

Curriculum for Rural Social Work Course

National Council of Rural Institutes
Department of Higher Education
Ministry of Human Resource Development
Government of India

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Introduction

The proposed curriculum has been developed as a part of group discussion held by group of Social Work Educators and Public Administration faculty from across nine Telengana State Universities. The objective calls for the Development of the student and the community through Community Service through the medium of social work. Social work being an intense medium for community engagement makes it a viable and apt form of engagement. Hence it is the need of the hour that Rural Community Engagement curriculum on social work should be developed which can be offered as a compulsory course to all the students. It has been discussed that in order to bridge the gap between the expectations and actual practices, there is a need to integrate the two important aspects viz., Living and Learning.

Characteristics

The following core characteristics form the basic frame work of the community based learning model which are prime factors that are considered while developing the social work education curriculum.

1. Flexibility
2. Creativity.
3. Passion.
4. Empathy
5. Trustworthiness
6. Competence
7. Sense of Humor

Curriculum Design

- Objectives
- Module Development
- Methodology
- Assessment
- Outcomes

Objectives

To instill interest and concern among the students about the dynamics of rural society, to develop community based learning, help the students to identify and respond to community needs, Give insights of broader social issues and its impact on rural communities, inculcate value and multiple perspectives of problem solving and foster students' intellectual capabilities and development as citizens, the following Objectives have been framed for the social work education curriculum.

1. Make use of effective communication to employ a planned change approach which supports client interventions for engagement
2. With diverse populations, use both ethnic- sensitive and socially-sensitive, generalist practical approaches for rural participation

3. Apply critical thinking skills in problem solving with social work values and ethics, on diverse human issues for rural solution engineering
4. Distinguish professional social work ethics, especially the values of self-determination, empowerment, and regard for diversity that enables community engagement
5. Conduct social research to evaluate the social work interventions, as well as to evaluate agency and community practice

Rationale

Community engagement can be a big game changer for rural communities. Though traditional extension and outreach programs are desperately trying to bring in the desired outcomes, are just not sufficient to heal the rift between higher education and community engagement. Though the existing curriculum covers major aspects of community engagement, there still exists a vacuum in the learning methodologies and field work practices. Social work is a practice profession with components of practice learning opportunities. As against the conventional learning practices, the thrust is on trainings through guest lectures and workshops from civic society experts. Exposure to varied interesting forms of community engagement techniques like Role play, folk lore, theatre etc. should be part of the Social work course curriculum. Inadequate communication and interpersonal skills hinder the progress in community engagement, which requires consistent training sessions to address the same. Audio visual method is an effective form of teaching-learning process which is possible only with adequate infra structure to facilitate the same. Interaction with community engagement experts and practitioners is essential for the capacity building of students. Periodic engagement with the prominent community engagement members will ensure the varied dimensions of community living and engagement. Brain storming sessions, Group discussions and assignments and case studies will ensure the students to get an empathetic view of the rural scenario and its consistent concerns. This calls for the conduction of systematic and periodic faculty development programmes in collaboration with the civic society experts and field practitioners. There is a void created by the NGO sectors through unqualified social workers and lack of mentorship mechanism which needs intervention for effective community engagement. Lack of commitment from students with indifferent attitude has been a major cause for the decline of NGO support and guidance. In Social work, there is a mandatory requirement for the awareness of interdisciplinary tools and techniques for community engagement. Further, the Social work students need the motivation and guidance through workshops which will throw light on the available career prospects in this arena.

The need of the hour, is an approach that extends beyond service and outreach to actual 'engagement'. Hence, higher education which is generally organized into highly specialized disciplines requires a paradigm shift towards a more systemic perspective, emphasizing collaboration, cooperation and partnership. This is a humble approach towards the long journey of community engagement through social work.

The various forms of community engagement are: (PRIA, 2014):

1. *Linking 'formal' learning and the local community*
2. *Researching with the community*
3. *Sharing knowledge with the community*
4. *Designing new curriculum and courses*
5. *Involving local practitioners as teachers*

6. Social Innovation by students

Proposed Model of Curriculum

The curriculum is for four consequent semesters. It is interdisciplinary in nature and more practical oriented with one common paper for both the core and the elective course and one specialization paper with 2 credits for theory and 2 credits for practicum and carries a maximum of 100 marks.

