

Scope for Child Rights and Protection in Social Work Education Seminar for Social Work Faculty

A one day seminar on scope for child rights and protection in social work education was organized by the Department of Women and Child Development, Bengaluru in collaboration with Karnataka State Integrated Child Protection Society (KSICPS, DWCD), Bengaluru, UNICEF Child Protection Program, Koppal UNICEF, Hyderabad, Resource and Development Centre on Child Rights, Shanthi Sandesha Trust, Mangalore and the Department of Social Work, Christ University, Bengaluru. The seminar was held on 12th May, 2015 at Christ University.

The speakers at the seminar included Mrs. Narmada Anand, Project Director, Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD), Mrs. Suchitra Rao, Senior Consultant, UNICEF, Sr. Dulcine Crasta, Director, Research and Development Centre on Child Rights, Mr. Vasudeva Sharma, Executive Director, Child Rights Trust (CRT) and Dr. Victor Paul, HOD, Department of Social Work, Christ University. The program was attended by a slew of faculty members who taught at various social work departments across Karnataka. The other participants included social work practitioners from different parts of Karnataka who worked in various organizations which were related to child rights and child protection and students from different academic disciplines such as law, social work etc.

The program was structured in 5 sessions and the first session was preceded by the inauguration which included a prayer song, lighting the lamp, inaugural address and vote of thanks.

Session 1- Child Protection and Scope for Social Work Professionals

The first session was based on child protection and scope for social work professionals and was helmed by Ms. Narmada Anand. Ms. Narmada Anand spoke about the ways in which the last few years have resulted in a change with respect to the discipline of social work courtesy the support extended by the Government. She gave importance to the fact that the professionals who are working in the ambit of child rights and child protection ought to get together and cooperate in order to bring favorable changes. The session also talked about the pivotal role of counseling skills in working with children and advocated the inculcation of the same as part of the fieldwork curriculum in not just social work but across varied disciplines such as law, clinical psychology etc.

Ms. Narmada Anand was strongly in favor of having robust objectives for fieldwork in order to make the process more meaningful and productive. She listed out some of the roadblocks that prevented the smooth collaboration between the academic institutions and the fieldwork organizations/agencies. One of the key snags mentioned was the lack of accountability on part of the academic institutions as they simply failed to submit any reports to the fieldwork agencies thereby, resulting in an absence of records.

The session was also of utmost significance as there was a proposal to develop a specific Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in order to make the proceedings more systematic and organized. There was also a mention of the importance of having an inclusive curriculum in order to train the students in an adequate and professional manner. Ms. Narmada Anand also endorsed the idea to have frequent meetings in order to incorporate child protection in the academic curriculum and plans are on to ensure that the meetings do indeed take place more regularly. It was learned that the need of the hour is to amalgamate theoretical knowledge with the practical learning.

Session 2- Child Protection Curriculum and Capacity of the Faculty

The second session of the seminar was helmed by Mrs. Suchitra Rao and it was about child protection curriculum and the capacity of the faculty. Mrs. Suchitra Rao emphasized that social workers do make a deep impact on matters related to children and their rights. She attributed the rigorous professional training imparted to social work professionals for their ability to work with children in an effective manner and also to help protect the rights of the children.

The session brought to light the fact that the scientific approach of social work helps immensely in challenging the ecosystem. Another pertinent fact highlighted during the session was that social work education and training have undergone immense transformation over a period of time in order to remain relevant and effective. There was an attempt to highlight the point that the vulnerability of children is universal and is not affected by socio demographic details as well as by extraneous factors.

Mrs. Suchitra Rao explained the paradigm shift in perspectives that has been witnessed over a period of time and said that there have been 4 stages since the origin of social work namely, charity based model (stage 1), welfare model (stage 2), development orientation model (stage 3) and rights and life cycle approach (stage 4).

During the second session, it was made clear that often the society tends to turn a blind eye to the needs of certain segments of the population such as adolescents and also the children in the womb. Some of the prominent facts mentioned during the second session were that often the response of the state is staccato. The participants were also enlightened about the fact that by and large the approach adopted in the concerned domain has been the linear approach. There was a general consensus regarding the fact that awareness needs to be increased with respect to the realization of UNCRC.

