The Role of
Social Work
in Poverty Reduction and Realisation of
Millennium Development Goals
in Tanzania

Zena Mnasi Mabeyo
Elijah Macharia Ndung’u
Sabrina Riedl

Austrian Development Cooperation

APPEAR
Austrian Partnership Programme
in Higher Education and Research
for Development

FOUNTAIN PUBLISHERS
www.fountainpublishers.co.ug
# Contents

*Contributors* ................................................................. xi
*Acknowledgements* ......................................................... xii
*Executive Summary* ......................................................... xiv
*Key Findings* ................................................................. xv
*List of Acronyms* ............................................................. xix

1. **Introduction** ............................................................. 1
   - Background to the Research Project .......................... 1
   - Tanzania Socioeconomic and Educational Context .... 3
   - The PROSOWO Project ............................................. 6
   - Key Conceptual Framework and Thematic Issues ...... 9
   - Professional Social Work ....... ................................. 9
   - Poverty Reduction ................................................. 10
   - Social Development .............................................. 12
   - Millennium Development Goals ........................... 13
   - Gender and Equality .............................................. 14
   - Culturally Sensitive Practice ................................. 15

2. **Study Approach and Methodology** .............................. 17
   - Introduction .......................................................... 17
   - Overall Research Design ....................................... 17
   - Study Population, Sample and Selection Procedures ... 18
   - Data Collection Methods, Tools and Techniques ...... 24
   - Primary Data Collection Methods and Tools .......... 24
   - Secondary Data Collection Methods ....................... 26
   - Data Management, Analysis and Reporting ............ 27
   - Data Management ................................................. 27
   - Quantitative Data Analysis .................................... 28
   - Qualitative Data Analysis ..................................... 28
   - Reporting/Triangulation ......................................... 29
   - Research Clearance and Other Ethical Issues .......... 29
   - Assurance of Quality and Content Validity ............ 29
   - Study Limitations ............................................... 30
3. **Poverty, Social Development, MDGs and Social Work**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions/Manifestations of Poverty - Perspectives from the Field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Poverty Reduction/Social Development Programmes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Actors in Poverty Reduction/Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Linkages to the Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Rhetoric vs. Actual Implementation – Probable Contradictions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. **Social Work Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Status of Social Work Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Responsibilities of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problems that Social Workers Deal with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employing Organisations and Designations of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender and Sociodemographic Characteristics of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distribution of Social Workers by Sex and Locality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of Social Work Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational Qualifications of Respondents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Practitioners’ Educational Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Study Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employers’ and Educators’ Educational Qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Practice Levels, Methods and Models</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levels of Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Methods and Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work Models Used in Service Delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature of Work and Practice Methods and Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Target Group and Types of Intervention by Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Interventions Applied by Social Work Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers’ Roles in Poverty Reduction and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers’ Knowledge about Poverty Reduction Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers’ Skills and Roles in Poverty Reduction and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work and Realisation of Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and Levels of Contribution to UN MDGs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges and Dilemmas Facing the Social Work Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Dilemma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sociopolitical Issues Affecting Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things not Adequately Covered in the Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Identity for Social Work Practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness and Membership to a Professional Body</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers’ Perceptions Regarding the Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Workers as “Change Agents” – What Needs to be Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Needs to be Done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desired Changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Needs to be Done to Professionalise Social Work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Reflections on Social Work Education and Training .............................................. 107
   Introduction .............................................................................................................. 107
   Policy and Legal Environment for Social Work Education and Practice .................. 107
   Social Work Training/Curriculum in Different Institutions - Students’ Views .............. 108
   Scope of Social Development Approach, Gender, MDGs and Global Standards ...... 109
   Social Work Training and Social Development Issues ............................................ 109
   Adherence to Global Standards of Social Work Training ........................................ 112
   Suggestions for Improvement of Training ......................................................... 116
   Perceptions about the Adequacy of the Social Work Training ............................... 120
   Experiences and Perceptions of Students on the Curriculum ................................ 129
   Areas for Improvement in the Social Work Curriculum ........................................ 135
   Areas for Curriculum Improvement - Student’s Perspective .................................... 136
   Adequacy of Field Practice Education .................................................................. 136
   Indigenisation of Social Work Education and Training ....................................... 142
   Level of Contribution to the Process of Indigenisation ......................................... 143
   Culturally Sensitive Approach – Learning from the People Concerned .................. 144

