



### Short Review Paper

# Localization of social work literature and its application in India: Need and challenges

Iranna Ronad

Shree Sangameshwar Arts & Commerce College Chadchan-586205, Karnataka State, India  
iranna.msw5@gmail.com

Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in), [www.isca.me](http://www.isca.me)

Received 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, revised 20<sup>th</sup> December 2022, accepted 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

## Abstract

*Social work is accepted as one of the Profession in all over the world. Being a problem solving profession, Social work deals with problems of individuals, family, community and society. Social workers always concern with solving the problems of their clients i.e. Individuals, groups and community. They are making enable/empowering them to solve their problems by using their strength and appropriate resources. Social work is accepted as a profession by the people in Indian society (social acceptance). Social work is originated from the western countries like, England and America, widely recognized by the government and practiced by social workers. Every subject/profession has its own literature or resource. The literature plays a pivotal role, it is always backbone of a subject, it contributes a lot to enrichment of subject and ultimately, that leads to development. In other words, we can say that no subject will grow without fruitful literature. Academicians, veterans and experts always refers that, the curricula should prepare with the tune of a countries background and situations. The social, cultural, economical, and political aspects are different from society to society. So, literature should fusion with socio-cultural aspects of a nation. Then only simply put into application, can able to meet the goal and objective of that particular education.*

**Keywords:** Social work, Process of indigenization, Professional aspects, Knowledge.

## Introduction

We have had our own approaches to helping the poor, destitute and disadvantage people of the society. In India, Social work has own history. Social work was doing on the name of social service, charity and philanthropy. Help and support were given and try to find out the solutions for the human sufferings by the major institutions of society i.e. family, dharma and Mathaas. We borrowed social work from western countries and practicing it in our country. Indigenization is the process of developing some local ideas, perspectives, to be best suited to a particular geographical context<sup>1</sup>. Due to ineffective and irrelevant theories and practices and models social work in India is struggling to get professional status, these theories and models are not fit and unadoptable in Indian local conditions<sup>1</sup>. Lack of evidence based practice and teaching of unscientific or pseudo-scientific knowledge, social work practitioners have not been able to secure exclusive areas of practice unlike USA and UK<sup>1</sup>. In 1936 (Bombay), Sir Dorabji Tata graduate school of social work was established, and started the education and training in Social work.

It was the first institute of social work in India, the person, who introduced the Social work in India, was Sir *Clifford Manshardt*. He came to know the need of trained social workers in India. Localization of a literature makes easy to understand the literature for students, teachers, academicians and general

public and interest minds. We need to reframe the literature and adopt the methods/approaches, skills, tools, techniques, values and theories according to our Indian scenario. It will be helpful to implementing and applying the particular subjects/profession like Social work.

Social workers are facing the difficulties while implementing and applying the methods, tools and techniques of profession in work place. Why it is happening is because, theory is different from practice and the Indian scenario is different from the western scenario. Educators of social work framed the methods, tools, techniques according to their societal situations. Another considering fact, here is that, even though the fields, problems and issues are same, nature and causes for the problems are quite different. Hence, the gap has been created and mismatch will occur. Taking into consideration above facts, the localization of literature is very essential.

## Problem statement

Social work is practicing all over the world including the under developed and developing countries. But it would be much effective, and succeed only when developed their wings according to the local conditions. So, here, we can ask questions to ourselves that... i. Is there any need of localization of literature in India? ii. Is it possible to localization of education and literature in India? If yes, then how?

**Objective of the study:** This writing is analytical in nature, this aims at expand the knowledge of localization of social work literature, it emphasize on need and application. This paper emphasizes the need of localization of social work in India. Even though, there is huge literature available in western countries, it is not useful and adaptable in Indian situations. The need of localization of social work literature indicates the scarcity in literature.

**Collection of data:** Here, researcher collected the data from the various books, websites, E journals, bibliographies, and some remarkable you tube videos. Later, narrated and described preconceive and applied knowledge.

