



**THE STUDY OF SOCIAL WORK CONTRIBUTED BY “UNSUNG HEROES”
FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WEAKER SECTORS OF SOCIETY IN AND
AROUND PUNE**

(Savitribai Phule Pune University, Pune sponsored research project)

Dr. Shilpa R. Kulkarni

Matrix School of Management Studies

Abstract

A powerful and effective social change is an individual's desire to express his willingness to be a catalyst of change. The very motive to help the society is a big booster; and the impact of leadership and commitment, which is generated, creates a noticeable difference in the community. Social work has long back passed the infantry level and has taken a big leap in all fields universally in last few decades thereby creating number of opportunities to millions of people. This paper presents the great work done by people who are not in lime light and with their selfless and untiring work; they have marked a pivotal role in the upliftment of the society.

The emphasis is done on those social workers who have no big setups, no political backing, neither strong financial backgrounds but only a strong passion to help the needy and weaker sectors of the society. Another aspect is of inclusive growth, which means that the growth process is associated with increase in average opportunities available to the downtrodden, poor segments of the society.

The paper has attempted to understand the motivational factors by which they initiate the programme, the financial models of such institutions, the effect of such social work on beneficiaries, and how these beneficiaries intend to carry this idea further.

Key words: Catalyst of change, motivational factors, beneficiaries

1. Introduction and scope of research

The stereotype perception of management in social worker is changing fast into innovators and social entrepreneurs for our society. Today's social entrepreneurs are from

different fields right from students, house wives, doctors, engineers, school kids or anybody who are proving the nation that you don't require any degree or merits or big money to create any positive change in the community; you only require a burning desire, team spirit and vision for the desired change to happen. Slowly the times in rural India are also changing where people are facing sanitation problems, water and light issues, poor education, poverty, etc. But the initiatives taken by social workers in rural areas are not considering these as hurdles but as challenges and opportunities for better India.

These social workers are real heroes who don't care for name, fame and money. They just untiringly pour their efforts for the upliftment of the society. Work contributed by such "unsung heroes" can bring groundbreaking change for the nation.

The scope of this study is to find the motivational factors and various barriers they face when they take up the task. The issues in implementation related to government licensing, federal guidelines, and related bodies plays an important role while carrying out the social work. The research throws light on the case studies of such social unsung heroes, who are not in the limelight, nor they have strong political contacts and neither have huge finance backup. Sheer will and determination to act as catalyst of change is their motive. Relentless work for the downtrodden is their objective.

2. Social work imperative

The term social work indicates working for the betterment of society. The social worker needs to identify the problems which individuals or that area are facing and find out the corrective measures to lessen it, improve it or eradicate it by going to the grass root levels. In this research leadership qualities, team spirit, HR acumen, motivational qualities are all reflected through social work which are considered as important base in management studies and social sciences.

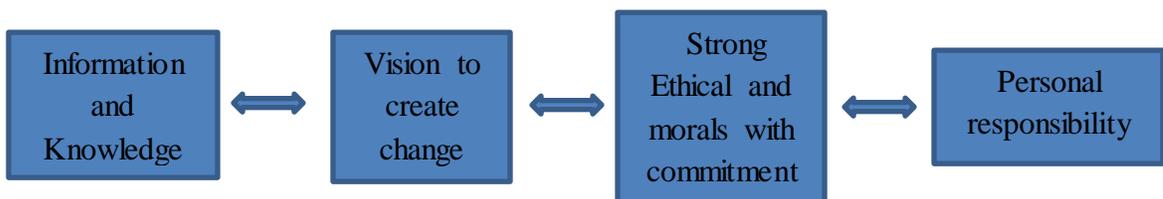


Figure 1- Basic key elements for social entrepreneur

Information and knowledge, Vision, ethical and moral commitment, personal responsibility are the key elements, which are woven and roped together and cannot function effectively without each other. Social entrepreneur possess these basic key elements. Social work base is built on strong base of ethics and commitment that creates positive, energetic, and professional relationship with the group. They should be able to maintain fine equilibrium between rights and responsibility of the community and the legitimate needs. Different people with different culture, customs, and beliefs have different styles of living; so while working within these communities it is essential to work carefully and sensitively. Social workers should be able to foresee the implications and reciprocate the results leaving their personal egos and attitudes aside.

