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## ROLE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE SUPERVISOR



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### ABSTRACT

Supervision is an educational, administrative and helping process which was concerned with enabling, teaching and guiding a supervisee to develop professional skills, knowledge and attitude based on the objectives of an educational programme and the needs of the supervisor. It is more as an integral and essential part of social work education which involved more dynamic intense and individualized educator, learner, interaction and relationship to promote professional growth and to facilitate self dependence in the learner. Supervision is the achievement of desired results through intelligent utilization of human talents and facilitation resources in a manner that provides the great challenge and interest to the human talents. Supervisory process is both creative and dynamic and it calls for investment by the supervisor in terms of knowledge, attitudes, skills and perspective in guiding a student to meet the demands of learning as well as that of the field

**KEYWORDS** : *educational, administrative and helping process, communication, interviewing.*



### INTRODUCTION :

Specially, Supervision aims at developing core skills in students such as observation, listening and communication, interviewing, relationship building, skills in fact finding, recording, analysis, administrative procedures, planning, organization and implementation. Supervision is also instrumental in developing a professional attitude in the students. This is achieved by the field workers setting an example, appreciating and encouraging desirable attitudes in the students, enabling the

students to express his/her feeling and analyzing the activity which expresses these attitudes.

Social Work is an art, and the role of the supervisor in social work is demanding. So in social work supervisor must require skills, knowledge of social work. In social work the supervisor brings his own personality and creative interest. Supervision, as it has been developed in social work practice, has been a unique combination of administrative, teaching and helping functions. Supervisors role is not only giving direction to the workers but also to teach the workers ways of helping people based on their own experience and they have to use their knowledge of human behavior to enable the workers to carry out their jobs. Chartotte Towle has defined that, "Supervision in social work agencies has been defined as an administrative process in the conduct of which staff development is a major concern.

Supervision is a process in the conduct of which the supervisor has three functions: Administrative, Teaching, and Helping. His mid-position has significance in the performance of each of these function and notably in helping." This definition gives some words of modern thoughts on the supervisors role like find the supervisor in mid-position that he is responsible for Workers / Students and responsible to someone higher in some administrative authority.

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISOR'S ROLE :

The role of supervisor has been developed firstly in U.S.A. but nowadays it has been used in some definite form in most of the social agencies almost in all countries. Originally the supervisors functions considered as administrative role. In America supervisors were placed in charitable institutions and administrative role came to supervisor. In charitable institution the supervisor has to handle cases, work organizes and has to take decisions. In the early days of social work profession even more that today some standards were being set and new methods were developed .For the utilization of such methods the supervisor had to teach and had to develop ways of working together with workers. So that improved methods could be used and tested. In this way from the earliest days supervision in social work was seen as mutual working together. As schools of social work began to develop, the role of supervision became important and the role of supervision closely concerned with development of professional methods and standards, due to beginning of social work schools the old educational ideas of "Learning by Doing" is changing the ideas of learning. In this way due to starting of social work schools field work teaching is becoming as an essential part of educational curriculum. The student supervision was first considered as an important factor in social work education. In this way administrative and teaching responsibilities became clearly to the supervisor. Thus we have been considered the general development of thinking on supervision largely based on the development of United States and much of the early occurred their. Interest in supervisory methods became general in Great Britain in the 1950's. Some British school social workers had taken further training in the United States and came back with favorable reports of supervision which they had received. At the same time the social workers from U.S. A. and Canada were being invited to give seminar on supervision. With the rapid growth of professional courses from 1953 onwards, more and more social workers became involved in student supervision.

### ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY:

The supervisor is in mid-position in a social agency or in a department who's main function is to provide social welfare services and social work services are to be provided through social work methods i.e. case work , group work, and community organization. As a member of agency team the supervisor has to be very careful about the purposes and functions of agency. In the social welfare agencies the purposes and functions are different e.g. hospital setting, correctional settings, educational settings, but all agencies share the common purposes of meeting specified social needs and of providing the best possible professional services to the clients with in the resources available. All members of staff are expected to work towards an achievement of these purposes and each position within agencies carries with it varying responsibility towards this end.

