

Pengurusan Perkhidmatan Kerja Sosial di Malaysia

Penyunting
Zakiyah Jamaluddin

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Pengurusan Perkhidmatan Kerja Sosial di Malaysia

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KATA PENGANTAR

Kerja sosial bukanlah satu bidang yang baru di Malaysia. Namun disebabkan kekurangan pendedahan dan bahan bacaan, bidang ini agak kurang menonjol berbanding bidang yang lain. Namun, selaras dengan perkembangan profesion kerja sosial yang semakin pesat, maka buku ini dihasilkan sebagai menampung kekurangan dan diharapkan menjadi sumber rujukan yang penting dalam bidang tersebut. Di samping itu, buku ini merupakan satu usaha pihak editor dalam memenuhi keperluan bahan bacaan dalam Bahasa Melayu.

Buku ini sebenarnya adalah terhasil daripada pengumpulan kertas kerja terpilih yang dimuatkan dalam Prosiding Seminar Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial 2000, yang dianjurkan oleh Program Kerja Sosial, Sekolah Pembangunan Sosial, Universiti Utara Malaysia pada 26-27 Januari 2000. Untuk memantapkan lagi penghasilan buku ini maka beberapa artikel tambahan dimuatkan bersesuaian dengan temanya.

Penulisan buku ini dibahagikan kepada beberapa tema utama iaitu Perkhidmatan Kerja Sosial, Polisi Sosial, Pendidikan dan Kerja Sosial, Remaja dan Kerja Sosial, Penyalahgunaan Bahan dan Pemulihan, Kesihatan Mental serta Komuniti dan Kerja Sosial. Sesungguhnya dengan perincian tema yang diberikan diharapkan akan dapat menjana pemikiran pembaca serta pengamal bidang kerja sosial tentang isu-isu dan permasalahan yang dihadapi oleh masyarakat amnya. Masalah-masalah yang berkait dengan remaja, dadah, kesihatan mental dan warga tua umpamanya memerlukan kajian yang mendalam dan berterusan. Oleh itu, secara tidak langsung kajian yang dihasilkan sekurang-kurangnya dapat membantu penyelidik dan pengamal kerja sosial terutamanya, untuk menangani permasalahan yang diutarakan.

Mudah-mudahan dengan terbitnya buku ini, lebih banyak lagi sarjana dalam bidang kerja sosial akan cuba menghasilkan kajian-kajian dan penulisan ilmiah mengenai bidang kerja sosial yang sangat luas skopnya. Diharapkan buku ini akan menyumbang kepada dunia ilmu dan dapat memberi manfaat kepada golongan pelajar, pensyarah, pengamal kerja sosial, pembuat polisi dan masyarakat keseluruhannya.

Kolonel Profesor Dato' Dr. Ahmad Fawzi Mohd Basri
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PRAKATA

Buku ini terhasil daripada Seminar Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial yang diadakan pada 26-27 Januari 2000. Seminar ini dianjurkan oleh Sekolah Pembangunan Sosial, Universiti Utara Malaysia dengan kerjasama Jabatan Kebajikan Masyarakat Malaysia dan Persatuan Kerja Sosial Malaysia. Inilah pertama kali usaha untuk mengumpul sebilangan besar kakitangan akademik dalam bidang kerja sosial dan mereka yang berminat dalam bidang kerja sosial pada peringkat kebangsaan. Hampir kesemua artikel di dalam buku ini telah dibentangkan sebagai kertas kerja pembentangan dan edaran dalam Seminar Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial 2000. Sebahagian besar daripada kertas kerja yang dibentangkan ialah hasil penyelidikan sama ada di peringkat universiti, jabatan/sekolah mahupun geran penyelidikan dari luar. Seminar ini secara tidak langsung telah memberi peluang kepada mereka untuk mengetengahkan dapatan dan pemikiran yang bernas dalam bidang kerja sosial.