Communication plays a very important role here. Communicating with people facing problems in that society and at the same time maintaining a balance with the main Sarpanch or Patils or the main stakeholders is a critical responsibility social workers goes through. Breaking orthodox customs and convincing them for change is a herculean task, which they often face during their work.

3. Parameters to become a creative catalyst of change

These are the guiding principles for any person who wish to take up social work as their career or who has the urge to create positive difference in the society. The social welfare education courses are changing with changing times and new designs for progressive social growth with new parameters are getting implemented to create better workers who are:

- Ready to travel to remote places for the upliftment of downtrodden areas.
- High level of commitment towards their goal.
- Passion to create difference in the society and stay positive in critical situations.
- Not just sitting with ideas but proper implementation of plans.
- Acting as creative medium for beneficial change.
- Taking proper permissions from legal bodies, government before carrying out any activities.
- Regular follow-ups.
- Incorporating quality control check system.

- Serving and treating equally without any biasness.
- Keeping the confidentiality of persons if the situation demands.

These are the guiding principles for any person who wish to take up social work as their career or who has the urge to create positive difference in the society.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Sampling design

Researcher randomly started contacting people who contributed for the betterment of the society through friend's, relatives and personal contacts in and around Pune region. Around 60 social workers were contacted and the data finally collected was of 45 social workers because of certain limitations like they were not available for interviews after many reminders and some didn't reply back through mail inspite of followup.

After brainstorming sessions principal investigator and co- investigator decided on the title of the research. Then the further step was to formulate objectives. Initial pilot survey played a guiding role in understanding motivational factors and financial models with the help of questionnaire.

Methodology used was **case study approach** and discussion based was on qualitative analysis. **Interdisciplinary relevance:** Factors like motivational, leadership, social awareness are related to Management, HR development and Social Sciences.

Sample size: Snowball sampling was done and the experiences of social workers doing variety of work in different fields were tapped. Sample size selected the above was 45.

4.2 Review of research and development in the subject

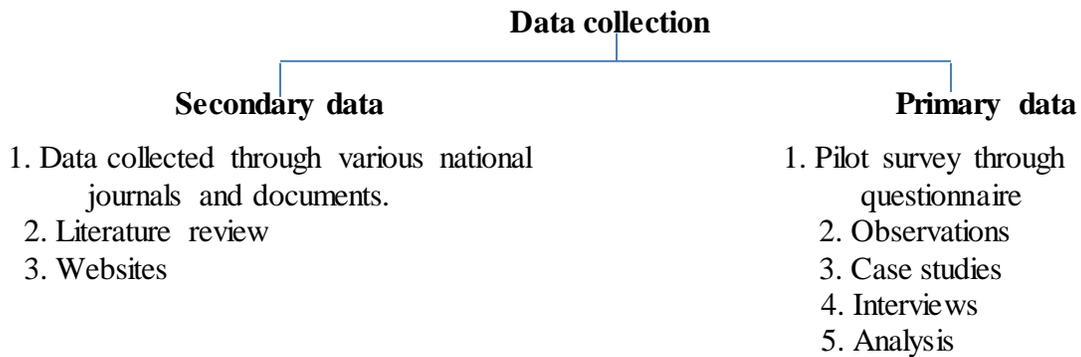
1) National status: The study covers areas in and around Pune.

2) International status- Since the research is aimed at understanding the grass root level factors of the social workers in and around Pune and to study their interpersonal skill sets. It is not connected with the international status.

Live case studies added more strength to the pilot survey questionnaire.

Area covered: The research project covers the entire Pune region and some parts of Mumbai. Geographical areas covered: Aundh, Deccan, Karve road, Ferguson college road, Camp, Baner, Chembur, Borivli, Vile Parle.