### Literature review and conceptual understanding

The thinker, writer *Osei Hwedie* (1993), describes the word Indigenization is concerned with the use of appropriate methods, philosophies, ideas, values, norms, theories and practice which underlie social work practice<sup>2</sup>. *Walton and Abo Ei Nasar* (1988) narrated about the indigenization in detail<sup>3</sup>. Indigenous social work, a term used to describe first in North America or in Australia social work and seen by people in North America and Australia and New Zealand as specific to a form of practice with minority indigenous populations in mainly western societies<sup>4</sup>. Localization is much relevant and contemporary issue. Generally, localization of social work refers that, concepts of social work i.e. methods, values, philosophy, approaches, ideas, theories and practices must be influenced by local factors of nation including social and cultural factors. Thus, theories and models should be prepared by practitioners, social workers on the basis of contextual understanding for helping their clients. Localization of social work education refers that, giving new perspective by adding and modifying the social work literature according to the Indic knowledge, culture, traditions, values, beliefs, and philosophies. Yan (2005) proposed that inter-dependence is more important when a more mature Indigenization of social work practice is introduced in a developing country<sup>5</sup>. Localization is a process by which methods practices, ideas values, and approaches philosophies theories and models adapted to local contexts. It is not excludes the theories, knowledge belongs to western countries, but it is further modifying changing and adopting according to our Indian culture, values, traditions and environment. So that it should fit, and match to our Indian context. It is further, modifying changing and adopting according to our Indian knowledge, culture values, traditions, and environment, so that it should fit and match to our social ways of thinking, local needs and conditions.

**Status:** Why they are willing to join social work a course is because, being a profession, Social Work is having wide scope and numerous job opportunities in all the fields of society. Some Para professionals are not having the qualifications, but, they are good at practical knowledge. Some reputed private organizations have taken initiatives to training and education in

social work. Those people are directly entered in to the fields like medical and psychiatry, correctional, youth welfare, social development and industrial sectors. Social workers regulated and controlled by some professional organizations in India. Linda Kreitzer (2004), in her study states that during the middle 20th century, social work education expanded to other non-western countries<sup>6</sup>. Many consultants and professionals have visited non western countries for creating successful social work curricula so far<sup>6</sup>. According to Kendall (1985) these consultants and professionals went with the understanding that western social work knowledge was superior to local knowledge. And it would lead for acquiring knowledge and Excellency in the field of social work and development of many non western countries<sup>6</sup>. It is argued that all western social workers imposed western social work theories and techniques on developing countries without considering indigenous culture and developmental issues<sup>7</sup>. Many social thinkers, academicians believes that, curriculum system of Indian social work courses i.e. BSW, MSW should be based on and suitable for Indian context, designed with the tune of Indic knowledge, culture, religion and should meet the aim of modern curriculum. Emphasis should be given on Indian values paradigms and perspectives. In 2001, model Social work curriculum, the UGC gave preference to standardized curriculum of social work across all Indian universities. And also multiple socio-cultural and political-economic conditions were highlighted<sup>8</sup>.

Indian youths are encouraged themselves and showing interests to learn social work by taking admissions in central, state, deemed universities and private colleges in India. Various central, state, private and deemed universities are providing education in Social work today. There are number of schools, universities and primer institutions are providing training and education in social work. These are providing diploma, Bachelor degree, Master degree, M.Phil. and Doctoral Programmes in Social work. It is expanding much more because, social work is a profession, there are enormous of job opportunities are there and we can say 'Sky is the limit' in this field. Some recognizable schools and universities in India are, Delhi university, New Delhi, Jamia Milia Islamia, New Delhi, Indira Gandhi National Open University, Nirmala Niketan Mumbai, Visva-Bharati, Sriniketan, West Bengal, Devi Ahilya Vishwavidyalaya, Karve Institute Pune, Maharaja Sayyajirao University, Anand Institute (AISW), Anad, Banaras Hindu University, Madras School of Social Work, Madras, Bharathi Vidyapeet Pune, SIBER Institute Kolhapur, Bharatiyar University, Coimbatore, Rajagiri College, Kochi, Loyola College, Thiruvanthapuram. In Karnataka itself 21 Universities, Departments offering bachelors, masters, and research degrees in social work i.e. Bangalore University, Bengaluru city University, Bengaluru North University, Christ University Bangalore, NIMHANS (An institute of national importance) Bangalore, Mysore University, Mysore, Central University of Karnataka, Kadaganchi, Gulbarga University, Kalaburagi, Raichur University Yeragera, Kuvempu University, Shankaraghatta, Tumakuru University Tumkuru, Davanagere

University Davanagere, Karnatak University Dharwad, DIMHNS Dharwad, Karnataka state Akkamahadevi women's University Vijayapur, Karnataka state rural development and Panchayat Raj University, Gadag, Rani Chennamma University Belagavi, Kasturba Medical College, Manipal, Mangalore University Mangalore, Srinivas University (private University) Mangalore, School of social work, Roshani Nilaya Mangalore.

