School Social Work

Lecture Notes: Imran Ahmad Sajid

School Social Work is the application of social work in schools to enable students and their families to overcome social and personal problems which impede learning.

Education [is a] system of formal teaching and learning as conducted through schools and other institutions.

Ali is an 11-year-old 5th grader with an IQ score of 120. However, Ali’s school performance does not match his intelligence abilities. Why is Ali not performing according to his abilities?

When a child, like Ali, performs poorly at school, what does it mean? Does it mean the child is dumb, stupid, and lacks talent? Or does it mean that the problem lies somewhere else.

Somewhere in 1906, people in New York, Boston, Chicago and Connecticut began to show concern for underprivileged pupils. They realized that it is not only the School which effects a student’s learning but his community and family environment also have a significant contribution.

In New York City, settlement workers from the Hartley House and Greenwich House thought that it was necessary to know the teachers of children who came to the settlements, so they assigned two workers to visit schools and homes in order to work closely with schools and community groups to promote understanding and communication. In Boston, the Women's Education Association placed visiting teachers in the schools to foster harmony between school and home and facilitate the children's education.

# What is School Social Work?

School Social Work is the application of social work in schools to enable students and their families to overcome social and personal problems which impede learning.

School Social Worker Provides social services and assistance to improve the social and psychological functioning of children and their families and to maximize the family well-being and the academic functioning of children.

# Theoretical Framework

A [school social worker] is a social worker, preferably one with some classroom experience of teaching. She undertakes, for a given number of pupils reported to her by the school for

1. poor scholarship,
2. bad health,
3. misconduct,
4. lateness,
5. irregular attendance, or
6. for what appear to be adverse home conditions,

to discover the causal factors in the difficulty and then tries to work out a better adjustment. It is not astonishing to find that, among the **measures** she (social worker) most frequently employs, are

1. the exercising of personal influence,
2. winning the co-operation of parents,
3. seeking the advice and assistance of medical and mental experts,
4. seeking the aid of the various social agencies,
5. utilizing recreational facilities, and
6. changing the child’s environment.

These are the measures most frequently used by social case workers. “changing of environment” may mean a change outside any school, within the present school, or to another school.

One school social worker illustrated a case history:

*A boy of nine with an intelligence quotient of 120 was doing very poor work, in the 4th grade. The school social worker found that he read till 11:00 at night “any books he found in the library. He rarely went out—not in this neighborhood. The visiting teacher correlated his reading with his lessons; interested him in outdoor athletics; and with the mother worked out a vigorous daily programme which left him at night physically tired and mentally satisfied, and ready to retire early. Interest and oversight brought this child up to the standard which his ability warranted, and in addition changed him from a dreamer and laggard into an energetic boy and pupil (Richmond, 1922.pp.199-200)*.

# Nature of Work/ Role of School Social Worker

From Richmond’s excerpt, we can see what is the nature of work that school social workers do.

1. Conduct interviews with a student, family members, and school personnel to gather information about a student's social, emotional, and behavioral adjustment to school and the community
2. Assist students, teachers, and parents to develop solutions to family and community factors that influence a student's capacity or ability to learn
3. The social worker may act as a liaison between school, family, and other community agencies in nurturing a child's normal growth and development.
4. The social worker provides individual and/or group counseling for students who have behaviors and issues of concern.
5. The social worker provides individual, and/or group support as well as educational workshops to strengthen parenting skills and assist in supporting positive adolescent development.