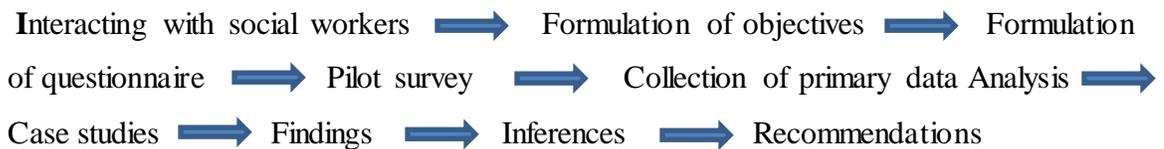
4.3 Survey done by collecting secondary and primary data



4.4 Areas of operations

1. Teaching in slum areas
2. Helping orphan children, child abuse, welfare
3. Keeping green clean environment, river cleaning
4. Teaching blind children and making them independent
5. Uplifting the weaker sectors
6. Working with adivasis and conducting medical camps in remote areas
7. Educating and adopting spastics and taking care of them in their old age till the end of their lives
8. Fighting against cruelty of animals
9. Raising action against abortion of female fetus
10. Creating AIDS awareness
11. Military social work

4.5 Research methodology flow map



5. Case Study

Researcher's while doing the survey went for a case study approach and collected around 45 case studies which acted as a real booster for the study. Because of the page limit constraint one of the following case study is highlighted.

Case Study of Sneh Bandhan Trust:

Vandana Kshirsagar and her late husband Rajiv Kshirsagar established Sneh bandhan trust in 2001 with a noble thought of doing something worthwhile for the community with like minded friends. The trust conducts social activities thereby spreading awareness in the society.

They first adopted an orphanage home 'Anurag' with 75 children at Ambarnath. . They have been providing groceries, toiletries, educational materials , LCD projectors or just plain gifts. The orphanage home is managed by Dr. Ila Paul and also runs two schools one in English and other in Marathi medium. There are students coming from nearby areas also to study besides Anurag kids. Because of space constraints for Anurag home Snehbandhan trust pooled in resources for the construction of school building thereby increasing the capacity to accommodate additional students. Sneh Bandhan conduct various types of workshops for the children and the teachers of Anurag's school, to help them and be in touch with the outside world.

Their well wishers contributions in all their projects through direct donations or supporting them in their fund raising drives by attending the charity shows or advertising in the souvenir is praise worthy and heartening, which allowed them to carry on their charitable trust activities successfully.

The trust have also successfully completed noteworthy projects that includes 26th July 2006 floods. Snehbandhan trust was the 1st NGO to reach 8 far flung villages around Badlapur after the floods. Their volunteers made trips to these affected villages with clothes, medicine, food stuff and also assisted the doctors.

The trust is active in organ donation movement along with the nodal agency the Zonal Transplant Co-ordination Center. The members of the trust give many presentations to

spread awareness of organ, skin, eye, blood donation among the masses on various occasions of conferences, camps, street plays, Ganpati festivals at prominent places.

Other activities like :

- Donations to old age home
- Conducting entertainment programme for the old age home
- Umbai darshan trip for adivasi kids along with their parents
- Felicitation of students of villages around badlapur who successfully passed ssc
- Renovation of balwadi, where the children studied sitting under leaked roofs
- Providing financial help for medical treatment to the economically weaker people
- Providing finance for many deserving students to complete their education are some of them.
- Conducting various workshops for school children and teachers on creativity, hygiene and safety, innovation ,yogas etc. to help them step in the outside world.

Observations of the case study

It has been found after having the dialogues with the trustees that in the beginning when they started the Sneh bandhan trust they too had their fears, anxieties, and worries; but with an aim in mind, the spirit, strength, and the passion they went ahead with a positive attitude . When asked to the trustees if their beneficiaries spread a good word in the society then the answer received was overwhelming. They said the beneficiaries do mention about the help received from us. Their family members, their close friends, their far relatives have not only shown keen interest in each activity of the trust but also shouldered responsibilities in conducting them during the past 13 years.The trustees mentioned that this social activity not only helps the society but also has helped us in many ways like confidence building, improved our presentation skills, go-getter attitude , working in team leaving our personal egos aside, balancing work of house hold activities and social activities.