Sebahagian besar daripada artikel di dalam buku ini telahpun diterbitkan secara edaran terhad dalam Prosiding Seminar Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial 2000. Walau bagaimanapun, pihak editor mengambil inisiatif untuk menerbitkannya dalam bentuk buku, di samping penambahan beberapa artikel lagi yang berkaitan dengan bidang kerja sosial. Buku ini boleh dibahagikan kepada tujuh tema utama iaitu Perkhidmatan Kerja Sosial, Polisi Sosial, Pendidikan dan Kerja Sosial, Remaja dan Kerja Sosial, Penyalahgunaan Bahan dan Pemulihan, Kesihatan Mental, serta Komuniti dan Kerja Sosial. Amat diharapkan kesemua artikel yang mengupas tentang permasalahan dalam kerja sosial serta perbincangan teorikal bidang yang berkaitan dengannya mampu memberi sumbangan yang besar dalam dunia ilmiah serta perkembangan dan kemajuan dalam bidang kerja sosial itu sendiri.

Zakiah Jamaluddin



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PENGURUSAN KERJA SOSIAL



MANAGEMENT OF SOCIAL WORK IN MALAYSIA*

-Abdullah Malim Baginda

INTRODUCTION

Social work has been practised in Malaysia for quite a some time and social work education has been in place since the 1950s. This being the case, the excuse that social work is a new profession in this country is no longer valid. The pioneer students of social work, now in their 70s and 80s, still hold the conviction that much of social problems that occur society can be alleviated through social work intervention.

However, there seems to be a sense of frustration among many social workers that it has not made much progress over the years. This, being the beginning of the new millennium is perhaps the most appropriate time for reflection and soul-searching to make some hard decisions that can bring forward our cause and, in the process, gain official recognition.

It is felt that this search should begin from within ourselves with honest evaluation; we may be able to identify factors that have become obstacles to our progress. Workload has often been blamed for any discrepancy, but there are certainly ways to overcome this particular issue.

This paper, therefore, is an attempt to draw attention to the current situation that hinders social workers from performing efficiently. Serious students of social work should consider various options that can improve the current situation.

LIMITATION IN APPROACH

It is safe to say that generally, social workers deal with social casualties, i.e. people who, due to some problems or situations, find themselves in a tight position and unable to deal with it satisfactorily. They have no option but to seek the services of social workers.

ers. By this time, they are already in such a bad state that a lot of preliminary remedial work has to be done before any real plans for improving their situation can be developed.

It is obvious that only those who seek help (or are referred) get served, while others who do not seek help, for whatever reasons - even if their conditions are as bad or even worse - will not receive any help. This leads to a discrepancy of an uneven attention over the needs of the community, and consequently such action can be construed as wilful neglect of a sector of society whose predicament should also be addressed.

A conscious effort should therefore be made to change this current modus operandi. This may require a drastic shift in organisational policy - instead of simply waiting for people to seek help from social workers, some out-reach work is needed.

Existing administrative structures have the capacity to provide referral services for all contingencies. However, for some reasons, this sometimes does not happen, hence the incidence of neglect leading to denial of social work services. Upon scrutiny, one will find that there is nothing wrong with the system, but the people involved in running the service may, to some extent, be at fault.

From the discussion above, it can be seen that social workers appear to confine themselves to remedial or rehabilitative work. This somehow limits the workers to the end and more chronic stage of the problems. While somebody undoubtedly has to do the job, it would seem more sensible for social workers to be involved in the earlier preventive and intervention stages as well.

Efforts should therefore be made to modify the prevailing socio-economic conditions or environment that could result in minimising the impact of certain situations that can bring about social problems. Social workers certainly have a role to play in this context. But how many are actually involved in this sort of activities, as a matter of routine?

RESOURCEFULNESS

For obvious reasons, no single agency can operate on its own without recourse to others. However, there is a tendency to ignore this limitation and whether due to false pride, no assistance is sought from others. Government agencies, despite all the facilities and resources at their disposal, generally acknowledge the fact that they cannot deal with all the issues on their own; and as such they would mobilise those from the private as well as the voluntary sectors. Therefore, the voluntary sector should have access to the resources of the government and the private sector in performing their functions.