Among the welcome changes that have been introduced in recent times, a very prominent one is that priority is being given to child budgeting in the Union/State budget. It has also been seen that sector oriented allocation for children has increased in the domains of education and health. Mrs. Suchitra Rao made a comparison between the old approach and the new one by highlighting the differences with respect to the causes taken, the focus areas and also the nature of the responses.

It was learnt that the need of the hour is to develop the social work professionals and instill them with the right attitude, knowledge and skills. The Child Protection Sector encourages emphasis on technical and specialized training which is a part of state and national initiatives for children. The session also educated the participants about the true meaning of child vulnerability, child protection as well as protective environment.

Mrs. Suchitra Rao said that the 3 main areas with respect to capacity building of the social work faculty concern development of the right attitude, gaining relevant knowledge and strengthening useful skills. A few areas of engagement where the social work professionals can invest their time relate to children, their families, their communities, the UN agencies, elected representatives etc.

The session was concluded by handing out key tips with respect to placements. It was suggested that the expectations of the fieldwork trainee ought to be tuned and also they should be taught the code of conduct while working with children. The idea to develop guidelines concerning Common Minimum Measures/Protocols to be followed by students was strongly patronized and it was also recommended that dialogues should be held between the NGOs and the CSOs concerning the expectations of the interns.

Session 3- Child Rights and Legislations

The third session of the seminar was spearheaded by Mr. Vasudev Sharma, and the topic of child rights and legislations was discussed. Mr. Vasudev Sharma highlighted the importance of child protection programs by mentioning that 39% of India's total population comprises of children. He also mentioned that the rural child population is around 73%.

During the third session of the seminar, several areas were listed where child protection was absolutely essential. Some of the areas are related to suicides, drug abuse, female foeticide, illegal adoption, child labor etc. Mr. Vasudev Sharma made it clear that child abuse can happen almost anywhere including schools, parks, restaurants etc. Child protection is important as a matter of principle. It is absolutely essential to the development of a nation as well as to ensure sustainable development.

The session made it clear that interventions concerning protection were required for the survival of all children. The participants also got to know about the various policies concerned with child protection such as the National Policy for Children (2013), the State Child Protection Policy, several action plans and schemes (related to ICPS, education, child labor etc.).

Session 4- Challenges of Field Practice in Child Protection System

The fourth session was spearheaded by Sr. Dulcine Crasta, Director, Research and Development Centre on Child Rights. Sr. Dulcine Crasta spoke about the challenges that are faced in the ambit of child protection. She mentioned that fieldwork is an integral part of social work education as it

provides an opportunity to combine theoretical knowledge with practice based experiences. She said that it is important for theoretical knowledge to mirror the requirement of the society. She also said that the development of certain skills is an absolute must among the social work professionals in order to effectively respond to the needs of the client.

Sr. Dulcine Crasta divided the participants into 3 groups on the basis of their designation in order to carry out a group discussion so that the challenges of the various people involved in social work could be brought out. One of the groups consisted of the faculty members from different colleges of Karnataka while the other 2 groups had practitioners and students respectively. The faculty members brought to the fore the problems faced as a result of limited number of fieldwork organizations available for placing students especially, in tier 2 and tier 3 cities. The faculty members also expressed their dissatisfaction over the fact that the students begin the course with a bang but their interest fizzles out very soon.

The fieldwork agencies were displeased with the attitude of the students as well as their lack of knowledge of the subject matter. They said that the students made frequent use of their mobile phones along with not adhering to the dress code of the respective colleges. It was also found out that the agencies did not get reports by students despite clearly asking them to pen their cases.

The fourth session brought to the knowledge of the participants that the agencies were at sea in engaging the fieldwork trainees in a meaningful manner. The students were not happy with the fact that they were asked to intern at agencies which did not cater to their interests. It was also found out that the lack of quality supervision coupled with lack of visits by the faculty members further added to the tally of woes.

Session 5- Developing Terms of Reference for Field Placement

The final session was handled by Dr. Victor Paul, who spoke about the development of Terms of Reference for field placements. The terms of reference is intended to be between Christ University, Bengaluru and Karnataka State Integrated Child Protection Society (KSICPS), Bengaluru.

The purpose of the terms of reference is to establish the roles and responsibilities for Christ University as well as KSICPS with respect to the implementation of activities for the fieldwork trainees. The students of the Department of Social Work and the Department of Sociology are expected to intern at institutions that are under the Integrated Child Protection Society in Karnataka. The main areas to be addressed pertain to support services, training, advocacy and research.

