Casework Process
Introduction
     Social case work is the method of social work which focuses both on the person and his/her Environment and helps to improve the balance between the person's coping efforts and the Environmental demands. It is a method in which help is provided by social case worker to the individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning. Sometimes due to certain factors internal or external, individuals are not able to solve their problems or fail to avail existing resources, in such a situation social case worker by using various methods, techniques and skills of social case work practice tries to help the client in solving his/her psycho-social problems.

Phases of Social Case Work Progress
According Mary Richmond (1917) there are three phases of social case work practice: social Investigation or psycho-social study, diagnosis and treatment or management. In contemporary **social case work practice these three phases have been divided into five divisions namely**
☐ social investigation or study,
☐ assessment,
☐ intervention,
☐ termination and
☐ evaluation.

Social Investigation (Study)
     Social investigation is a psycho social process. It is the initial phase in which the worker gains his first understanding of the kind of help his client's needs. He/she must learn what the client sees his problem as, what he/she thinks can be done about it, what he himself/herself tried to do about it, and what are the reasons the client has identified for his present difficulty. It transcends much beyond assessment of an individual client or family. The intra psychic forces are inseparably linked with social forces. To understand the individual psycho-social entity, it is important to analyze the relationship of client with others. The worker continuously tries to arrive at his own understanding of what the client's problem is, what factors contribute to it causatively, and what assets in the client's situation can enable the client to improve his situation and help the worker facilitate this improvement through the case work intervention process.

The term social investigation is also used by some experts as social- evidence, seeking social inquiry, intake and orientation or beginning process. Social investigation is the foundation upon which the various helping processes, actions and intervention technique are built. For every social work activity, whether it is at individual level or family level or community and society level the social investigation is indispensable. Social investigations help to find out the social realities of the clients and their families, to identify the problem area and to formulate intervention, rehabilitation and aftercare strategies.

a) According to Perlman **elements of the social case work study in the beginning phase are:**
1. The nature of the presenting problem,
2. The significance of this problem,
3. The cause/s, onset and precipitants of the problem,
4. The efforts made to cope with problem solving,
5. The nature of the of the solution or ends sought from the case work agency,
6. The actual nature of this agency and its problem solving means in relation to the client and his problem.

b) **Method**
Perlman has suggested four methods for operating in the beginning phase:
1. Relating to the client
2. Helping the client to talk about his/her troubles
3. Focusing and partializing
4. Helping the client to engage with the agency. Both content and method in the beginning phase assists all the processes.

c) **Tools and technique in case study process**
1. Interview
2. Objective Observation
3. Examination of records and documents
4. Collection of information from collateral sources
5. Collection of information from family members
6. Special examination or test

The process of social investigation is initiated and carried out through the process of interview. Professional skill in this area requires not only theoretical knowledge about the psychology of human behaviour but also considerable case work practice in which the worker's technique is repeatedly analysed. The interview is used for securing the information about the client as well as his problems including his social relationships. Through the interview, the case worker attempts to instruct and guide both the clients and others who play significant role in his life and attempts to manipulate the environment for the benefit of the client. Observation is always coupled with interviewing. It makes possible to correct behaviour of the client as it occurs. It yields clues to the pathological patterns of communication, pathogenic relation and defective role playing and polarization of power and authority among the family members who are of etiological significance.

d) **Various aspects related to social case work study** It is very important to collect sufficient factual information regarding client so that the worker can understand the current situation and what needs to be done in future. How his/her problem started or what was the cause of beginning and increase of the problem. In the past how client has managed his problem and who are the concerned person related to the problem. It is important to study how environment is affecting the client or how he /she is affecting the environment. Clear and effective diagnosis can only be achieved when the worker studies the client and the family's socio-economic, psychological

and cultural factors in context to their inter-personal relationships. In a nutshell the important aspects related to social case work study are:

1. Current problem and beginning of the problem (when, how and where problem started, intervention taken and current status i.e. management of the problem)

2. Facts related to client (birth, weaning, food habits, mobility, toilet training, measure experiences and incident, aggressiveness, fear, school progress, learning problems and responses. Traumatic experiences, accident, handicaps, family profile, cultural and economic status, important family relations, married life, means of recreations, interest and skills).

e) **Skills of Social Case Worker**
1. Skill in observation and analyzing situation
2. Skill of listening
3. Skill in talking
4. Skill in giving direction during interview
5. Skill in conducting interviews according various objectives

Social Diagnosis (Assessment)