6. Views From the Ground - Perspectives of Social Work Clients .................................. 149
   Introduction .............................................................................................................. 149
   Clients’ Problems, Challenges and Their Coping Strategies ..................................... 149
   Problems and Challenges ........................................................................................ 149
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Perceptions on Gender, Poverty and Social Development</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Conclusions and Recommendations</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**References**................................................................. 173

**Index**........................................................................ 177
List of Tables

Table 2.1: Study Sample and Data Collection Tools........ 23
Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Locality
and Sex.......................................................... 51
Table 4.2: Employers’ and Educators’
Educational Levels........................................ 57
Table 4.3: Focus of the Bulk of Work - Social
Workers’ Views.............................................. 63
Table 4.4: Views Regarding the Curriculum and
how it Addresses Poverty Issues ....................... 67
Table 4.5: Social Workers’ Skills vs. Practice Levels in
Poverty Reduction and Social
Development................................................... 70
Table 4.6: Social Workers’ Contribution to Poverty
Reduction and Social Development..................... 71
Table 4.7: Level of Contribution to MDGs by SW
Practitioners and Employers ............................ 78
Table 4.8: Specific Areas of Contribution
to the MDGs .................................................. 80
Table 4.9: Respondents’ Views on the Adequacy of the
Training on MDGs........................................... 83
Table 5.1: Views on the Role of Training in
Addressing Diverse Social Issues....................... 121
Table 5.2: Educators’ Views on Adequacy
of the Social Work Curriculum......................... 126
Table 5.3: Students’ Views Regarding the
Adequacy of the Curriculum............................ 131
List of Figures

Figure 3.1:  Estimated Magnitude of Poverty among Clients of Social Workers ......................... 32
Figure 4.1:  Major Roles Played by Social Work Practitioners .................................................. 48
Figure 4.2:  Actual Versus Expected Employers of Social Workers ........................................... 49
Figure 4.3:  Age Distribution of Social Work Practitioners ......................................................... 53
Figure 4.4:  Social Workers’ Educational Qualifications ............................................................. 55
Figure 4.5:  Years of Study Completion ......................................................................................... 56
Figure 4.6:  Categories of Institutions Where Social Workers Studied ........................................... 58
Figure 4.7:  Levels of Social Work Practice .................................................................................... 59
Figure 4.8:  Main Methods and Approaches Used .......................................................................... 60
Figure 4.9:  Employers’ Views on Models Used .............................................................................. 62
Figure 4.10:  Major Target Groups of Social Workers ................................................................. 64
Figure 4.11:  Types of Intervention Applied by Social Workers ...................................................... 65
Figure 4.12:  Social Workers’ Views on the Adequacy of the Training ........................................... 68
Figure 4.15:  Awareness and Membership to a Professional Body ............................................... 95
Figure 4.16:  Social Workers’ Perceptions Regarding the Profession .............................................. 98
Figure 5.1:  Educators’ Level of Involvement in Policy and Social Planning ................................. 107
Figure 5.2:  Educators’ Views on Adherence to Global Standards ................................................. 112
Figure 5.3:  Sources of References - Educators’ Views ................................................................. 114
Figure 5.4:  Students’ Views Regarding Main References Used .................................................... 115
Figure 5.5: Type of Training Programme Offered - Educators’ and Students’ Views .......................... 118
Figure 5.6: Educators’ Views Regarding Their Engagement in Research......................................... 119
Figure 5.7: Students’ Areas of Research Orientation .......... 120
Figure 5.8: Educators’ Views Regarding Teaching of Social Development........................................ 122
Figure 5.9: Relevancy of the Curriculum to Development Needs and MDGs ........................................ 123
Figure 5.10: MDGs which Receive Priority in Training Programmes .................................................. 124
Figure 5.11: Educators’ Views Regarding Curriculum Review and Gender ........................................ 125
Figure 5.12: Students’ Expected Practice Level ...................... 130
Figure 5.13: Student’s Fieldwork Participation ....................... 137
Figure 5.14: Types of Students’ Fieldwork Agencies and Locality .................................................. 138
Figure 5.15: Internship Opportunities offered by Social Work Organisations ................................ 139
Figure 5.16: Students’ Professional Areas of Focus in Fieldwork Practice ........................................ 140
Figure 5.17: Students’ Future Areas of Professional Focus .... 141
Figure 5.18: Educator’s Contribution to the Indigenisation Process .................................................. 142
Figure 5.19: Social Workers’ Views on Their Ability to Handle Cultural Issues .................................. 145
Figure 5.20: Views on Compatibility of Social Work Models with Cultural Values ............................ 146
Figure 7.1: Social Workers’ Ability to Handle Poverty Challenges - Employers’ Views .......................... 166
Contributors

The research project was funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation under its auspices of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR).