It does not seem to make sense that while there are, for example, poverty eradication programmed by the Amanah Ikhtiar Malaysia, very few cases are referred to it by; the Department of Social Welfare. Social workers should be fully aware of the many resources available within the community and tap them in the process of helping clients to solve their problems.

Seeking help from others should not be seen as a failure or weakness on one's part to assist the clients. In fact, it should be considered as a virtue; i.e the ability to use knowledge, information and skills at mobilising support in promoting the cause of one's clients.

So what is holding this up? Is there any special inhibition among social workers today? Could it be that our strict adherence to the principle of confidentiality deters us from referring the clients to other agencies, in other words, sharing information on our clients with other agencies? If this is the case, perhaps we ought to re-examine this principle in relation to our objectives.

Or, is it possible that we are reluctant to share our clients with others, claiming sole ownership of the cases? On the other hand, we do not seem to hesitate when referring clients for medical purposes, for example, but not to another helping or enabling agency. We need to examine this dichotomy closely in our efforts to assist those requiring our help.

If we are sincere in assisting the clients, there is no reason not to seek help from others who have better facilities at their disposal. As many agencies are available and capable in providing the required services, they also have the right to share in the success (and also in the failure) of the clients. This sharing attitude helps to reduce the burden of responsibility and the sense of helplessness and guilt due the lack of resources within our own organisations.

CASE CONFERENCE

It has been noted that the practice of holding case-conferences has somehow been neglected. Nowadays, very few such conferences are held. Perhaps the pressure of daily duties has made it seem less important and critical. It must be stressed that the value of case-conferences cannot be over-emphasised, as they help social workers to sharpen their skills with useful contribution from other workers in the organisation.

This sharing of knowledge and skills is important in improving one's own capability at dealing with human problems. Ideas expressed during such an exercise can be enlight-

ening to all parties. Presenting cases at these conferences does not in any way indicate one's helplessness or failure, rather they provide an assurance that one is not alone in dealing with difficult cases.

It is suggested that no matter how busy one is, some kind of arrangement should be made to hold regular case conferences. A monthly schedule perhaps can be developed without difficulty and without disrupting normal working patterns.

USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Malaysia is progressing rapidly in the realm of IT application. However, it is noted that social workers seem to be somewhat lagging behind in this respect. It is possible that the organisation or agency concerned is reluctant to use into it or perhaps there are financial constraints.

Social workers should take advantage of the facilities that come with information technology. Organisations and agencies should be encouraged to invest in this area as it provides great potential in expediting and improving the role and functions of the workers. Furthermore, electronic mail is an accepted form of communication these days and it will be the major medium of correspondence in the future.

Hitherto, prose writing makes all case reports. One wonders if social work would lose its essence if reports were made in point forms or perhaps by entering the most appropriate variables in pre-printed forms. This seemingly outlandish idea is worth considering in view of its brevity and concise ness.

Current technological development generally emphasises on time and labour saving, in short, convenience. The use of computers in social work will certainly expedite activities, and indeed there will be no further need for paper work at all as everything can be dealt with electronically.

Those workers who already have the facility should endeavour to use this tool extensively, while encouraging others to follow suit. It would be a good idea to organise a special seminar to consider the extent to which this new information technology can be applied to social work .

DEPLOYMENT EXERCISE

It is acknowledged that as the population increases, the number of people requiring social work intervention will escalate accordingly. Under normal circumstances, the immediate reaction is to seek an increase in the number of social workers. While this may be ideal especially when resources are plentiful, it would be worth examining the types of cases and the nature of services required before hasty decisions are made. In an evaluation exercise conducted some time ago, it was found that about 40 per cent of the social workers' time in a government agency was spent on activities not related to social work per se.

The discussion above clearly indicates that not all aspects of social work require the services of trained professionals. Is it not possible to delegate others within the organisation or agency to do such jobs? On the other hand, there are also specific areas or tasks that other organisations/agencies can be mobilised to perform (at a fee, if necessary). Is it not be possible to identify available facilities to lessen the burden of the over-worked social workers?