6. Objectives

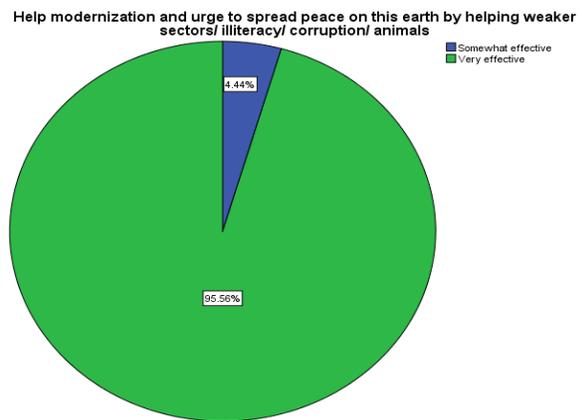
- 1) To study motivational factors of such social workers by which they initiate program.
- 2) To study the financial support of such institutions.
- 3) To study the effect of such social work on the beneficiaries.
- 4) To study whether the beneficiaries intend to carry the idea further.

6.1 Objective:1-To study motivational factors of such social workers by which they initiate program. Following motivational factors that ignited the spark to take social work were considered.

a. Help modernization and urge to spread peace on this earth by helping weaker sectors / illiteracy/corruption/animals. Frequency Table is as follows:

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Somewhat effective	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Very effective	43	95.6	95.6	100.0

It has been observed that 95.56% respondents have shown concern towards peace on this earth by helping society.

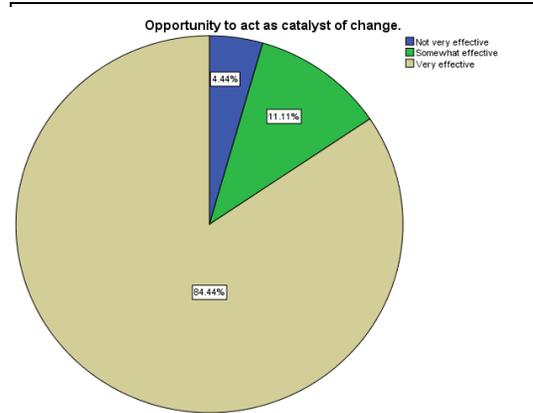


Graph 6.1 (a)

b. Opportunity to act as catalyst of change

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not very effective	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Somewhat effective	5	11.1	11.1	15.6
Very effective	38	84.4	84.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed from the response of the respondents that 84.44% believes that their help to weaker sectors definitely acts as catalyst of change. It surely creates difference in the thinking process of the community and helps them to lead their lives in better ways.

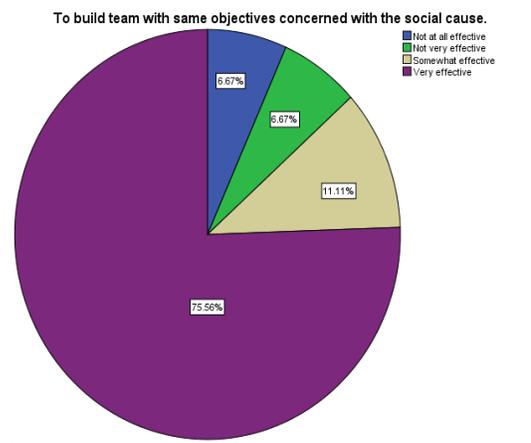


Graph 6.1 (b)

c. To build team with same objectives concerned with the social cause

Frequency Table 6.1.(c)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all effective	3	6.7	6.7	6.7
Not very effective	3	6.7	6.7	13.3
Somewhat effective	5	11.1	11.1	24.4
Very effective	34	75.6	75.6	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed from the response of the respondents that 75.56% believes in building atmosphere with same goals so that their strong team can create a substantial positive change for the betterment of the society. If all like minded people come together for any cause the impact is effective.



Graph 6.1 (c)

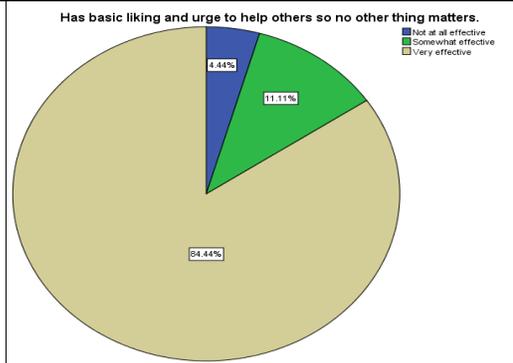
d. Has basic liking and urge to help others so no other thing matters

Frequency table 6.1.(d)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all effective	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Somewhat effective	5	11.1	11.1	15.6
Very effective	38	84.4	84.4	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that 84.44% respondents are obsessed with the passion to help the society and contribute their time and energy for the benefit of weaker sectors and green environment. So these unsung heroes have basic urge and desire for social activity. Name, fame, money from this line is not important for these social workers.