It is the assessment phase of case work which gives realistic basis for differentiation – individualized knowledge about the person in their social context. Social diagnosis (assessment) is the attempt to arrive at an exact definition as far as possible of the social situation and personality of a given client. It is a search for the cause of the problem which brings the client to the worker for help. It is an effort to deduce from the material available, seen against the background of what the worker knows of human behaviour and social realities, what the client's problem is, what factors contribute in alleviating the problem, what changes can be brought to occur which will reduce or eradicate his/her problem and what steps the case worker can take to forward these objectives. Hence, diagnosis is defined as:

1. An explanation formulated in the light of known facts (both tangible facts and psychological facts)
2. An explanation made in the knowledge of other possible explanations and
3. Subject to change or revision whenever subsequent material warrants a different explanation

a) **The content of social diagnosis** (assessment) in case work process falls into the triangular pattern. It consists of:
1. The nature of the problem brought and the goals sought by the client, in relationship to;
2. The nature of the person who bears the problem (his social and psychological situation and functioning) and who seeks (or needs) help with his problem, in relation to;
3. The nature and purpose of the agency and the kind of help it can offer and/or make available.

b) **Types of Diagnosis**
Perlman has described three types of diagnosis that is carried on in social case work process. These are:
☐ Dynamic diagnosis,
☐ Clinical diagnosis,
☐ Etiological diagnosis.

Dynamic diagnosis

Dynamic diagnosis gives an understanding of the current problem of the client and the forces currently operating within the client, within the social environment and between his environment. It gives the answers of the question- what is the trouble? What psychological, physical and social factors are contributing to it? What solution is sought? What are the means available within the client, his/her environment? What are organized services and resources by which problem may be affected? The nature of such diagnosis is changeable because it is the beginning phase of social case work practice.

Clinical diagnosis

In clinical diagnosis, the case worker attempts to classify the client by nature of his sickness / problem. He identifies certain forms and qualities of client's personality and malfunctioning in his behaviour. The clinical diagnosis describes both the nature of the problem and its relation to the client and the helping means and goals. Such type of diagnosis is useful only when it becomes apparent that a disorder of personality accompanies the social disorder, creating and complicating it.

Etiological diagnosis

Etiological diagnosis is concerned with the explanation of the beginning of the life history of the problem of the client, basically the problem that lies in the client's personality make up or functioning. The history of his development as a problem encountering, problem-solving human being may provide the case worker with an understanding of what his client suffers from and what is the extent of his coping ability likely to be. Etiological diagnosis is more useful in explaining or rigid reactions. When inspite of fact that the client's present problem are in the centre of attention, the client's response are not in accordance with, the past history and its appraisal in the light of client's current capacities, goals and problems are used for the intervention. This type of diagnosis contributes to understanding the nature of the problem to be dealt with, the person who has the problem, and the ways and means that can be anticipated as helpful.

c) **Steps in diagnosis (Assessment)**
The following steps are taken while diagnosing a problem

1. The worker begins to focus on problematic behaviours. He begins with the survey of both functional and disfunctional behaviours in his environment. He clarifies various complains and problems in terms of excesses and deficits. He evaluates the client's personal strengths as well as of his environment.

2. He targets the specified behaviours. This involves an attempt of breaking down complex Behaviours into their component parts.

3. Baseline data are collected to specify those events that appear to be currently controlling the problematic behaviours.

4. The collected information is summarized in an attempt to anticipate any major problem in

intervention and as a way of beginning to establish objective for intervention.

5. Selecting priorities for intervention is the final step of the diagnosis. Concentration on one problem at one time makes intervention process more manageable and allows both client and worker to channel their energies into one area. It is the best way of handling and proper use of available resources.

Intervention (Treatement)

The objective of social case work intervention is to alleviate the client's distress and restoring, maintaining or enhancing the social functioning of an individual in need of help. It is to enhance the client's comfort, satisfaction and self realization. This may require enhancing adaptive skills of the ego and functioning of the person-situation system. According to Hamilton, treatment is the sum total of all activities and services directed towards helping an individual with a problem. The focus is on the relieving of the immediate problem and, if feasible, modifies any basic difficulties which precipitated it. Social case work process begins with the initial contact with the client. The process of intervention passes through many phases. i.e. (i) initial phase, (ii) motivation and role induction, (iii) primary contract, (iv)diagnosis and assessment, (v) establishing intervention goals, (vi) developing intervention plan, (vii) preparation for actual intervention, (viii) intervention in practice, (ix) monitoring and evaluating the effects of intervention, and (x) planning of follow-up and termination of the therapeutic relationship.