The final report has been written jointly by Zena Mnasi Mabeyo, Elijah Macharia Ndung’u and Sabrina Riedl.

Dar es Salaam/ Klagenfurt/ Feldkirchen, July, 2014

Research assistants

Innocent Atwijukire: Data entry and analysis expert, PhD candidate, Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt, Austria

Abigail Kiwelu: Field researcher in Ruvuma, Iringa and Dar es Salaam Regions, contractual tutorial assistant, Institute of Social Work, Tanzania

Ronald Luwangula: Data entry and analysis expert, PhD candidate, Alpen-Adria University, Klagenfurt, Austria

Stella Mngodo: Field researcher in Lindi and Mtwara regions, Tanzania
Acknowledgements

The successful completion of this study is the result of efforts and contributions of various individuals and organisations. It was funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation under its auspices of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). The research team wishes to express sincere appreciation to the funding organisation for the generous support and dedication to the promotion of social work profession in the East African region.

The researchers wish to extend sincere appreciation to the project coordinator Prof. Helmut Spitzer of Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Austria, country coordinators of PROSOWO project namely; Dr Gidraph Wairire of the University of Nairobi, Kenya, Dr Janestic Twikirize of Makerere University, Uganda and Charles Rutikanga (MSW) of the University of Rwanda, for their collaborative efforts in the process of developing the research tools.

We are also highly indebted to all those who agreed to take part in the study. More particularly, we acknowledge and highly thank our study respondents for agreeing to share a moment of their valuable time to respond to questions raised by the researchers. Without their willingness to participate, the study would not have been a reality.

We appreciate and, therefore, wish to thank the district and regional administrative authorities, including leaders of organisations consulted during the study undertaking for their cooperation. Nevertheless, the team of research assistants deserves a special mention. We are indebted to
Stella Mngodo and Abigail Kiwelu for giving us a helping hand in the collection of data, and to Ronald Luwangula and Innocent Atwijkure for their assistance in the analysis of the qualitative data. With their support, devotion and commitment, data collection and treatment was accomplished without any significant shortcomings. All other unnamed persons who offered support and assistance in preparing this report are also acknowledged.

Zena Mnasi Mabeyo (PhD)
Lead Investigator and PROSOWO Country Coordinator
Executive Summary

The study was aimed at assessing the role of social work in poverty reduction, social development and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Tanzania. It was done as part of the implementation of the project entitled “Promotion of Professional Social Work towards Social Development and Poverty Reduction in East Africa” (PROSOWO). The project was funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation under its auspices of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). It involves four (4) East African and one (1) Austrian schools of social work namely; the Institute of Social Work (Tanzania), the University of Nairobi (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), the University of Rwanda (Rwanda) and Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (Austria).

Tanzania is among the countries that endorsed the MDGs. It has made significant effort in setting policies, programmes, plans and strategies targeted towards the realisation of the goals. However, with exception of impressive progress in the increase of school enrolment, promoting gender equality and reduction of the HIV/Aids transmission rate, the country is yet to significantly reduce poverty among those living below the income poverty line of one United States dollar per day. A sizeable portion of the population is still living in risky and vulnerable situations.

Poverty-related problems persist, continue to grow and negatively impact the lives of many despite the existence of the social work profession for over half a century now. The profession was introduced by the British colonialists in the late 1940s. Probation services dominated the initial social work interventions. To date, the dominant professional
practice and educational approach have not changed. There are a number of uncovered and hence undocumented social work professional gaps in curbing poverty problems that this study endeavours to unearth and present.

Understanding the relativism and dynamics of poverty, participants from both urban and semi-rural settings were included in the study. Dar es Salaam (urban) and Ruvuma, Iringa, Mtwara and Lindi regions (all semi-rural in nature) were included in the study.

