

Role of Social Worker in Post-disaster community recovery

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Abstract

This study shows significant roles of Social worker in post disaster phase. We found that varied roles of social workers in post-disasters are important for assisting the survivors in their psychological needs, receiving and assisting project implementations, encouraging independence among members, and providing solutions to community issues, i.e. poverty and development. Moreover, social workers provide vitality and inspiration to the survivors as well as the community members. Social worker can be associations for the "next society" since it is free from constraint and united personally. Social workers can intervene individually as well as officially.

Keywords: disaster recovery, Social worker, post disaster

Introduction

Michael J. Zakour, disaster as a concept can be defined "primarily through social disruption and collective stress", and he stated that, "disasters are seen as a type of collective stress situation, in which many individuals fail to have their needs met through societal processes." When both social structures and economic supports that serve as the foundation of people's lives are immediately, unrecognizably stripped away, community members and individuals will need specific kinds of aid.

Disasters can strike the land, life and livelihood. Strongest or mild strike can make the people unrest and become traumatized. Due to the environmental impact of global climatic change the world is witnessing risk over land and life. Legislations have initiated Disaster risk management policies for strengthening of power and capacity of the Local Self Government Units (LSGUs), participating of all stakeholders including private sectors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in every level, with focus on community level. Under the act national, state and district level councils have been formulated for the improvement of the community's physical, social, and economic resilience, and consideration to local conditions and existing capacities of communities are put as its principles. It is an ambitious plan toward sustainable reconstruction of communities, and further study is needed to understand survivors' recovery in long-term period.

Because of the unprecedented level of hit over the land in the form of cyclone, land slide, tsunami, earth quake, over flowing of rivers the people found themselves helpless and sometimes might be evacuated from their homeland. The loss that people experience in these kinds of situations is unpredictable, later there are chances for messing up the situations. To help the survivors by these catastrophic events, professionals or trained practitioners are required to offer life saving support. Social workers respond to catastrophic events by focusing on planning, management, relief, and recovery. It makes the community and survivors better able to receive the immediate and long-term support they need to start rebuilding. Not only the social worker, but active and continuous participation of survivors or local people is essential in the recovery from disasters because problems that communities have held since before the disaster become apparent in disaster time and they fundamentally have to be dealt with in recovery process. Thus, tragedy of disaster will occur repeatedly unless long-term recovery and the fundamental problems of communities are considered. There are some cases studied in past disasters that survivors themselves made efforts toward not only reconstruction in the aftermath of disasters but also revitalization of their community or society in the long run but still many of previous studies on community recovery focus on support agencies.

According to the intensity of the disaster the mission should promote community-based disaster management and to support populations in the most marginalized and vulnerable sectors such as peasants, fisher folks, workers, urban poor, unorganized labourers, women, and children. It requires intervention programmes with long term and short term effect. As immediate support the survivors needs mental support to tackle with the loss of family members and loved ones, of their homes, of their jobs, and of their communities. The best kind of help that emergency response social workers can provide to victims in the immediate aftermath of a disaster is through offering basic necessities: food, clean water, and shelter. As for the long-term rehabilitation program, they offered sustainable livelihood project with national or international funding partners. For both long term and short term interventions there should be trained professionals from social work as the damage that disasters wreak is multifaceted across emotional, physical, economic, and social levels. According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), social workers play a vital role in helping with "recovery efforts in the restoration of public health, health care and social services networks to promote the resilience, health, and well-being of affected individuals and communities"

During the rescue and rehabilitation period a field is inclusive of so many important roles to help individuals,

communities, and the environment, both social workers and emergency responders may share some similar tasks but overall perform different responsibilities. For one, emergency responders in natural disaster situations are specifically trained to engage in sometimes high-risk situations to rescue victims to safety. The role of the social worker is differentiated among these people as they approach the situation professionally and assist the people according to their requirements and according to the objectives.

Objectives

To understand the role of Social workers in post disaster intervention

Methods adopted

Focused Group Discussion

Result and discussion

1. Role of social worker in Disaster relief

Importantly, social workers in this field must be able to respond to both natural and human-driven disasters. It can be violent conflicts between armed people or force, hazardous like volcanic eruptions and melting down of power plants, wild hits like cyclones or Tsunami. Each of the kinds of events requires unique challenges with unique consequences, social workers in disaster management are specifically trained with the expectation that victims of these events will need unique support. These kinds of practitioners can help meet these expectations by using specific victim support strategies before, during, and after a disaster has occurred. The FGD members were from Tamil Nadu and they had been acquainted with Tsunami, cyclone like Okhi, flood. It requires long term and short term interventions.