Application of Intervention Methods

In order to achieve the goals set by the worker, conventionally the following methods of social intervention have been mentioned:

a. Direct
b. Environmental Modification
c. Administration of Practical Service

A)Direct method of intervention deals with the different ways that are used by the worker to promote a specific kind of behaviour on the part of the client. Pearlman sees direct intervention as the provision of a systematic but flexible way in which the client can work over his/her problem, his/her relation to it and possible solutions. Here case worker exerts his/her influence directly on the client. Direct intervention techniques are used where the client needs direction because of his/her ignorance, anxiety, and weaknesses of his/her ego strengths. The degree of influence, the case worker is able to exert, may depend on the relationship between himself/herself and the client. Direct intervention is given through counselling, therapeutic interviewing, clarification and interpretation leading to an insight. Supportive intervention for the direct benefit of the client is provided through guidance, externalization of interests, re-assurance, suggestion, persuasion and advice.

Counselling is a personal help directed toward the solution of a problem which a person finds that he/she cannot solve himself/herself and on which he/she, therefore, seeks the help of a skilled person whose knowledge, experience and general orientation can be brought into play in an attempt to solve the problem. It is a psychological help in which information and clarification

are used for making the client aware of the problem. It is always used for a particular purpose like marriage counselling, occupational counselling, family counselling, school counselling, etc.

Therapeutic interviewing is used where intra- psychic conflict is present in the environment or neuroses or behavior disorders are acted out. The purpose of such interviewing is that of psychotherapy which aims at personality, competence and self-actualization, competence and self-actualization. For the analysis of the unconscious, social case worker applies the techniques of free association, dream interpretation, analysis of resistance and transference. For behaviour modification, social case worker makes use of the techniques of positive enforcement, negative enforcement, positive punishment, negative punishment, systematic desensitization and covert desensitization. Sometimes faulty interaction play basic role in developing maladaptive behavior. For the improvement of interpersonal relations and correct communication social case worker practices marital and family therapy techniques and transactional analysis. It is a process through which *clarification* about the client himself/herself, his/her environment and the public with whom he/she is associated is made. Social case worker is in need of understanding the person, his/her environment and his/her social network. Clarification may consist of information given to the client so that he/she becomes capable of understanding himself/herself, his/her environment and his/her social network, which he/she does not posses and without which he/she cannot see clearly what steps he/she ought to take. Sometimes conflicting feelings and strong emotions lead the individual to distort reality so seriously or react to it so inappropriately that understanding is impossible without deeper perception. Social case worker interprets the factors of the problem, related facts, attitudes of client and unconscious feelings in relation to the reality situation. He/she helps the client to an awareness of his/her strong projection of his inner needs and his/her subjective responses upon the outer world. Insight development is always accompanied by some degree of clarification and psychological support.

Psychological support is useful in decreasing tension and guilt, increasing self-confidence, encouraging healthy functioning or a way of functioning that maintains the client's equilibrium and in helping him/her to build up compensatory strengths and satisfaction. The case worker accepts him/her and his/her feelings, and shows keen interest in him/her. He/she clarifies the problem and encourages him to take his/her own decision. Social case worker helps him/her to strengthen his/her client's ego through the techniques of guidance, reassurance, suggestion, persuasion and
psychological support.

(b) **Environmental modification** means to bring change in the social as well as physical conditions of the client so that he/she may be relieved from excessive stresses and strains. The case worker suggests what steps may or may not help the client to cope better with his/her problems. He/she plans with him/her his/her emotional, professional and recreational activities. He/she gives appropriate advice to members of his/her environment and modifies their attitude favorably. Though interview is used in this method the main emphasis is laid to change in his/her conditions. When social resources and systematized social conditions are used as main sources for the solution of the problem, it becomes social intervention. Home services, camps, group experience activities, training and employment for livelihood and other activities of adjustment are such type of programmes. The purpose of such activities is always to minimize the tension in the client. Social case worker organizes such type of activities through which the client's

experiences help in the personality growth and adjustment in the society. Though practical services are also made available but the focus is always on change in conditions. Attempts are also made to change and modify the attitude of parents, teachers, spouse, employer, friends and relatives in accordance with the needs of the client. In general environmental modification (manipulation) is undertaken by the case worker only when environmental pressure upon the client are beyond the latter's control but can be modified by the case worker.