The study employed a cross-section of quantitative and qualitative research methods and approaches to allow triangulation. Questionnaires were administered 100 social workers, 99 students, nine educators and 35 employers. In-depth interviews were conducted to eight policy makers, eight educators and 20 employers. Four focus group discussions and two individual interviews with clients were held.

Key Findings

Social Work Practice

It was reaffirmed that social workers have a noble role to play in addressing poverty. However, findings suggest that the dominant role of social workers is counselling and case work. Application of empowerment and development approaches is done only to a small extent. Forty six per cent of social workers said that their work has a “slight” focus on poverty reduction. Findings also suggest that social work practice and services are more urban than rural-based and adopt more Western than locally generated models. Findings also suggest that social workers lack specialised skills because of adoption of a generalist approach. It was proven that social work training prepares practitioners to handle poverty challenges. However, a number of challenges hinder social workers from effective
contribution to poverty reduction, social development and realisation of MDGs.

**Social Work Training**

Findings suggest that social work training in Tanzania adequately prepares practitioners to handle poverty challenges. Eighty three point six percent of social workers have proven so. The training is generalist in nature and highly relies on the Western models, methods and approaches. Evidence-based teaching is not practised due to less involvement of lecturers in research. Social development and gender are not taught as cross-cutting issues. Thus, training does not adequately prepare students to deal with gender issues. It has been confirmed that field work is a mandatory part of social work training. Contrary to views of majority of social workers, clients indicated that the contribution of the profession in addressing poverty, gender and other social development issues is still insignificant. The need for having more professionally trained social workers in areas of gender, community development, entrepreneurship and poverty, and decentralisation of social work practice to rural areas emerged.

**Poverty Reduction**

The study confirmed that poverty is a major problem affecting clients who seek social work services – as reported by 100% of the respondents. The majority of social workers (75%) confirmed that social work training has equipped them with adequate skills in empowering their target population. However, a very sharp gap exists between skills acquired and the practical abilities of social workers in addressing poverty. Forty six per cent of practitioners said that their current work has a “slight” focus on poverty reduction. The majority of the clients also felt that the social work services they received have not empowered them to reduce poverty. Hence, social
work is yet to have significant and adequate impact on poverty reduction. Many clients felt that poverty reduction efforts have left them out. The rural poor are more marginalised. Therefore, the need to widen the scope of coverage of social work to rural areas was emphasised.

**Gender**

Second to poverty, gender-related problems such as marital conflicts, maintenance of children born out of wedlock and gender oppression were issues of concern for the majority of female clients. However, the contribution of social workers in addressing gender issues is still inadequate. Forty six per cent of social work practitioners confirmed that mainstreaming of gender issues in their work is done to a “small extent” only. Forty nine per cent of practitioners and employers said that they only “partly” contributed towards achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women. Moreover, social work training especially at the Institute of Social Work (ISW) does not integrate gender as a cross-cutting issue. Therefore, a need to mainstream gender issues in social work training and practice emerges.

**Millennium Development Goals**

Findings suggest that a majority of respondents including 65.7% of employers, 55% of practitioners and 44.9% of students were aware of MDGs. However, it was only a few (18.2%) who knew them in details. The level of understanding of specific MDG programmes was also high among employers and practitioners. However, that understanding did not correspond with the direct contribution of social workers and employers to the achievement of the goals. Fifty eight per cent of them said that they only “partly” contributed towards reduction of poverty. Findings further suggest that goals for
environmental sustainability and global partnership received less priority and due attention. Poverty is the most pressing but not well addressed problem by social workers.

**Contribution to Indigenisation**

Half of social work educators appreciated that indigenisation of social work is important. Fifty three per cent of them also agreed on the compatibility between social work and cultural values and traditions. Despite the appreciation of the importance of indigenisation, the majority (55.6%) of social work trainees did not fully contribute to the process. Lack of a means and locally generated materials were mentioned as major factors that hinder social professionals from contributing to the process.

The study concludes that in order for social work to make meaningful changes in the lives of the poor and effectively contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs, pragmatic changes in professional practice as well as training are inevitable. More social workers should be deployed in rural areas. Increased use of locally-generated literature, approaches and models is recommended. Adoption and wide use of empowerment and social development approaches are important and will likely generate more meaningful changes to the lives of the poor than over-reliance of traditional individualistic methods. Increased involvement of social workers in research and policy is essential.