Looking at the current range of activities of the government social work agencies in the country, it is apparent that not only has the number of cases increased, but new areas of responsibility have also been added to the already long list. It is time for the concerned agencies to examine these responsibilities and consider the feasibility of unloading some of them, especially those outside the legal framework, to voluntary sector organisations. The government can enter into a form of contract with these organisations to ensure the delivery of services based on best practices. Thus, the agency will be able to deploy its professional personnel to concentrate their time and energy in areas where their expertise is required.

The above suggestion is not intended to infer that voluntary sector organisations are only relegated to perform secondary and less important tasks. They are already providing substantial contribution to the government efforts in dealing with social issues. The respective government agencies should consider off-loading some of their responsibilities to the voluntary sector, thereby sharing the burden of tackling social problems, while at the same time, being able to specialise in particular aspects of the work.

Voluntary sector organisations should consider engaging professionally trained personnel not only to improve their services but also to enhance their stature in society. However, in order to attract trained personnel, they should offer competitive remuneration and a career path to social work graduates. At the moment this is not happen-

ing in most cases, not because of any reluctance on their part but more the question of inadequate resources. This may be overcome if we follow the earlier suggestion regarding deployment of services from the government sector to the voluntary sector.

The crux of the matter is the employment of the best available trained personnel to deal with case management rather than the more mundane and routine office administration that can easily be delegated to others. It seems a pity that much of the energy and time of trained professional are devoted elsewhere and something should be done quickly to rectify this situation.

FINANCING SOCIAL WORK

It is noted that the bulk of funding for social work comes from government sources, and this is rightly so as social well-being of the populace is the responsibility of the state. However, despite all the resources at its disposal the state alone cannot deal with the whole spectrum of its social responsibility.

In response to this need, a variety of voluntary sector organisations have been established over time. They assume a share this responsibility, either in complementing and supplementing the work of the public sector, or in pioneering work dealing with newly emerging issues, or in areas the state is not ready or not willing to enter, for many reasons.

But, the voluntary sector organisations have little or no resource of their own, and as such have to rely largely on public donations and contributions. Reliance on uncertain and irregular income of this sort affects the quality of work. A study has shown that a high proportion of the organisations' time has been spent on fund-raising, thereby deflecting from the real purpose of their being. The little support from the government has to be supplemented by other sources. Whatever money there is has to go into meeting the cost of their activities, but not for their personnel.

In recent years, the government has responded positively to the need of the voluntary sector. However, the problem of staff cost remains and this needs to be looked at as a matter of urgency. Quality staff have to be paid according to established norms, and the government has to consider this particular need. If this can be met, then the quality of performance of the voluntary sector can be more assured.

Many of the proposals and suggestions made here can be implemented without many problems. This will provide a greater opportunity, and choice, for employment of trained social workers.

ADVOCACY

In view of our pre-occupation with remedial work, very little advocacy has been undertaken by trained social workers in this country. Conversely, voluntary sector organisations, which do not seem to employ many professionally trained workers, appear to do a lot more promotional or advocacy activities. They seem reluctant to involve themselves in this field.

Indeed, even professional bodies such as the Malaysian Association of Social Workers (MASW) and the mixed grouping of trained and semi-trained people in the National Council of Welfare and Social Development Malaysia appear to ignore this important aspect of social work. We do not see any public expression in response to some social issues.

There is clearly a need for social workers, and its professional bodies, to engage in public debate over social issues. Due to our prolonged silence all these years, the very existence of these bodies is little known, with the exception of those closely linked or associated to them.

It is important that our presence be felt and recognised by all concerned. This can be done through our involvement in public affairs, making comments and voicing our considered opinions on current and topical social issues. Through such involvements, we can illustrate the personality of professionally trained workers.

We need to be recognised and appreciated by others. But this is not likely to happen if we are fighting shy to stand up and express ourselves. Asking for recognition is not good enough. We have to work hard at it, and we have to employ several strategies.