**Role of academicians and Practitioners:** Number of academicians, professors, scholars, researchers, lecturers and teachers, professionals are working in the universities, colleges and educational institutions are unfortunately unable to put their effort to expanding the knowledge and enriching the literature in India. Developing countries have borrowed or imported social work from the western countries or adopted from the American practices. Even after eight decades of social work education in India, still it is not recognized by the Indian government. The inappropriateness of Euro-American social work in the curriculum taught at various Indian universities has been highlighted by various social work scholars. Social work scholars always suggest for creative indigenous social work to be taught in Indian schools of social work<sup>8</sup>.

Social work educator (SWE's) plays very important role in generates the literature and local knowledge. They should meet and fulfill the indigenous needs of social work along with meeting the academic standards and qualifications. They should play and fulfill the role of "Creation of indigenous knowledge based social work literature", as it is one of their responsibility and greatest contribution to the literature of their expert. It is not only the role of SWE's to promote and enrich indigenous knowledge based literature of social work, But, we cannot forget the efforts and contribution of the field based practitioners, researchers, consultants, managers, co-coordinators, counselors, social workers, volunteers, stake holders of various organizations, and professionals who directly and indirectly related to the field. The Applicable, contextual, comprehensive, models, approaches should be formulate on the basis of their ideas, views and experiences to meet the real needs and necessities of the people in the field, and that is what indigenization of social work focus to be. They are the real workers, who are working and implementing the social work related plans and programmes at the field level. So, their efforts should be encouraged and entertained.

**Need:** Since social work is directly related to predominant spheres of our lives, developing countries are not equal to developed countries in terms of social structure, problems, economy, culture, ethics, and religious practices. Social work in India should be indigenize and reproduce some own literature according to our culture, ethics and practices. Social work education and practice can benefit immensely for the aforementioned Literature should be incorporate together with Indic culture and value system. Social work should be indigenized in Indian context and conditions. While, adopting models from urbanized America, in India social work profession must be able to reach the thrust needs of the people and nation's

priority. Perhaps, urbanization happening in India, our country is having more villages i.e. rural than urban areas, poor and marginalized people are facing difficulties in their life spheres. So, all the practices including models, approaches, theories, philosophies, and techniques need to modify according to our local context. Somnoma Valerie Ouedraogo and Barbara Wedler have opined that Indigenization is a kind of adoption, a process in which ideas, methods and practices are adapted to local contexts. This is the existing local knowledge and indigenous recourses such as relationships and networks<sup>9</sup>. They further discuss the Postcolonial approach; indigenization is about the decolonization of social work. The process of this inquiry demands consciousness of colonized mind when developing social works concepts and practices informed with socio-cultural, economical, political and environmental realities<sup>9</sup>.

A little empirical social work research inspired by indigenous conceptions and methodologies are available. That leads us to following questions. What does indigenization mean in social work literature? What does it suggest for social work practice and education? Is indigenization benefit to social work development<sup>10</sup>?. Several debates are going on this matter around the world. Actually these questions became academic matters now. We need to find the answer for these questions within an academic boundary. The Need of localization of social work is increasing, why because, due to inadequacies of literature and practices, western theories and practices unable to meet the Indian standards and problems. In this contrast, *Kendall* states that, theories and models that have developed in developing countries, predominantly, the existing practices of profession in all countries.

**Role of NGO's and Professionals:** Development sector is largely controlled and managed by welfare or Nongovernmental organizations which are doing pioneer work towards the overall development of society<sup>11</sup>. Despite, numerous non government and social welfare organizations are serving indulge needs of the people; policies of government would impact lot on society. Here, the enormous and considerable workforce is working and these workforces directly related to the field. They are real workers and they may be professional social workers, managers, co-coordinators, Para professionals/semi professionals and voluntary social workers. NGO sectors as well as the development sectors are being dominated by the professional social workers<sup>11</sup>. They are responsible for policy making, designing the plans and programmes and any successful implementation of programme is depending upon the mixed approaches and methods of profession. In nutshell, they are real players, recourses, and backbone of our profession. Their influence is much in social welfare practices in India. We can say they are contributing a lot to development of social work.