Basically, professions develop and are constantly shaped by the social, political, economical and environmental conditions and contexts of the time. It is along these grounds that this study draws its rationale and hence point to the need of professional transformation. The profession should be repositioned to more effectively and adequately address poverty.
List of Acronyms

ADSW  Advanced Diploma in Social Work
AMSDP  Agricultural and Marketing System Development
ART    Antiretroviral Therapy
BSW    Bachelor in Social Work
CCBRT  Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation in Tanzania
CSW    Certificate in Social Work
CYODO  Children and Youth Development Organisation
DSW    Department of Social Welfare
FAL    Functional Adult Literacy
FBO    Faith-Based Organisation
FGD    Focus Group Discussion
FGM    Female Genital Mutilation
FMVCT  Future for Most Vulnerable Children Tanzania
HDI    Human Development Index
HIV    Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFSW   International Federation of Social Workers
IGAs   Income Generating Activities
IPC    International Poverty Centre
INOC   Iringa Network of Organisations Working with Children and Youth
ISW    Institute of Social Work
LGAs   Local Government Authorities
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MDGs</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKUKUTA</td>
<td>Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umasikini Tanzania – Swahili Acronym for National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKURABITA</td>
<td>Mpango wa Kurasimisha Rasilimali na Biashara za Wanyonge Tanzania – Swahili Acronym for the Property and Business Formalisation Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MKUZA</td>
<td>Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kuondoa Umasikini Zanzibar – Swahili Acronym for Zanzibar Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (ZSGRP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Master in Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MVC</td>
<td>Most Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACTE</td>
<td>National Council for Technical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NBS</td>
<td>National Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSGRP</td>
<td>National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty – English Acronym for Mkakati wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kupunguza Umasikini Tanzania (MKUKUTA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTA</td>
<td>National Technical Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODSW</td>
<td>Ordinary Diploma in Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>Orphaned and Vulnerable Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PADEP</td>
<td>Participatory Agricultural Development and Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PASADA</td>
<td>Pastoral Activities and Services for People with Aids, Dar es Salaam Archdiocese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PGDSW</td>
<td>Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLWHA</td>
<td>People Living with HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWD</td>
<td>People with Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGZ</td>
<td>Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACCOs</td>
<td>Savings and Credit Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAWAMA</td>
<td>Sauti ya Watu Waishio Katika Mazingira Magumu – Swahili Acronym for Voices of People Living in Difficult Circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package of Social Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STI's</td>
<td>Sexually Transmitted Infections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Social Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWP</td>
<td>Social Work Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASAF</td>
<td>Tanzania Social Action Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TASWO</td>
<td>Tanzania Association of Social Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TB</td>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TZ</td>
<td>Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URT</td>
<td>United Republic of Tanzania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAMATA</td>
<td>Walio Katika Mapambano na Aids Tanzania – Swahili Acronym for People in the Fight Against Aids in Tanzania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

This chapter provides a historical background and conceptual framework of the study. The socioeconomic context of Tanzania and strategies adopted to address poverty and achieve MDGs are also highlighted. A critical appraisal of the country strategies in achieving the goals is done. The role and contribution of social work with regard to the achievement of UN MDGs and social development are in critical focus.

Background to the Research Project

The undertaking of this country-specific research was part of the implementation of a joint project aimed to promote professional social work towards social development and poverty reduction in East Africa. The study draws its rationale from the fact that despite various plans, programmes, strategies and policies set to eradicate it, poverty continues to have crippling effects to the economic and social well-being of the majority of Tanzanians. Thus, the country’s ambitions for realisation of the MDGs such as that of halving the populations of those living below the poverty line by year 2015 are far from reality.

The role and contribution of the Social Work Profession (SWP) in poverty reduction, social development and hence the realisation of MDGs in Tanzania is the central focus.
Social work has a rich history in addressing poverty at the individual, community and national levels. The profession has continued to work with and for the poor. Since its existence, the profession has enriched many lives (Bailey, 2012, p. 7). Practitioners in the fields of social work, social work education and social development around the world are concerned about recent and continuing economic crises, modalities employed to address them and how the same continue to increase inequalities (ibid, p. 9). At an international level, the profession is at the forefront in setting deliberate actions to fight poverty. The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW, 2012) has committed itself in addressing poverty by setting a policy stipulating roles of social workers in poverty reduction.