The supervisor carries the responsibilities for agency functioning and for staff and student development within an allotted part of the agency. Usually the supervisor is given the responsibility for a certain no: of workers or students. It is in relation to their workers and the supervisor for seeing that the work of agency gets done well. The services are provided to the clients, workers and students are unable to improve their skills to the limits of their ability at any given stage in their development. The

chief of social work agency or department has overall responsibility for the organizations total functioning to develop agency policy, to provide resources such as ( Money, Staff, Office Equipments etc.) to set an administrative structure that will improve the agency work, decision-making, maintains relationships with other agency heads and interested citizens within the community in a effort to serve the services some part of these responsibilities may be given to supervisor and the administration can make effective. The supervisor has to distribute this with the skills, time-available to the workers. There should be no undue blocks or delays. Decisions must be taken promptly within the area of decision making allotted to the supervisor and judgment must be shown as to when decision should be referred for higher approval. In most of the cases the administrative had to depend on the report of supervisor not only this but the administrator has to decide the policies, future plans in consultation of the supervisor. So the supervisor should provide the accurate report to the administrative for the effective administration. The supervisors responsibilities in relation to the social welfare are mainly varied. The supervisor is one of the important enabling and helping responsibilities in relation to the worker. The supervisor has responsibility for communication policy as he forms a two way link in communication so that the worker is unable to understand and carry out policy effectively. He is able to convey his concern and thinking about policy to the administrator. The supervisor has also the responsibility for providing and opportunity for the discussion of all aspects of the work. In this way he will be teaching, discussing, suggesting, stimulating and sharing his knowledge and experience with the workers. If he is to help workers functions to the best of his ability, he must know the workers closely. Work i.e. case-reading and regular supervision sessions. Supervisor has to do evaluation of the workers so that worker and supervisor together may work out new objectives, recognizing the workers interest and abilities as well as areas which may need strengthening efforts. The supervisor has responsibility to provide a climate and surrounding in which the worker can work effectively. The supervisor can do this all combinations of administrations teaching and helping functions throughout by clear communication. The overall goal is providing the best possible services to the clients who come within the agency function. So the supervisor carries his middle management role, responsible to help those above and below him in the hierarchy of his agency, utilizing of his knowledge of administration to enhance services to the clients. Utilizing this knowledge of client needs and problems to help administration to function effectively to meet the needs. Using his knowledge and skills in social work practice to improve agency functioning through teaching, stimulating and enabling staff to carry their own responsibilities most effectively.

### FUNCTIONS OF THE FACULTY SUPERVISORS

The prime responsibility of the faculty supervisors is to teach the students theory and to orient them to practice, in their respective fields. To carry out these prime responsibilities they have to take interest in framing the field practicum on the basis of the needs of the profession, the field agencies and the students, and revise it from time to time.

In any data gathering activity, supervisors play a major role in attending high quality statistics. It is the duty and responsibility of the supervisor to:

1) Accompany interviewers, especially those new in the area of interview, in the first few days of data collection to assist them in following the proper procedures. The supervisors should observe how they conduct the interview and provide suggestions for improvement. It is important, however, for the supervisor not to intervene and correct the interviewer while the interview is being conducted, unless the error would have a major effect on the response of the respondents. In this case, the supervisor should ensure that the process of correcting the interviewer does not irritate the respondent nor

reduce the credibility or morals of the interviewer.

2) Conduct spot-checking. This is the process of checking if the interviewers are actually in area visiting the households and conducting the interview. Despite the fact that interviewers have gone through rigid screening and training procedures, it is always possible that some may be tempted not to visit all the households they are assigned to.

3) Re-interview a sub-sample of households. Supervisors should always re-interview some households to determine if the interviewers asked the correct questions to the respondents. The supervisors do not have to ask all the questions in the questionnaire, and data collection developer may design a specific form intended for this activity. The contents normally consists of important data items in the questionnaire, such as age, sex and few questions on disability. It is important, however, that supervisors provide clear explanation to the respondent why a re-interview is needed. It is crucial to emphasize to the respondent that they are being re-interviewed, not because the supervisor doubts the veracity of their answers, but merely to confirm some of the answers they provided. The supervisor should not tell the respondent that are conducting a re-interview in order to check that the original interviewer's credibility.

4) Review the completed questionnaires. Supervisors should review the work of the interviewers in order to correct errors at the earliest stage possible. Early detection of errors saves incorrect information being processed, and enables the supervisor to correct the interviewer's mistake so it is not repeated in future interviews.

5) Attend to other problems during data collection such as refusals, lack of forms, supplies and materials, lost questionnaires, and replacement of staff.

6) Hold regular meetings with interviewers. Such meetings are vital as they provide a venue where problems and solutions can be discussed. They also provide an opportunity for the supervisor to discuss their observations made whilst conducting the spot-checks, re-interviews and reviews of completed questionnaires.

