1. Highlight the evolution of social work and social service tradition in India.

Ans: A systematic analysis of the social work, its philosophy, values and principles can only be understood after a proper reference and attempt is made to understand the concept of social work and its evolution in India. This should encompass various perceptions and viewpoints with regard to its growth and development. The social work profession is primarily committed to solidarity with marginalized sections of society. The basic human rights are very often violated for people, who lack economic, physical, mental social and/or emotional resources. Lack of resources leads to powerlessness and thereby marginalization of people by the social, economic and political systems. Marginalized people are vulnerable to deprivation and exploitation by those who have control over resources. Thus, this profession recognizes that marginalized people need to be empowered so that they themselves play a decisive role for their development and welfare.

Empowerment is the process of gaining control over self as well as the resources, which determine power. This process aims at reforming the nature and direction of the systemic forces, which marginalizes the powerless. Characteristic was doing or initiating welfare and common good of all, the glimpses of which can be found in folk tales and legends in old literary works, Smritis or Dharmasastras. The earliest mention to charity can be obtained from Rigveda which encourages charity by saying “May the one who gives shine most”. The Arthasastras, ascribed to Kautilya is one of the oldest works in politics that refers to the construction work for public good by joint efforts of villagers. It also mentions social work as care of children, old or invalid in case of no protectors. Special regulations were established for persons living in cities for common good. Collective charity was popular form of social work, of which progress of education or Vidyadana was an important one as one of the numerous Jatakas reflect. Other Upanshidas like Brihadarnayaka, Chhandogya and Taittiriya prescribes that every householder must practice charity. Next to education, reference may be made to religion, which took precedence over everything else to the people of ancient India. One of the popular methods of performing social activities, hence was Yagnas.

The main aim of yagnas was the common welfare of all, devoid of any personal benefit or profit. There were several Yagnashalas, which were like classrooms wherein students were instilled with the feeling of working without the egocentric desires. This learning and spirit transcended to the home, workplace and in the ordinary community life. The community was urged to move ahead as one entity and achieve progress.

According to Geeta privileged sections must strive towards the fulfillment of its duty to serve the poor, handicapped and underprivileged. The communitarian structure of early Vedic period functioned like an extended family, where everybody Social Reform in Medieval Period (1206-1706) The approach followed while mentioning the social reform activities during the medieval period would be to focus not on individual kings and their achievements but to the extent of their contribution to changes in social institutions and structure. The Muslim Sultanate who formed a significant phase of the medieval period were motivated and driven by the same spirit of social service in the fields of religion and education.

The practical needs of consolidating conquered territory and providing efficient administration in a foreign country necessitated the delineation of the role and functions of the kings. These duties included maintenance of peace, protection from external forces, levying of taxes and providing justice to subjects. Beyond these limited secular functions, the rulers took little interest in promoting the general welfare of the masses. The religion enjoined upon the Muslims to render help to the underprivileged by the payment of Zakat, “the annual legal alms of five things, namely money, cattle, grain, fruit and merchandise”. Provision of drinking water, building of mosques, provision of sarais, charity to poor was regarded as pious act.

Humayun was the pioneer amongst the Muslim rulers to make the efforts to prohibit sati system. Akbar was an illustrious ruler who took initiatives in bringing reforms in Indian society by abolishing slavery in 1583. He introduced equality among people irrespective of class and religion, and established a comprehensive system of poor relief which was of two types: granting relief in cash/kind to every needy person who made requests for the same and the other was systematic and organized assistance provided regularly. Ram Krishna Mission, Indian Social Conference, Servants of India Society etc.

However, this social reform movement confined to small elitist segment of the population mostly of English speaking middle class. But with the advent of Gandhiji on the scene, the entire social reform and political independence movement took a turn. Significantly, Gandhiji linked political movement with the social movement and transformed this into a mass movement with the participation of all sections of population notably women and peasants and lower castes.

The establishment of the first school of social work, Sir Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work, Bombay in 1936 marks a watershed in training and education of social work profession. Subsequently, several institutes of social work were established in various parts of the country. After independence, the government shifted towards the welfare approach and took several areas of social work under its purview. The popularity of ideas of social change, social development, institutional change and programmes of family planning, elimination of mass poverty and reduction of income gaps among the population reflect the direction of social orientation towards seeking and striving to achieve the goals.

Or

Explain the concept of voluntary action in relation to social work.

Ans: Any action taken without any direction from anybody is called a private action or a voluntary action. It work continuously on the problem and needs of the community member. The scope of voluntary action can become really wide. It basically belong to the...