

# THE DRAFT DOCUMENT FOR A NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION (NCSWE), 2021

## *Frequently Asked Questions*

### **1. How can social work be a profession instead of being a passion?**

Every profession requires passion in general, but the passion alone is not enough. Professional social work is internationally recognised as an academic discipline and practice-based profession in 145 countries.

### **2. How does the NCSWE Document define professional social work?**

‘Professional Social Work’ is defined by the document as an internationally recognised academic discipline and practice-based profession, based on knowledge, methods, and skills of working with people and systems. It is built on the foundation of values and ethics of human dignity, sensitivity to structural realities, and respect for diversities. It promotes social justice and social development, guided by the Indian Constitution, and by India’s commitment to the International Human Rights Law.

### **3. What are the objects of the NCSWE that will be useful for professional social workers?**

The NCSWE aims at formulating a curriculum framework and ensuring minimum standards for social work education institutions and programmes, for self-regulation as well as for accreditation. The NCSWE will also ensure ethical conduct by professional social workers.

### **4. Why is the NCSWE duplicating their work with the UGC and the NAAC?**

UGC is primarily mandated for promoting and coordinating university education, determining, and maintaining standards of teaching, examination, and research in universities; whereas The NAAC carries out assessment and accreditation of universities and colleges and not of disciplines. There are significant lacunae in the standards of curriculum, field practicum and research activities of social work education in India which highlight the urgent need for a national statutory body to promote quality in social work education and practice.

### **5. What are the responsibilities of these professional councils?**

Professional councils are responsible for recognition of courses, promotion of professional institutions and providing grants to undergraduate programmes and various awards, setting code of ethics/conduct, standard of practice etc.

### **6. Has the Government of India recognised social work education in the past?**

The UGC has sponsored two review committees on social work education, two reports on curriculum for social work education, and Refresher Courses in social work education. The Ministry of Welfare has published the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Social Work in India*, and a *Directory of Social Work Education Facilities in India*. In 2005, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) sponsored a Manual for Self-Study of Social Work Institutions which included the minimum and quality standards in social work education.

### **7. Has any Government Committee or Ministry recommended setting up a Council for social work education?**

The First as well as the Second Review Committees on Social Work Education, sponsored by the University Grants Commission (UGC), had recommended that a National Council for Professional Social Work Education may be established in order to upgrade social work education and to maintain standards. The first initiative was undertaken by the Ministry of Welfare to prepare a draft Bill for the establishment of the Council, in 1993.

### **8. Has the government formed the Working Group to prepare the NCSWE Document?**

The NITI Aayog had invited some social work educators for a meeting to discuss the need for a social work council on July 14, 2020. Subsequently, and independently of the NITI Aayog, an informal voluntary Working Group of professional social work educators was formed that prepared the draft document for a National Council for Social Work Education.

### **9. Preparing a Bill for enactment of legislation is the job of the parliament. Is it legitimate for professionals to prepare bills?**

A private Bill can also be brought by a Member of Parliament. In 2018, Prof Richard Hay has presented similar Bill in Rajya Sabha, but it was not discussed.

### **10. Is there a convergence between the draft NCSWE Document and the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020?**

The NEP 2020 document was carefully examined and some of the important changes recommended by the NEP 2020 were discussed while drafting the Document.

### **11. What is the place of distance mode of education in social work education in the NCSWE?**

We cannot deny the existence of social work programmes in distance mode all over the world with field practicum and direct supervision arrangements in many places. Development of standards for this mode of education is all the more essential, and therefore an expert panel is suggested in the Bill to look into these challenges.

### **12. Is the NCSWE Document based on a western Eurocentric model and not indigenised?**

Since the inception of social work profession in India, there have been many initiatives and continuous progress to make it more and more relevant to India. The Council Document has been drafted in the context of these indigenous perspectives in the context of internationalisation of social work, as both are essential.

### **13. Will social workers without social work qualifications have to now stop working or get social work qualifications to continue to work as social workers?**

The proposed Council will neither threaten the interests or employment opportunities of the voluntary or development practitioners working with the welfare and development sectors nor undermine their significant contributions.

### **14. Why is the NCSWE only looking at social work education and not practice as well?**

Social work education is the foundation on which social work practice gets professionalised and should therefore be a priority for the quality enhancement process.

### **15. Will the government funded NCSWE control the freedom of social work educators?**

Professional councils in India are all based on legislation and funded by the government, which will have some control over it.

### **16. How will the NCSWE work be decentralised?**

For the purpose of decentralisation, the National Council shall conduct elections for a Director, a Deputy Director and two members from each state and union territories (UTs) of the zone to constitute the six Zonal Councils for Social Work Education.

### **17. How will the Council make use of the expertise in different aspects of social work education all over India?**

The Council shall constitute Expert Panels for its major professional functions that will comprise registered professional social workers known for their expertise and experience in the respective fields.

### **18. Will it be compulsory for professional social workers to register with the Council?**

The Document makes the registration with the Council voluntary for educators as well as the practitioners. Only professional social workers who wish to associate with the Council and its activities, need to register with it.

### **19. Is registration same as licensing of professional social workers?**

Registration is not same as licensing as the former is voluntary and the latter is compulsory to work as professional social workers; therefore, not registering with the Council will not criminalise anyone.

### **20. How will the NCSWE help in improving standard of social work education?**

The NCSWE shall develop minimum standards for institutions of social work education for the management, vision, and governance of social work institutions; physical infrastructure and resources; process of curriculum development, board of studies, and implementation; field practicum arrangements

### **21. Will the NCSWE develop a uniform syllabus for social work education all over India?**

The Council shall not develop a uniform syllabus for social work education all over India, but formulate a curriculum framework for social work education programmes.

### **22. What are the advantages of the NCSWE for social work research and knowledge development?**

The Council shall undertake the promotion of social work research, knowledge development, dissemination, retrieval, and utilization. It will promote documentation of the history of indigenous methods and values of social services in the diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and regional contexts that can be fed into social work knowledge.

### **23. How will the NCSWE promote ethical behaviour in social work education, research, and practice?**

The NCSWE shall develop a Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers, comprising its values, principles, pledge and ethical standards to guide the conduct of professional social workers.

### **24. How will the National council help students studying social work?**

When the NCSWE is in place, student studying social work will have access to quality social work education, competent social work educators, updated social work libraries, student support services, career counselling all over India and opportunities for relevant jobs in the field.

### **25. What are the advantages of the NCSWE to the social justice and the social development sectors?**

The NCSWE will facilitate social work education to achieve 'social justice' which comprises empowerment and inclusion of the socially excluded groups. It will also facilitate social work education to achieve 'social development'.

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