## FUNCTIONS OF THE FACULTY SUPERVISORS

The prime responsibility of the faculty supervisors is to teach the students theory and to orient them to practice, in their respective fields. To carry out these prime responsibilities they have to take interest in framing the field practicum on the basis of the needs of the profession, the field agencies and the students, and revise it from time to time. With the help of the developed field practical and theoretical curriculum the faculty supervisors have to guide and assist the students, to integrate theory with practicals and to create an environment for them to learn in practical situations. Faculty supervisors have to teach the students fieldwork i.e. the meaning of professional relationship, to develop an insight into their own and others' behaviours, to help them grasp the techniques of interviewing, recording, conducting home visits and such other skills, as are necessary for successful discharge of their professional responsibilities. In other words, the faculty supervisors have to teach three things : (i) concepts of social work in field work, (ii) Social attitudes and perspectives they find meaning in these three functions as field administration, fieldwork teaching and professional help. However, of all these functions, the teaching function occupies a very significant place in the process of fieldwork training in social work education. Trained professional social workers have narrated the roles of the faculty supervisors during the various phases in the workshop "Fieldwork Training in Social Work Education" , organized by the Delhi School of Social Work as follows:

**Orientation Phase :** The faculty supervisors have to narrate the fieldwork programmes of their schools

to the students and must explain the process of supervision and their roles and functions. A general idea should be given to the students regarding the fields of social work and explain them their expectations from the students about professional training in social work.

**Induction Phase :** The faculty supervisors have to introduce their students to the social welfare agencies or communities where they will be placed for concurrent fieldwork. It is also expected that the client system is narrated to the students and the roles of the students in the client system are explained. Students should be re-conditioned at different levels and should be told about the supervisor-supervisee relationship. They must also help the students in establishing this relationship so as to carry out the functions of guidance on fieldwork and report writing and ultimately achieve the goals of fieldwork training.

**Implementation Phase :** the faculty supervisors have to help the students identify the needs and resources, and to evolve work assignments. Similarly, they have to help the students to learn in practical situations. This faculty supervisors have to clear doubts in terms of solving the problems of the client / needy and sufferers. The supervisee should be helped to share his / her experiences so as to be able to analyze feelings. The supervisor should then extend support to the students in achieving faster growth and awareness. Besides these, the faculty supervisors are expected to conduct on –the-spot supervision and administration, and develop relations between the agency and schools throughout the implementation phase.

**Evaluation Phase :** the faculty supervisors have to formulate a pattern of evaluation and help in the evaluation. They must assist the schools in maintaining records of fieldwork for inspection by the university or external examiners.

**Functions of the agency Supervisors :** The professional responsibility of agency supervisors is to guide the students on office procedures and methods so that they understand the functions of the agencies. Instructions have to be given on methods and techniques of social work, in dealing with individual groups and communities, professional interactions, use of principles and philosophies of social work in the field, etc. students must also be instructed on how to create an atmosphere of work and to render professional services to solve the problems of the students. The agency supervisors have to teach the students on how to maintain professional relations with individual clients, groups, communities, members and employees of the agencies. They also have to teach them the expected, mature and polished behavior in dealing with everyone concerned. Besides this, their responsibility is also to shape the students' views and to build a personality suitable for a professional social worker. The necessary guidelines are to be given and their social outlooks and perspectives are to be enhanced. In other words, it can be said that the agency supervisors have to teach three main aspects.

(a) Principles and philosophy of social work and use of these in practice for providing solutions to problems of individuals, groups and communities. These are to be accomplished with the help of all three direct social work methods namely casework, group work and community organization, and the three indirect methods, namely, social welfare administration, and social work research.

(b) Professional skills of handling human beings in good and bad situations, to solve their problems, to enhance their confidence and to make them capable enough to help themselves in life.

(c) Official correspondence especially in relation to preparation of case sheets, reports, proposals, rehabilitative reports, handling of accounts and administrative paper work related to conducting meetings, agency proceedings, decisions etc., and general letters to make the students administrative oriented and capable enough to handle an office on their own in future.

**CONCLUSION :**

All three functions of the agency supervisors occupy a very significant place in the process of imparting practical training in social work education because each in themselves will enable the students to become able professional social work practitioners. Students should take the advantage of fieldwork supervision and try to make the best of the situation to learn professional skills and enrich their field knowledge to practice social work in the field on scientific lines for effective solution to the problems of the needy and sufferers in the society.

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