(c) **Administration of practical service** involves those which are extended to the client for help to choose and use the social resource afforded by the community. According to Hamilton administration of practical services is the oldest and best known case work method of intervention. Porter Lee was the first social worker who emphasized and classified such resources. Administration of practical services means to help the client in such a way that he could select and use the resources available in the community. Social case worker helps the client for adequate knowledge of available resources through the techniques of discussion, information, clarification and direction. The use of services is essential to solve any kind of problem and if the problem is of social nature, then it becomes more essential for the worker to help the client in this direction. These services take the form of intervention as they satisfy his/her needs and give satisfaction. The client knows the type of services. It is the job of case worker to take the client to the resources. Money, medical care, nursery schools, scholarships, foster homes, legal aid, recreational facilities, etc. are such type of services that any person may need in order to
resolve a given problem in his/her daily living.

Termination and Follow-up Termination means ending the process that began when client agreed to undergo social case work intervention process. The termination process is being decided by worker and client with each others consent. Termination is the stage when the worker has the confidence in the client's ability to cope with the present and future situations. It is neither wise nor necessary for the termination to be an abrupt one. Termination should be done in a phased manner so that dependency on worker can be minimized. The frequency and amount of contacts should be gradually decreased. Particularly, the follow-up should be planned on a progressively diminishing basis, first, perhaps after two weeks, then a month, then three months, six months and a year following the termination of the formal programme.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the process in which the worker tries to find out the effectiveness and success of the process. It is the activity which ascertains whether the social case work process has achieved the desired goals, in a case. In social case work practice evaluation provides the crucial feedback to the case worker and the client regarding whether the intervention programme is succeeding as desired, whether established goals have been achieved, whether modifications in the programme are necessary and whether the client is being helped in the real sense. Social case worker evaluates the content of the programme and its effectiveness inner strength gained by the client and the success of himself/herself in helping the client.

Recording

Recording is the process in which all the facts gathered are recorded along with success or failures in the social case work process. It is humanly impossible to retain in mind all the

information related to a client. Record writing is important for formulating the social assessment and plan of action in each and every case. Recording is done regularly as the case moves based on this chronologically linked material. Summaries may be prepared periodically.

Role of Social Worker

The Social Worker, in each phase, has to be an expert who is able to understand human behaviour and life situations. The social worker should have proper research orientation so that he /she is able to study and collect relevant data regarding the client. He/ she should have understanding of nature, motivations, strengths, weaknesses and dynamics of the role expectations as they influence the individuals.

The social worker should have knowledge of the society- its values, traditions, customs, taboos, problems, priorities etc and while working with individuals. The social worker must himself/herself be clear as to what, realistically, the role's requirements are, and he/she work accordingly. The social worker should have knowledge of available services and resources. While dealing with the client the social worker has to perform various roles such as care giver, enabler, therapist, guide, counsellor consultant, mobilizer, an evaluator, as an advocate, and a referral agent.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have studied the various phases of case work process. Case work is one of the primary methods of social work which aims to help individuals to solve their problems and enhance social functioning. The various phase of case work are study, assessment, intervention, termination and evaluation which are interlinked with each other and they are similar in form to a rope, woven of multiple strands. When one cuts the rope at any point, all the component strands are exposed. In the study phase the case worker establishes professional and purpose full relationship using skills of case worker. In study phase he/she tries to study the client and his/her circumstances in context to his/ her problem. In the study process the case worker must secure all and every fact that taken together, through logical and inferential reasoning, would reveal the client's personality and the situation. The methods used for collecting information's in this phase include interviews, observation, study of available records and collateral contacts.

Assessment is the phase in which we try to understand the problem and its causative factors. It is an attempt to arrive at as an exact definition as possible of the social situation and personality of a given client. Termination means ending the process that began when the client agreed to undergo social case work intervention process. Termination is the stage when the worker has confidence in the client's ability to cope with present and arising situations.

Evaluation is the phase where we try to know what the outcomes of the efforts are. It is the activity which ascertains whether social case work process has achieved the desired goals in a case. Recording is the process in which all the facts gathered are recorded, events and success or failures related to case work process are being listed for the purpose of measurements of results, administrative, teaching and supervision and research.

INTERVIEW

The casework interview refers to the meeting of the social worker and the client in a face-to-face conversation. It is not a casual conversation but a professional activity on the part of the

social worker, because the conversation is geared to specific or general purposes which may be obtaining or imparting information, giving help or studying and assessing the client's situation.

Purpose of Social Casework Interview

Interviewing is the base on which the theory and the practice of social casework has been built over the years. It is the main medium of help without which the social casework process will never be possible. Interviewing is one of the important casework technique which functions as a conveyor for the transmission of Interviewing help to the client.