Graph 6.1 (c)



6.2 Objective: To study the financial support of such institutions.

Factors for analysis are considered as follows:

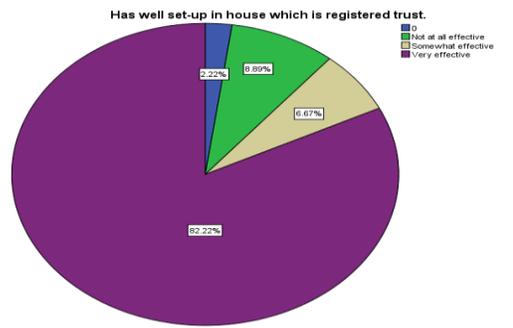
a. Well setup in house registered trust

Frequency table 6.2 (a)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
0	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
Not at all effective	4	8.9	8.9	11.1
Somewhat effective	3	6.7	6.7	17.8
Very effective	37	82.2	82.2	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that around 82.22% respondents operate from inhouse registered trust. They do not have offices or place; so sheer desire and burning passion have helped the unsung heroes to stride their way amongst all odds.

Graph 6.2 (a)

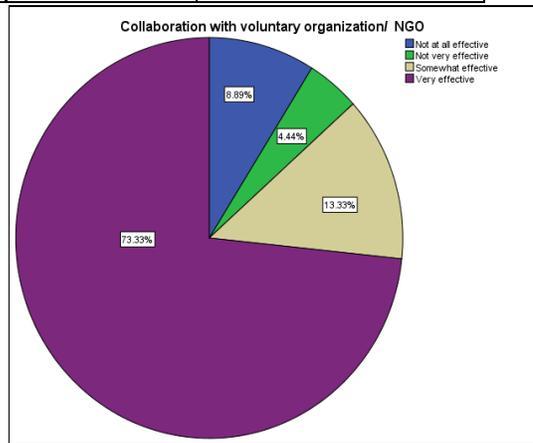


b. Collaboration with voluntary organization/ NGO.

Frequency table 6.2.(b)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all effective	4	8.9	8.9	8.9
Not very effective	2	4.4	4.4	13.3
Somewhat effective	6	13.3	13.3	26.7
Very effective	33	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that 73.33% respondents take help and assistance from voluntary organizations and NGOs. As guidance and support is always required and more helping hands helps to solve the problems faster so collaborations with NGOs and other social organizations is beneficial.

Graph 6.2 (b)

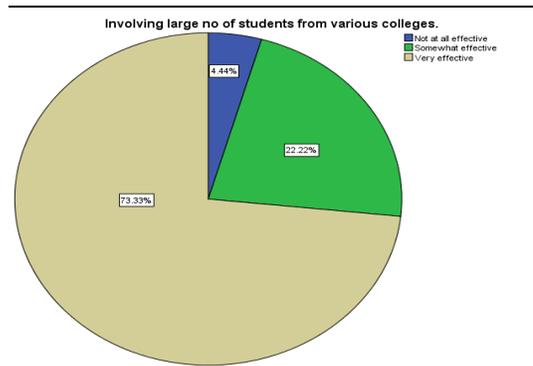


c. Involving large number of students from various colleges

Frequency table 6.2.(c)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all effective	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Somewhat effective	10	22.2	22.2	26.7
Very effective	33	73.3	73.3	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that 73.33% respondents feel that today's youth have immense potential to contribute for the society. So if the social organizations tap the energy and channelize the students' mind for doing the welfare and upliftment of the society it will be definitely beneficial for the nation. Colleges and schools do a lot of social

Graph 6.2 (c)



activities and that can help to pull funds for the needy. So some social organizations are backed by large number of student's fraternity for the welfare of the community.