Rural Community Engagement CORE PAPER

S.N	Module Title	Module Content	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	Numb of Classes
1.	Community organization	Concept, meaning, definition, philosophy, scope and nature of community organization in India. Community organization, client system and perception	Lecture, Demonstration	6+6
2.	Community organization	Principles, process, skills, techniques approaches and strategies. The role of community organizer in rural and tribal communities.	Group discussion, Field Visit	6+12
3.	Community organization	Models of community organization. Rothman model: Locality Development, Social Planning, Social Action models. Resource Transaction Model.	Group discussion, Field Visit	6+12
4.	Community Engagement	Theory of Community Engagement School, Family and Community Partnership	Observation, Participation, Field visit	6+12
5.	Participatory Rural Appraisal	Features, Techniques and Uses. PLA and social analysis. The application of these techniques in Community Organisation. Study, review and analysis of cases/issues in community and its presentation.	Observation, Penetration, Participation, field visit	4+12
6.	Village Development	Village Development Plan including aspects and	Case Study Field Visit	4+12

	&Disaster Management Plan	process of preparation of Village Disaster Management Plan		
7	Community Based Disaster Risk Management	Community Based Organisations and Disaster Risk Reduction	Field Visit Mock Drill	4+6

Content of Concurrent Field Work

1. Studying the Community set up in detail and developing an in-depth understanding of the field and reporting their study in the form of a special report.
2. Practicing social case work with a minimum of 2 individuals; identify the problem, study, assess and develop intervention strategies for all the cases and execute the plan of intervention.
3. Practicing social group work with a minimum of two groups (Children, Women, Youth, Adults, or Occupational groups, etc.) involving its steps and principles.
4. Working with the community by involving them on one or two issues/problems by confronting the concerned community.
5. Making a minor research study on any specific problem and submitting the report as part of field work.
6. Organizing a minimum of 3 special programmes, (action programmes) by the team of students with clear division of work among themselves to meet the felt needs of the community or commemorating some International / National Days.
7. Visiting the agencies having relevance to their placement and act as resources for their clientele in promoting interaction between the agency and the community – such as MCH/NGO's, other such Government departments (with the prior permission of the Faculty Supervisor).
8. Taking part in the programmes, seminars, workshops, etc. related to community work for the enrichment of knowledge. (With the prior permission of the Faculty supervisor)

Rural Community Development Set-up

During this intensive field work training programme the students are expected to

1. Study and report about the organization – History, aims, objectives and goals,
2. Administrative structure, operational area, target group, programmes, findings and problems of the organization
3. Study the magnitude of unemployment in the community and prepare a report on its migration pattern
4. Analyze the situation and problems of rural industries and suggest the plan for man power utilization.
5. Study, work and report on the functioning, models, monitoring of SHGs and Bank linkages.
6. Work for sustainable livelihood promotion of a family or group by using livelihood strategies.
7. Involve in the micro planning of any project with the target group and report the process.

8. Study the present status of any of the development programme implemented by the Government in the rural development arena.
9. Work on meeting the community needs by using the process of community Development.
10. Involve in the micro planning of any project with the target group and report the process.
11. Engage in public relations and social advocacy activities in the organization/community.
12. Formulate pressure groups and take necessary action on particular issues in the communities.
13. Study the programmes of RCD covered in the communities and analyze the role of panchayats in Rural Community Development
14. Select any programme/service/of agency and evaluate it.
15. Plan and organize one/two day programmes to create awareness among the target population on any specific social issue.
16. Assist the agency in fund raising and publicity campaigns.
17. Study and report the steps in community based planning, management and monitoring of water shed management
18. Study and report on different types, functioning activities, role and problems of cooperative societies in the community.
19. Attend the staff/target group meeting and record the minutes
20. Prepare the case study of any successful / failure case/group
21. Involve in networking, lobbying and advocacy of the concerned project.
22. Use audio-visual and theatre communication methods in the field.
23. Involve in participatory evaluation by using the criteria.

Methodology of Field Work

The following are some important modes of learning in field work:

1. Observation
2. Informal interactions with community, SHGs and Governmental Organizations
3. Participatory Rural Appraisal and Participatory Learning Appraisal Methods
4. Case Discussions/Conferences
5. Sharing of experiences both among the team members and the teams
6. Additional field work if necessary

Practicum details

Twice a week, students are engaged in the rural community to take up the following Field Work:

1. Rural Development Skills: Health, Education, Agriculture, Water and Sanitation
2. Facilitating and promoting activities relating to Village Adoption
3. Creation of model of rural community organization
4. Documentation of Model Village Case Studies, Cooperative Societies

Assessment

This is a ten credit course, five for theory and five for practicum. The emphasis is to be more on the practical orientation of the student.

Outcomes

After completion of the course the student will be able to

- Develop skills to understand the social, economic, political and cultural framework of the rural society
- Develop skills to address the challenges with suitable responses for the identified rural issues
- Develop skills to engage in the management of the rural community

Career Options

- Career in the Rural Community organization and development activity
- Career in the Not for Profit Organization/Community Service Organizations and Corporate Social Responsibility activities
- Career as a rural nodal officer for supporting rural community organization/development and facilitation of rural reconstruction as well as resilience building programmes.
- Career in the facilitation of Rural Governance and development