REFERRAL

In the case work process it is not possible always to solve the client's problem in the same agency and by the same worker. Therefore sometimes cases are transferred or referred to another agency for rendering expertise help to the client. The helping process does not end in referral but it is the contact with a particular case worker or agency who will take over the case. Referral is done for various considerations, when a different type of worker/ therapy is required to achieve the finally formulated goals of treatment and when the worker and client find it difficult to move to or assume new responsibility. The case may be referred to some other agency if at some point it decided that the client cannot be helped in this agency for some reasons. Referral involves preparation of a referral note which gives a very brief summary of the problem and the efforts undertaken to solve the problem along with psycho social diagnosis. Preparation for referral should be done in the way preparation for termination is undertaken through referral stage is not the final stage. Preparation involves explaining the reasons of referral, talking of the positive and negative feelings involved in a referral process, tackling separation anxiety in one or two sessions, handling the question factually and preparing the client for new contact.

When referral is done for availing of some concrete or specialized services, the case worker may, if required also assume the role of an advocate or liaison worker. The case worker links the client with the needed services. Advocacy may be required when the agency does not offer its services to the client. The social case worker tries to interpret the rules, looks for expectations and pleads for services to the client. While assuming either of these two roles, the case worker must assess the risk and the time involved. In this process, efforts can also be made to help the client to secure these services on his own with social, administrative and political pressures. If this is possible the social worker can work as an enabler. In all cases of referral consent of the client is important to help him to use the available services for his problems.

Types of Referral
 1. The case or problem should be referred by somebody [agency, institutions, family etc] (or)
 2. Identified by the worker himself (or)
 3. By the client himself to the worker or to an agency

HOME VISITS

Home visit is an important technique used by the case worker to make the treatment process much effective. Bernard (1964) states that by making home visits one sees that the

environment in which the client lives, observes family and other relevant social interactions at first hand and develops a fuller diagnostic understanding of the patient for appropriate treatment planning. Home visit is thus an important tool in total intervention process. According to cameron, "in a few minutes in home, an experienced observer can gain more pertinent information about the client and his environment, which can be gained during hours of probing in an office.

The main purposes of home visits are:

- Getting detailed information about the client and his family
- Persuading the client to utilize the services to the maximum extent
- Educating the family members in matters of the client
- Strengthening the relationship between the client, agency and the family
- Facilitating rehabilitation of the discharged clients from institutions
- Family care and after care services to the discharged client.

COLLATERAL CONTACT

Collaterals are those, who, because of their special

☐ Association with the clients, in a position to furnish information to the caseworker about the client or to help the clients (in some way) Social case work makes use of document, case history, and

☐ agency reports, consultation with experts from other fields, tests and examination of all kinds as it requires an interdisciplinary approach. Further, the worker has to see that the clients gets possible treatment for his problems and to this end, work closely together with the "Collaterals" such as schools, hospitals, employees, unions social agencies friends, etc.

A collateral contact is a source of information knowledgeable about a household's situation. The collateral contact typically either corroborates or supports information provided by household members. Collateral contacts are often used in child custody cases to obtain information about a child, parent or other person responsible for the child. In these cases, the collateral contact often has knowledge of the family situation without having personal involvement in the situation.

FUNCTION AND COMMUNICATION

Collateral contacts provide a third-party validation of the household circumstances and help ensure correct eligibility and payment determinations are made by the courts. Courts often use collateral contacts to support or impeach a client's statement or when evidence of certain eligibility criteria does not exist. Examples of collateral contacts include employers, past or present landlords, neighbors, school officials, day-care providers and other persons outside the household.

OBTAINING A COLLATERAL CONTACT

A caseworker often asks for the names of several persons for use as possible collateral contacts. The caseworker can request this contact information during face-to-face interviews, during a home visit, by telephone or in writing. The caseworker uses the collateral contact to support statements made by household members or to determine eligibility factors. The caseworker

normally determines whether the specific case requires collateral contacts and what kind of information to request from these contacts.

NECESSITY

The household members normally provide all relevant information to the caseworker required for the caseworker to make a determination. The caseworker ordinarily gives the household the opportunity to provide all necessary verification information. If the caseworker has doubts after processing this verification information, the caseworker can decide to use collateral contacts to make a final determination. Additionally, the caseworker can also use collateral contacts to assist in expediting the verification process.

PROCESS

When making the initial contact with the collateral contacts, the caseworker should always identify herself by communicating her name, title and the name of the department or division she represents. The caseworker should only ask questions to the collateral contacts required to determine the household's eligibility for a specific purpose. Further, the caseworker must document all the information reported by the collateral contact in the case record, including the contact person's name, title, phone number and relationship to the household.