**Out comings of the study:** After the comprehensive and illustrative study of above cited topic, the researcher would able to come out with these recommendations. i. Since, social work

is practiced directly into the fields, Indigenization of social work is very essential in every nation. Because, every nations situation is different. ii. Localization would help to adopt and grow our profession in local conditions. iii. Our profession seems like most appropriate and fitted if, developed with local/contextual models. iv. There is need to analyze the existing curriculum across India, academicians have to put their effort in making localization of social work. v. Localization of social work makes help in growth of social work in India.

## Conclusion

As we know pupils and practitioners of Social work experiencing the scarcity of Indic literature of social work and this may lead for lagging any profession. The consecutive efforts for localization of literature may enrich our profession in India. Recent developments and dynamics will have been transmuting the path of the profession, it redefining very concept of the profession in India. Western critics, veterans and practitioners recommend for localization of social work because they know probable effects of practicing 'western social work' in India.

## References

1. Dash, B. M., Kumar, M., Singh, D. P., & Shukla, S. (Eds.). (2020). *Indian social work*. Taylor & Francis.
2. Osei-Hwedie, K. (1993). The challenge of social work in Africa: Starting the indigenisation process. *Journal of Social development in Africa*, 8(1), 19-30.
3. Walton, R. G. & Abo El Nasr, M. M. (1988). Indigenization and authentization in terms of social work in Egypt. *International social work*, 31(2), 135-144.
4. Gray, M., & Hetherington, T. (2016). Indigenization, indigenous social work and decolonization: Mapping the theoretical terrain. In *Decolonizing social work*, pp. 25-41. Routledge.
5. Yuen-Tsang, A. & Ip, D. (2009). Indigenising social work education: Experiences of the students from the People's Republic of China in Hong Kong. *Critical Edge Issues in Social Work and Social Policy: Comparative Research Perspectives*, 165-180.
6. Kreitzer, L. (2004). Indigenization of social work education and practice: A participatory action research project in Ghana. Doctoral dissertation, University of Calgary, Calgary, AB, CA.
7. Cowley, J., & Howlett, S. (1982). Professional Imperialism: Social Work in the Third World. *Critical Soc. Pol'y*, 2, 114.
8. Prasad, S., Actovin, C. A., & Dash, B. M. (2021). A study on relevance of social work curriculum in selected social work institutions in India. *African Journal of Social Work*, 11(6), 344-353.
9. Sommnoma Valerie Ouedraogo and Barbara Wedler (2020). Westernisation-Indiginisation in social work education and practice: Understanding indigenization in international social work, [HTTPS://doi.org/10.33673/OOA20201/9](https://doi.org/10.33673/OOA20201/9)
10. Yunong H. & Xiong Z. (2008). A reflection on the indigenization discourse in social work. *International Social Work*, 51(5), 611-622.
11. Jacob, J. (2016). Current prospects of social work in India and abroad. *International Journal of Current Research and Modern Education*, 1(1), 452-453.
12. Banks, N. (2021). The Role and Contributions of Development NGOs to Development Cooperation: What Do We Know?. *The Palgrave Handbook of Development Cooperation for Achieving the 2030 Agenda: Contested Collaboration*, 671-688.
13. Payne, M. (2020). *Modern social work theory*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
14. Trevithick, P. (2005). *Social work skills*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
15. Ernest Osas Ugiagbe (2014). Social work is context-bound: The need for indigenization of social work practice in Nigeria. *Sage Journals*. Arnon Bar-On (2014). Indigenous knowledge: Ends or means, *Sage Journals*.
16. Ugiagbe, E. O. (2015). Social work is context-bound: The need for indigenization of social work practice in Nigeria. *International Social Work*, 58(6), 790-801.
17. Watts, L. (2021). Social work: Professional development and training. *Australian Social Work*, 74(1), 1-3.
18. Saleebey, D. (1996). The strengths perspective in social work practice: Extensions and cautions. *Social work*, 41(3), 296-305.
19. Sheridan, M. J., & Hemert, K. A. V. (1999). The role of religion and spirituality in social work education and practice: A survey of student views and experiences. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 35(1), 125-141.
20. Simon, J. D., Boyd, R., & Subica, A. M. (2022). Refocusing intersectionality in social work education: Creating a brave space to discuss oppression and privilege. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 58(1), 34-45.