The study reviewed and appraised the progress of MDGs and challenges in achieving their targets in the Tanzanian context. A review of programmes undertaken to reduce poverty and achieve social development was also done. It also assessed the extent to which professional social workers are engaged in programmes designed to reduce poverty and achieve social development. It explored the specific roles and tasks undertaken by professional social workers in addressing poverty and the realisation of the MDGs and assesses the adequacy of the social work curriculum in preparing social workers to address issues of poverty and MDGs in the country. Aspects of fieldwork were also assessed based on their importance in social work training and practice.

The study is intended to inform the review of the curriculum to ensure that it equips learners with requisite knowledge, skills and competencies to address poverty and social development issues and problems. It also contributes towards
the existing efforts to regulate the social work profession in the country and eventually in the East African region.

**Tanzania - Socioeconomic and Educational Context**

Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa. According to the 2012 population census the official population of Tanzania is 44,929,002 people. Out of these, 43,625,432 and 1,303,568 people are residents in Tanzania Mainland and Tanzania Zanzibar, respectively. The country has a high population growth rate with a fertility rate that stands at 5.4%. Despite the high fertility rate, the country can best be described as a young nation due to the fact that the average life expectancy rate of its population stood at 53.14 years as of 2012. However, life expectancy rate is even lower among those living with HIV/Aids. The URT (2007a, p. 1) estimates that life expectancy at birth is 47 years for men and 49 years for women with HIV and Aids scenarios.

Like other developing countries, Tanzania is predominantly rural. More than 80% of its citizens live in rural areas and are solely dependent on subsistence agriculture. Lives of the majority of rural populations remain challenged by a number of social, economic, political, cultural and structural factors that hinder them from enjoying decent life. Between 2005 and 2010, the country recorded an impressive growth in per capital Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from that of TSh 441,000 in 2005 to TSh 770,000 in 2010 (URT, 2011, p. 38). As has been the case with many other African countries, the economy of Tanzania grew at 7% per annum during the above-mentioned period (URT, 2011).

---

1 Note that Tanzania became the United Republic after the union between the former Tanganyika and Zanzibar that occurred on 26th April 1964.
Contrary to the progress described above, findings from a very powerful “Views of the People” report by Research and Analysis Working Group and United Republic of Tanzania (2008) indicated that the economic growth did not simultaneously contribute towards decreased poverty among Tanzanians of different income levels. Based on the findings of this report that involved 8,000 respondents, more Tanzanians in all income groups, perceived to have falling rather than rising living standards even after the three years of implementation of the popular poverty reduction policy known as the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP I) which is referred to in its Swahili acronym as MKUKUTA.

Therefore, despite efforts to eradicate poverty, Tanzania is still ranked among the poorest countries of the world. Out of every 100 Tanzanians, 34 were estimated to be poor (URT, 2010). Besides income poverty, the country continues to face a number of other socioeconomic challenges including unemployment, HIV/Aids, grossly inadequate social services in general and social protection systems in particular. Realising the inadequacy of and the concomitant importance of social protection, the country envisages, through its cluster two of its second National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP II), to ensure that improvement of quality of life and social well-being of the poorest and most vulnerable groups is attained.

Despite the rising poverty rates and the associated challenges, social work professional practice and education in Tanzania has not been well-positioned to address it. The social development principles as advocated by Midgley and Conley (2010) are yet to be applied in social work practice and education in order to create the desired social and
economic changes to the majority of poor and marginalised populations. The profession is rooted and hence heavily relies on the individualistic rather than community services (Mwansa, 2012, p. 365). Similar to its history in other African countries, the profession is transplanted as a colonial export from Europe (Mwansa, 2012, p. 365). Thus, its approaches, programmes and methods are yet to be adapted to indigenous systems and environments. Principles of welfarism as opposed to empowerment and developmental ones guided the post-independence and current practice – and not much has been done to change that. As a consequence, primary needs and dominant social problems that face the majority of the Tanzanian population lack adequate attention of professional social workers. Lack of a social work vision as pointed by Burke and Ngonyani (2004) is likely to be one of the reasons for lack of focus by the profession in addressing major problems of the indigenous populations (poverty being the major one). Therefore, these professional gaps, coupled with the emergency of new and complex social, economic, health, cultural and political problems and challenges that undermine human rights and the possibilities for social justice require a professional transformation.