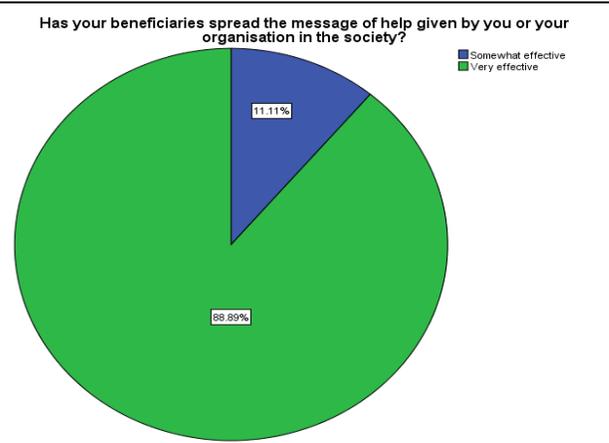
6.3 Objective: To study the effect of such social work on the beneficiaries.

Following factors were taken into consideration for analysis :

a. Have your beneficiaries spread the message of help given by you or your organization in the society ?

Frequency table 6.3.(a)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Somewhat effective	5	11.1	11.1	11.1
Very effective	40	88.9	88.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that 88.89% social workers feel that the weaker sectors who have been benefited always have spread good messages of the social workers who helped them to uplift their lifestyle. They have in turn recommended others who are in need of help the names/ organizations who have helped them.

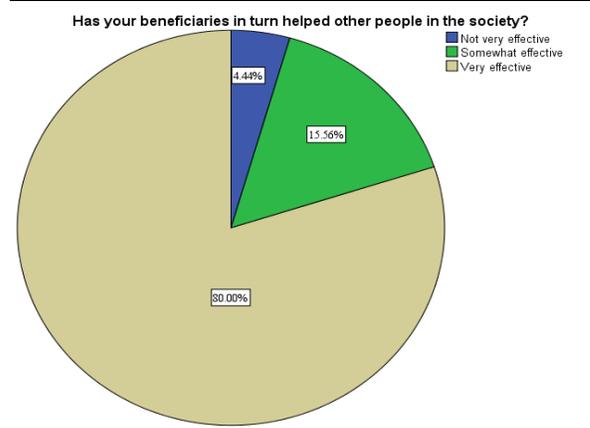


Graph 6.3 (a)

b. Have your beneficiaries in turn helped other people in the society?

Frequency table 6.3.(b)				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not very effective	2	4.4	4.4	4.4
Somewhat effective	7	15.6	15.6	20.0
Very effective	36	80.0	80.0	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

It has been observed that the 80% of social workers feel that their beneficiaries have taken active role in not only spreading positive messages but also has helped to build strong social activities of collecting funds, helping the other needy people.



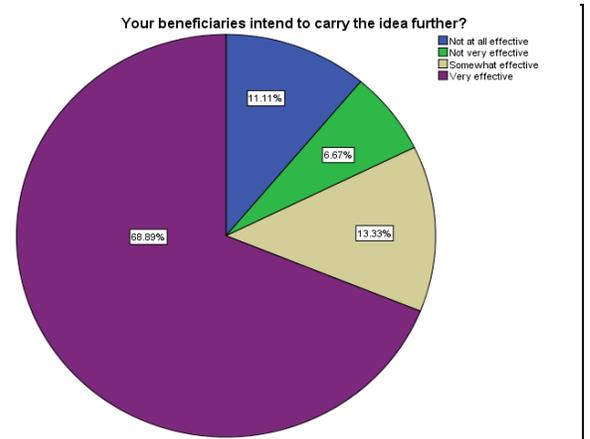
Graph 6.3 (b)

6.4 Objective:

1.To study whether the beneficiaries intend to carry the idea further.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Not at all effective	5	11.1	11.1	11.1
Not very effective	3	6.7	6.7	17.8
Somewhat effective	6	13.3	13.3	31.1
Very effective	31	68.9	68.9	100.0
Total	45	100.0	100.0	

Around 68.89% social workers feels that their beneficiaries tends to carry the ideas further and spread a good network amongst the society. Sometimes in case of emmergencies they all come together to solve any problems, issues faced by the people.



