

Introduction to Social Work

- Definition of Social Work

Social work is one of the branches of social sciences, which in turn includes the application of social theory as well as social research methods to study the lives of individuals, groups and societies in order to improve them. Therefore, it is closely and fundamentally linked with other branches of the social sciences, with the aim of improving human conditions and working to change society's response to the issues it faces.

In another definition, social work is a science, art and profession to help people solve their problems, which emerged after the Second World War. It can also be defined as the contribution of individuals to social welfare and development, whether by opinion, labour, funding or other forms. Accordingly, social work includes all types of social service and forms of human solidarity aimed at helping people in difficult situations (social, psychological, educational, health, family) in order to remove all obstacles and issues that affect their progress in life.

In a comprehensive definition, social work means, first and foremost, all actions aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of individuals as well as the development of their lifestyles. It is also a direct endeavour to achieve and ensure social justice within society. It is also a systematic and controlled attempt with specific mechanisms and means in order to change the general response of society and its individuals to various types of daily crises and issues. It can therefore be said that the main objective of social work is to achieve the well-being of society and transform negative points into positive points, and from this perspective, it reveals and exposes the dark spots within the community and then treats them.

The concept of social work has a number of synonyms, the most important of which are:

1- Social solidarity: Ahmed Abdo Awad says: Social solidarity is when the members of society, whether individuals or groups, rulers or ruled, join together to adopt positive attitudes, such as caring for orphans and spreading science. Motivated by a deep emotional feeling that stems from the origin of faith, so that the individual lives in the sponsorship of the group, and the group lives with the support of the individual.

2- Social Service: Social service has foreign and Arabic definitions, including Henson's (1925) definition of social service, which states that it is: "A type of service that works on the one hand to help the individual or family group suffering from problems to be able to reach an appropriate level, and on the other hand to remove as far as possible the obstacles that hinder individuals from realising their full potential." As for the Arabic definitions, there are many, including Ahmed Kamal Ahmed's definition, where he sees it as "a scientific method of serving human beings and a social system that solves their problems, develops their capabilities, and helps the social systems in society to fulfil their role to achieve the well-being of its members.

3- Social welfare is: A system of change aimed at securing an appropriate standard of living for all members and groups of society. It is an essential means of achieving social balance and stability through (a dynamic perspective).

- The pillars of social work:

Social work has two main pillars, namely:

- Belief in human dignity and value.
- Belief in individual differences between people.
- Belief in individual self-determination.
- Belief in the right and freedom of the individual in society and its values.
- Belief in social justice among people of different races and religions.
- Belief in tolerance and love.
- Belief in the power of the individual to bring about social change and his/her role in the advancement of society.

- Stages of development of social work:

Social work evolved through multiple stages that were linked to the political, social, economic and religious conditions prevailing in each period of time in the development of human society, and its services developed in a way that contributed to the emergence and emergence of organised social work or organisational social service. The stages that care services went through can be identified as follows:

1- The tribal care stage: Care services were provided through the customs and norms prevailing in each tribe, where the tribe was responsible for the affairs of

its members, so everyone was at the service of the tribal group and the tribal group at the service of its members, and under this care, the individual was not expected to seek help from outside the tribe.

2- The stage of charity: This stage emerged with the spread of agriculture and small handicraft industries, as the tribal system began to disintegrate and was gradually replaced by the centralised state system, hence the care services became based on individual assistance from the capable and driven by humanitarian aspects and religious conscience, but these services were provided individually by the capable members of the community.

3- The stage of voluntary organisations: With the complexity of society, the need to provide services in a more sophisticated manner emerged, due to the multiplicity of problems such as the spread of unemployment and the existence of issues between the worker and the employer as well as the disintegration of family ties, especially in the early period of the industrial revolution, which led to the need to organise the provision of care services in order to collect more resources and provide care services in a better way within the framework of new societal changes.

4- - The Welfare State: This phase emerged at the beginning of the 1930s as a result of the economic crisis, which led to the emergence of issues that required the intervention of the state with its legislative, executive and judicial authority to deal with such issues. Hence, the state began to intervene in the provision of social welfare services in various fields (education/health/social insurance etc.). At this stage, the need for a scientific specialisation emerged to help it provide social welfare services according to the scientific method within the framework of studied plans, hence the emergence of the profession of social work.

5- The stage of the emergence of the social work profession: With the intervention of the state in the provision of care services, services became provided to citizens through specialised institutions in all fields related to the process of satisfying the needs of citizens (education / health / recreation / economic ... etc.) Hence, care services became provided within the framework of social systems that the state establishes and provides them with resources (human and material) and sets laws and procedures for them with the aim of regulating them. In light of achieving these goals, there was a need for a scientific discipline that enables society to provide social welfare services in an organised manner.

- Types of social services:

The types of social services can be defined as:

- 1- Dealing with the most needy groups, i.e. those who cannot help themselves.
- 2- Dealing with the most positive groups in benefiting from the assistance provided.
- 3- Focusing on the moral objective that focuses on the concept of self-help, i.e. developing human capabilities to overcome the issues encountered.
- 4- Achieving a cumulative relationship between the material and moral objectives in providing assistance to citizens.
- 5- Advocating that social welfare is a citizen's right and not a grant.

- Objectives of social work:

Social work aims to:

- Seek to establish social justice and improve material and moral living conditions.
- Support all means and possibilities that provide well-being and stability for every individual and group in society.
- Find ways to deal with social problems and find solutions to them at all levels of society.
- Working to improve the economic and social situation as a whole, especially among the poor, the sick, the less educated and the less fortunate in society.