In view of the above and by virtue of its nature, social work is envisioned to have a noble role to play in poverty reduction and achievement of social development and hence to the realisation of MDGs. Yet, little is known regarding the extent to which the profession contributes towards that end. Thus, this study establishes its premise along these grounds.
The PROSOWO Project

The project idea was conceived in a joint workshop held in Nairobi in 2010 where a proposal was developed to promote professional social work towards social development and poverty reduction in East Africa. This was under the auspices of the Austrian Partnership Programme in Higher Education and Research for Development (APPEAR). Partner institutions include Carinthia University of Applied Sciences (Austria), Makerere University (Uganda), University of Nairobi (Kenya), Institute of Social Work (Tanzania) and University of Rwanda (Rwanda). The project addresses a number of objectives namely:

- To strengthen the capacity of higher social work education institutions in the region through research, curriculum development and joint publications.
- To develop sustainable academic partnerships and networks in Africa and with Austria in social work training and research.
- To conduct research on the role of social work in poverty reduction and the realisation of the MDGs.
- To develop a more relevant social work curriculum in alignment with national poverty reduction plans and social development strategies.
- To facilitate the process of drafting a discussion paper on regulating the social work profession in the respective countries.

Based on the findings from the reviewed literature, the study is the first to be undertaken in Tanzania. It informs social work professionals about the inefficiencies in addressing poverty. Findings suggest the review of the curriculum, regulation and transformation of the social work profession. However, it is
worth noting that initial steps are already underway to develop a profession regulatory body. The Tanzanian Association of Social Workers in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare are spearheading the process.

**Study Objectives and Key Research Questions**

The study was intended to realise the following objectives:

- Appraise the progress of MDGs and the challenges in achieving their targets;
- Identify key programmes undertaken to reduce poverty and achieve social development and the extent to which professional social workers are engaged in such programmes;
- Explore the specific roles and tasks undertaken by professional social workers in addressing poverty and the realisation of the MDGs; and
- Assess the adequacy of the social work curriculum in preparing social workers to address issues of poverty and MDGs in the country (including aspects of fieldwork as part of the curriculum).

Deducing from the above objectives, it can be synthesised that the research focused on three strands namely; social work education and training (curriculum), social work practice, and policy and cross-cutting issues.

**Social Work Training**

With regard to the training, the following key issues were investigated:

- How well does the social work curriculum in Tanzania prepare graduates to handle issues of poverty and social development?
• What specific knowledge and skills are they equipped with?
• What should be covered in the curriculum but is currently not?
• To what extent is gender mainstreamed in the curriculum?

**Social Work Practice**

In practice, the following key issues were investigated:

• In what ways is professional social work practice contributing to poverty reduction in Tanzania?
• Given their professional training, what should social workers be doing in promoting MDGs and social development but they are not doing? What are the constraints?
• To what extent are social development programmes engaging social workers? What specific services and tasks are they engaged in? Who is doing the social work role?
  Do these agencies employ professional social workers?

**Policy and Cross-cutting Issues**

The study was also to assess:

• The policy and legal environment for social work education and practice including identifying the professional strengths and gaps – What can be done to ensure that there is an enabling environment for social work education and practice?
• Cross-cutting issues of gender and rural-urban differentials in service delivery and outcomes; and
• The sociocultural and political factors that confront social workers and how these impact on practice – Problematic dilemmas in social work practice with special consideration of globalisation of social work vis-à-vis the local context and the tension that is sometimes created by this.
Key Conceptual Framework and Thematic Issues

In order to understand the role of social work in poverty reduction and realisation of MDGs in East Africa, six (6) key conceptual aspects were considered important. They were: professional social work, poverty (reduction), social development, Millennium Development Goals, gender equity, and culturally sensitive practices as they are further explained in the following sub-sections. Gender and culturally sensitive practices are viewed as cross-cutting issues to be considered at every stage of the study.

Professional Social Work

Social work has a professional mandate to enhance the “functioning” of individuals and groups so that individuals’ and society’s well-being are assured. Social work as a profession has existed in East Africa for many decades and some institutions such as the Institute of Social Work (ISW) started training social workers at a diploma level as far back as the early 1970s. Through the years, many changes have taken place both in the political and socioeconomic arena that necessitate the review of the role of social work. To meaningfully appraise this role, there is a need to explore the current status of social work education in the country. Review of training is important because the ability of social workers to pursue their roles in society is dependent on the adequacy and relevancy of the preparation they receive in terms of training and education. With regard to practice, social workers intervene at different levels in society and perform varied roles. Some are residual while others developmental. Exploring the current nature of practice of social work will help delineate its contribution to social development and the realisation of the MDGs. Other key elements in understanding the status of
professional social work will include benchmarking the legal and policy environment in which social work is practised as well as organisational and other non-organisational factors that impact on social work and influence its contribution to social development.