ONE FINAL WORD

Like any other undertakings today, social work needs to be efficiently managed if the clients are to benefit from best practices that will help them address their current problems and take necessary steps to overcome them within a reasonable time-frame. This demands a correct attitude on the part of the workers who should be capable of accessing various facilities (and funds, where necessary) at their disposal and those of their network, making full use of available resources within the communities.

One wonders whether we can set targets of achievement in social work, and if so what should they be? In the manufacturing industry, there is the 'zero defect' target, for

example. In recent times, there was the talk of 'zero inflation' etc. What can it be for the social work sector? Can it be the number of cases dealt within a specified timeframe? Perhaps we need to spend time reflecting over this issue.

NOTA AKHIR

* Telah diterbitkan secara edaran terhad dalam Prosiding Seminar Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial 2000, Sekolah Pembangunan Sosial, Universiti Utara Malaysia.

PENGURUSAN PERKHIDMATAN KERJA SOSIAL KE ARAH KECEMERLANGAN*

Syed A. Rahman Syed Mohd.

PENGENALAN

Perkembangan semasa dalam negara memerlukan satu penelitian kembali terhadap pencapaian dan juga kaedah perkembangan kerja sosial pada masa ini. Bagi mengenali dan meneliti pencapaian tersebut, maka difikirkan wajar untuk meninjau beberapa isu termasuk pentadbiran dan pengurusan kerja sosial, perkhidmatan dan amalan kerja sosial, pendidikan dan latihan untuk pekerja sosial, serta isu-isu dalam kerja sosial masa kini.

Sebenarnya, persepsi kerja sosial di Malaysia sebagai suatu kerjaya mahupun sebagai suatu bidang kerja masih di tahap yang memerlukan intervensi pendekatan yang agresif; bakal penghasilan satu pencapaian yang mempunyai impak ke atas kumpulan sasar dan juga corak, gaya serta rentak perkhidmatan dan pengurusan sosial yang berkesan. Persepsi umum pada alaf yang lalu dan kini masih terasa limpahan "aura" pengaruh tersebut memberikan gambaran bahawa mereka yang terlibat dalam bidang ini adalah orang perseorangan atau badan-badan kebajikan yang membantu kumpulan sasar yang kurang bernasib baik. Begitu juga Pegawai Kebajikan Masyarakat dilihat sebagai pegawai kerajaan yang digajikan supaya memainkan peranan yang sama.

Justeru, apabila memperkatakan kecemerlangan dalam pengurusan perkhidmatan sosial, satu proses anjakan paradigma ke arah profesionalisme dalam pengurusan perkhidmatan kerja sosial perlu dilakukan oleh semua yang terlibat. Kertas ini akan cuba menilai kedudukan perkhidmatan kerja sosial semasa di Malaysia, di samping meninjau perkembangannya pada alaf baru.

PERKEMBANGAN KERJA SOSIAL DAN PEMBANGUNAN MASYARAKAT

Pemahaman terhadap sesuatu dasar atau falsafah serta isu yang berkaitan dengannya lebih relevan sekiranya dilihat dari perspektif pensejarahan ketika dinamisme perlakuan

Buku **Pengurusan Perkhidmatan Kerja Sosial di Malaysia** merupakan himpunan kertas kerja yang telah dibentangkan dan kertas kerja sisipan sempena Persidangan Kebangsaan Kerja Sosial 2000. Bagi memantapkan lagi penulisan buku ini, beberapa artikel daripada kajian ilmiah oleh para pensyarah Program Kerja Sosial, Universiti Utara Malaysia, telah dimuatkan berdasarkan tema-tema tertentu.

Buku ini memaparkan beberapa isu dan permasalahan yang meliputi masyarakat Malaysia amnya, selain membicarakan tentang latar belakang dan sejarah perkembangan serta polisi yang berkait dengan bidang kerja sosial. Ia sesuai untuk semua peringkat pembaca yang meliputi golongan pelajar, pendidik, pekerja sosial, golongan profesional dan pembuat dasar dalam pelbagai sektor perkhidmatan untuk memahami dan memperoleh manfaat daripada penghasilan buku ini.



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