The KSICPS is expected to arrange the student internships by communicating the necessary circulars. It is also responsible for orienting the interns with respect to the roles and responsibilities that they are expected to carry out. The organization is also entrusted with the job of meeting travel cost of the students attending the internship along with designating the

supervisor for the internship. KSICPS is also expected to collaborate with the Department of Social Work and the Department of Sociology in order to develop training modules through workshops. The organization is expected to review and evaluate every student's internship program.

The Department of Social Work, Christ University has been entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the internships are organized in an effective manner, as agreed by both the parties. The following is the list of institutional services that are expected to be carried out by the Department-

- (a) Providing assistance in facilitating CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) support
- (b) Home Enquiry Report (HER) of children in the CCIs
- (c) Preparing Social Investigation Report (SIR)
- (d) Individual report/Care plan of children in the CCIs
- (e) Support group activities
- (f) Conducting educational/informational activities
- (g) Procuring database of CCIs
- (h) Support in documentation of programs and activities
- (i) Preparing documentaries/IEC materials/animation
- (j) Adoption centers

The following is the list of non-institutional services that are expected to be carried out by the Department-

- (a) Functioning with CWC, JJB and SJPU's for a continuous period
- (b) Collecting data of DCPUs action plans
- (c) Preparing Home Enquiry Report (HER) and individual care plan of children identified under sponsorship programs and Vishesha Palana Yojana
- (d) Organizing awareness programs such as child protection and child right issues can be covered in schools, hospitals, illegal adoption centers, colleges and public places/communities
- (e) Facilitating education, information and communication strategies for child protection
- (f) Study of activities at open shelter, adoption agencies, gram panchayats and children gram sabha

The following is the list of services that are expected to be carried out by the Department with respect to POSCO cases-

- (a) Support person/language translators for victims of POSCO cases
- (b) Conducting awareness workshop on child protection

The following is the list of services that are expected to be carried out by the Department with respect to Child Care Institutions (CCIs)-

- (a) Accumulating data of children in CCIs i.e. data concerning sex, age, state, educational background, health status etc.
- (b) Enquiring of children in CCIs i.e. whether these children are kept in CCIs with the order of CWC
- (c) Follow up report of children post their stay at JJB, CWC and institutional care

The following is the list of care, support and rehabilitation services that are a part of the terms of reference

- (a) Emergency outreach service through ‘CHILDLINE’
- (b) Open shelters for children in need in urban and semi-urban areas
- (c) Family based non institutional care through
 - (1) Sponsorship
 - (2) Foster care
 - (3) Adoption
 - (4) After care

The seminar concluded after Mrs. Suchitra Rao, Ms. Narmada Anand and Dr. Victor Paul individually delivered the final words. All the participants agreed that it was indeed mandatory to have an agreement among all the concerned parties in order to implement all that was discussed during the conference. The participants were encouraged to give their individual inputs in order to make the process multi-dimensional and inclusive.

Schedule of the Program

9:30 am	Registration	
10:00 am	Inauguration (a) Prayer (b) Introduction and Welcome (c) Lighting the Lamp (d) Inaugural Address (e) Vote of Thanks	
10:30 am – 11:15 am	Session 1- Child Protection and Scope for Social Work Professionals	Ms. Narmada Anand, Project Director, ICPS
11:15 am – 12 pm	Session 2- Child Protection Curriculum and Capacity of the Faculty	Mrs. Suchitra Rao, Sr. Consultant, UNICEF
12 pm – 1:30 pm	Session 3- Child Rights and Legislations	Mr. Vasudeva Sharma
1:30 pm – 2:30 pm	Lunch	
2:30 pm – 3:15 pm	Session 4- Challenges of Field	Sr. Dulcine Crasta, Director,

	Practice in Child Protection System	Research and Development Centre on Child Rights
3:15 pm – 4:15 pm	Session 5- Developing Tools for Reference for Field Placement	Dr. Victor Paul, Christ University
4:15 pm – 4:30 pm	Concluding Remarks and Way Forward	Ms. Narmada Anand, Mrs. Suchitra Rao, Sr. Dulcine Crasta and Dr. Victor Paul





