Social workers approaching the survivors with the mental health support they need during and immediately after a disaster. Professionally social workers are better able to ensure that victims can adopt healthy coping strategies by providing therapeutic services and mental health counseling will have to be delivered gradually and consistently after the tragic event. Immediate, responsive care also needed by the survivors can be made available by the professionals only. From the focused group discussion it is found that, the immediate impact of the natural disaster that hit mainly the Cuddalore district is on the life and livelihood of the people, and it requires mental health counselling for the survivors in the rehabilitation centers as well as in the affected areas. Women, children, old age, differently abled, as well as weak and injured require counselling support.

2. Preparations for Disaster management

Social workers should proactively prepare for saving the lives of people and restoring community during and after disaster. Special training and professional dedication is needed to dedicate a sizable portion of their bandwidth to developing plans and responses to ensure victims receive the support they need immediately and in long run after a disaster. Social workers have to work with survivors who experience extreme levels of disruption in their lives and must be in advanced communication with organizations that offer support in housing, food relief, career services, and grief and mental health counseling.

From the Focused Group Discussion it is found that, social workers should be very responsive in circulating the weather report also. In rescue operations also professional approach is needed in circulating information to potentially affected, vulnerable communities. Information regarding the upcoming disasters will equip the people in altering their lives as well as the informed social workers can more successfully intervene to provide necessary resources and guidance. In certain cases the intervention of social workers are required in drafting safe evacuation, sheltering, and lockdown plans to best aid vulnerable communities and individuals. It will help the people who will be directly affected by unpredictable disasters. Information dissemination is a possible way to be equipped with addressing disasters and such people and communities will have a much greater chance of survival. Another possible preparedness among social workers is connectedness with agencies and departments to meet the needs of survivors to offer life-saving solutions and outcomes.

3. Response of Social Worker During a Disaster

A comprehensive disaster management strategy is mandatory for effective social work decision making, as the intensity of disaster is unpredictable. Even though social workers must prepare a high-level, effective plan to help the survivors it's necessary to understand the nature and extend of violence. Role of social worker must remain flexible as they aim to support victims of disasters in real time. By coordinating immediately with medical practitioners, housing shelters, food banks, and community centers, disaster management social workers can connect survivors with the relief according to their requirements. From the Focused Group Discussion it can be understood that, social workers should not be placed as response team, as the strategies are different among response team and social worker. If they are placed in dangerous situations during disaster but they will likely be on the ground to offer outreach to those who need it. General counselling, psychological counselling is also can be provided to the survivors.

4. Response of Social Worker after a Disaster

Economically and socially vulnerable populations are at greater risk both during and after a disaster. According to FEMA, "disadvantaged households, such as low-wealth families, children and older adults, people with disabilities, and racial and ethnic minorities, suffer disproportionately during major disasters, be they hurricanes, floods, or industrial accidents." Because of these overarching, preexisting problems, social workers must apply innovative problem-solving techniques to best support the people who need it. The Minnesota Department of Health has come to a similar conclusion, stating that economically disadvantaged communities face significant challenges in receiving medical attention, shelter, and access to food services after a disaster. This logic unfortunately makes sense, where already disenfranchised and marginalized communities and individuals will struggle much more severely - and immediately - than others who have greater means.

The major response of Social Worker after disaster can be summoned like

Major response of Social Workers	Focused group discussion report
Direct outreach	
Connect with survivors	100%
Relief support	100%
Bridge gap between survivor and resources	100%
Case management	
Attending individual need	100%
Attending community needs	100%
Keeping records	100%
Follow up of cases	100%
Mental health counselling	
Conducting counselling sessions	100%
Offering emotional support	100%
Offering psychological support	100%
Offering clinical support	100%
Providing individual attention	100%
Follow up of counselling	100%
Establishment of support network	
Connect people with support network	100%
Assisting in recovery process	100%
Connect with funding agencies	100%
Connect with allied departments	100%
Victim advocacy	
Continued support to survivors	100%
Individual level attention	100%
Community level attention	100%
Engage with policy makers	100%
Advocate for greater level of aid	100%

From the focused group discussion it can be understood that the social workers have to be with survivors during and after the disaster.

Conclusion

Role of social worker is important to curb down the problems faced by the survivors. Disasters not only damage the land and livelihood but the life and lifestyle of people. In certain cases disasters end in trauma and unrest among people. Role of a social work professional is essential to deal with people in unrest. Making the survivors comfortable during and after disaster is greater than reconstruction of a building or a structures,

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