Graph 6.4

7. Hurdles experienced by unsung heroes in the initial stages of work.

Researcher also wanted to know the hurdles faced by these unsung heroes. So following points were taken into consideration which revealed the barriers that were initially faced by the social workers while carrying out their activities. Different hurdles were faced as per the type of help and social work they did.

a) **Initially there was no support from the society** : In the initial stages around 22.22% social workers did jumped into this activity on their own . The community or society support was lacking. But that did not wavered off their confidence. They formed small teams and sometimes worked in a group of three to four and started creating positive changes in the society. Whereas 22.22% respondents felt that sometimes there is a support but not that strong enough; so it actually does'nt matter and is not very effective. Social workers do work untiringly to bring improvement on various issues of the society.

b) **Criticism from society:** It has been observed that 22.22% respondents have faced criticism from the the society. Various social workers carry out different projects some on AIDS, some on rape cases some on kushtarogis, some on spastics. So it happens that such social workers do not get adequate help from the society. Many families feel that the person from their house should not help these affected people and it is not their responsibility. So when social workers approach such families for help then they were criticised. But now slowly over a period of time the importance of their work has been spreading and hence they have started receiving many helping hands from the society. Whereas 42.22% respondents do fall into not at all effective bracket and do not get any criticism from the society as their projects are welomed from the society or the community. They get good response and support and many times fanancial backing also. (projects like schools, colleges, spreading literacy, digging bore wells.)

c) **Problems faced due to lack of space:** It has been observed that 57.78 % respondents in the initial working days of their social work felt space problems . This was experienced especially with social workers carrying out activities in the areas of animal rescues and accidents / teaching in slum areas. Space problem used to be a major concern to keep

animals or in case of teaching the children they used to be many in number and hence accomodation used to be difficult. Whereas 17.8 % respondents did not faced major problems due to lack of space and 20.00% respondents not at all faced space problems as the area of working for these social workers are different. (environmentalist/military social work etc)

d) **Geographical problems due to communication mode:** It has been observed that 40 % respondents did faced geographical problems due to communication modes. Generally the social workers who are carrying out work in adivasi areas, where language is a barrier, or working in areas of remote places where the people are unable to understand your views faced these hurdles in the beginning. Due to long and remote distances the help was not given in time. The means of communication, the telephone lines in the beginning when they started the work was in very primitive way. But over the years roads were built, light connections were given. Telephone line came and the access to these areas became better than before. Many social groups also started approaching these adivasi, vanvasi areas to shower help. Whereas 33.33% respondents did not faced any geographical problems due to lack of communication because of the work they were into like uplifting weaker sectors, teaching, helping orphan homes.

e) **Lack of medical facility:** It has been observed that the response is mixed as 40.00 % respondents and 28.89% respondents express no lack of medical facility as their areas of work does not include medical help. Whereas 20.00 % respondents express their opinion on lack of medical facility especially social workers who are working for animal rescues and accidental cases, social groups working with adivasis feel that many adivasis die due to lack of diagonasis of diseases, snake bites and lack timely help of medical facilities. Over period of years improvement is happening and medical camps do get conducted in adivasi regions.

8. Organizational Development Aspect

It has been observed through case studies that they are just not simple social workers but are real social entrepreneurs. For them their product is their activity.

e.g. For people who are teaching their products for school is the development of children.

- For people who are working for organ donation their products are the beneficiaries.
- For those who are fighting against cruelty of animals their products are animals.
- For those who are fighting to keep the environment clean and green their products are nature, human beings, the entire surrounding which is benefited.

It has been observed that the social entrepreneurs possess administrative capacity without which they cannot function systematically. All of them do not have taken degree like masters in social work, or they are not HR professionals but they still possess HR qualities like spreading their network, using their contacts, maintaining public relations, acting as team leaders.

They do possess entrepreneurial qualities like they have started with one activity and now have expanded into several other activities of social work. They are creating confidence in the mind of donors that whatever donations they are collecting is getting utilized for the welfare of the downtrodden and the needy people. That creates confidence in the minds of the donors to contribute money for betterment.

Example : A classic literature review researchers would like to put forward is the case of Inderjit Khurana. She was nominated for "The World's Children's Prize for The Rights of the Child". It all started in the year 1985, Ruchika Social Service Organization with few committed volunteers started working for street children removing them from downtrodden areas and providing them with safety, food, hygiene, education.



Inderjit Khurana

With lot of efforts and challenges and burning desire to help the children on streets a small group of unsung heroes have now established an organization where their target has reached 5000 children. They are into various activities like helping HIV/AIDS awareness, program on hygiene and medicine check ups, having mobile vans reaching out to schools, conducting community meetings, functional literacy programs etc. It inspiring to learn that some children after completing their literacy program had enrolled for vocational training. They get placement in tourism areas as bell boys, room boys, cooks.

9. Finding and Suggestions

From the above research work done by 'Unsung Heroes' it has been concluded that sheer determination and burning desire to create improvements in the society is the key for their remarkable contribution towards society/ community and in turn towards the Nation. It has been observed that perseverance is the main factor which gets highlighted in their work. **Perseverance when mixed with desire and passion makes an irresistible combination of success and these social workers are excellent in achieving it.** They are not greedy of coming in limelight or media publicity. Following common characteristics the researchers have identified which marks them different from others are as follows: A definite purpose of social work backed by burning desire for its fulfilment.

- ❖ A definite plan which is expressed in continuous action.
- ❖ A mind closed from all negativities.
- ❖ A friendly alliance to maintain good relations with people.
- ❖ A correct attitude with no ego involved.
- ❖ A character bearing good moral and ethics.
- ❖ A non corrupted personality.

These were the common traits which were highlighted in most of the unsung heroes. These social entrepreneurs are keen in a) helping to built modernization by uplifting weaker sectors of the society. b) They act as a positive change factor by improving the

conditions of the people around or acting as catalyst of change in the environment. c) They are with progressive thoughts so all people with similar mentality together come and form teams built on common objectives. d) These unsung heroes have urge, fire under their belly and basic liking to help others, to shower kindness; to support the downtrodden as a result no other things come in their way. **They are focus on their goals and are ready to face all challenges.** e) All social workers are not from super rich and strong financial backgrounds. Some are teachers, some are social workers, some are working in companies, some are IT professionals, some are house wives so they belong to various strata of income levels. They have started their social activities by forming small team of like minded people and have established trust to carry out their activities legally from their houses. Over a period of time some of them have purchased offices and have started operations from there. f) Social workers take support from NGOs and other voluntary social groups for their guidance. It helps them to spread their network and get contacts for donations and grants. g) It has been observed that social workers are supported by today's college going youths. Awareness at all levels be it crime/ green environment/ pollution/ politics/ education etc at all levels has increased. **Youngsters are full with energy and has tremendous potential to cause a positive change.** So involving large number of students is beneficial for any activity to be carried out. h) Its heartening to find out that beneficiaries are grateful for the help showered on them. They do express their gratitude and spread the message; thereby blessing goodwill to the social workers. Some of them are highly motivated and have themselves become catalyst of change. **This shows the chain reaction of noble cause acting as fuel and taking the engine ahead.**

Suggestions:

- Researchers suggest that regional training centers should be set up to inculcate awareness for social work. In this the main lead can be taken by colleges. Youths are

- the future of India so if they are trained properly then they can be of tremendous help for the nation.
- Researchers suggest that counselling through aid of committed NGOs, psychologists, should be provided to existing people who are facing problems. This will help them to improve their confidence levels. Their vision can be broadened. New ideas, new hopes can be developed. So NGOs, counselors can be of great help. Societal and cultural atmosphere often influences people in everyday life. Newspapers, magazines, mobile phones, TV channels, media, movies, internet etc offers lot of solutions on many problems be it psychological or social.
 - Researchers suggest that guidance and followup cell should be set up to take care of various social issues. It is often seen that improvement is done and the problem is solved. But it is necessary to see if that remedy is continued and carry forward or forgotten and left half.

Bibliography

1. Social work: An integrated approach by Sanjay Bhattacharya, Deep and Deep Publication Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi.
2. Social problems in India by Selwyn Stanley, Allied Publication.Pvt.New Delhi.
3. The leadership challenge by Barry Z Posner and James M. Kouzes, Willey Publication.Pvt.Ltd.
4. Doel, M. & Low, S. (2005). Modern social work practice. Teaching and learning in practice settings. Aldershot, UK: Ashgate.
5. Critical Social work- An interdisciplinary journal dedicated to social justice- By Marcus Herz and Thomas Johansson. Sweden
6. Economy of India under the British Raj - wikipedia
7. Leadership By- Rudolph W. Giuliani & Ken Kuronl, Hyperion Pub. Pvt. Ltd., New York.

8. worldschildrensprize.org/inderjit-khurana