Poverty Reduction

Poverty is the greatest problem confronting the modern world (Cox and Pawar, 2006, p. 167). It has overwhelmingly crippling effects on individuals’ “functioning”, capabilities and well-being which in turn keeps them in a vicious cycle of poverty. Despite its effects and the concomitant efforts to reduce it, poverty continues to be pervasive among the majority of population of the developing countries (Tanzania inclusive). It is also the major problem that faces the client population of social workers as it has been proven by this study. On these grounds, it becomes obvious that assisting people to come out of poverty is one of the critical and fundamental roles of social work particularly in the African context. Poverty is defined by Davies (2000, p. 263) as the enforced lack of those material items which a majority of people accept as essential for participation in society. Based on this definition, people who do not have or because of low income are unable to purchase the goods and services which would allow them to participate fully in society are living in poverty. In the Tanzanian context, poverty has remained a problem for slightly above one-third of the population who fail to meet their basic needs. The 2000-2008 Millennium Development Goals Midway Evaluation Report (URT, 2007a, p. 4) indicates that “the proportion of people living below the national basic needs poverty line of TSh 13,998 per month in 2007 stood at 33.6 %.”
As a response to and commitment towards poverty reduction and realisation of the MDGs, the Tanzanian government has put in place policies, strategies and programmes for poverty reduction. These include the two popular National Strategies for Growth and Reduction of Poverty (NSGRP) I and II (URT 2005; 2010) and the Development Visions 2020 for its Zanzibar Island (RGZ, 2002) and 2025 for the Tanzania Mainland (URT, 1999). The country has also implemented specific programmes intended to improve the economical, educational, health and environmental conditions for its citizens. Affirmative actions have also been taken to reduce gender inequalities and hence ensure enhanced and equal participation of men and women in the production and distribution of resources.

Whereas there has been some progress made in poverty reduction in Tanzania, it is also true that in absolute terms, the number of people living in poverty remains unacceptably high. Poverty remains highest in the rural areas where 37 % of the population fall below the basic needs (URT, 2007a, p. 4).

High unemployment rates, lack of access to productive resources such as land, credit, market and information limit the productive capacity of the poor. Lack of access to basic services, such as education and healthcare, results in limited opportunities for the poor. This is exacerbated by increasing inequalities between the rich and the poor. The poor remain excluded from the development process. Even with a number of well-intentioned poverty reduction programmes, the poor do not actively and meaningfully participate and benefit. Part of the problem is lack of effective mobilisation at community level as well as a general sense of powerlessness among the population, which would need to be dealt with in order to increase people’s ability to participate meaningfully in
development and overcome poverty. The role that social work is playing or can play in this sense needs to be carefully examined.

**Social Development**

Social development is not a very new concept in social work. It is a wider interdisciplinary field that informs a distinctive approach in social work known as developmental social work (Midgley and Conley 2010, p. xiii). Social development seeks developmental rather than remedial solutions that originally defined social work as a profession. Although not a new concept in social work, new debates on social development positioned it as an approach which addresses social issues such as poverty in a comprehensive and integrated manner. According to Elliot (2012, p. 102) the approach brings a much-needed economic perspective to social work and social welfare.

Key indicators of social development include levels of income, employment, educational attainment, access to healthcare and the health status of the population, and availability and access to social protection for vulnerable groups in society, among others. Social development is said to occur variously through human capital formation and mobilisation, asset accumulation and investment, employment creation and microenterprise in poor communities. This has implications on the specific roles that social workers can play alongside other professionals to contribute to social development. In recent years, there have been renewed calls to boost social work’s focus on social development through emphasis on developmental social work. Midgley and Conley (2010, p. xii) view that a key feature of developmental social work is the use of investment strategies in professional practice. They further pointed that developmental social work does
not only emphasise on clients’ strength and empowerment, but also requires clients be provided with tangible social investments that enhance their capabilities and facilitate their participation in community life and the productive economy. In addition to social work’s roles of mobilisation, education and empowerment, there is a need to appraise the specific contribution that social work is making towards the promotion and protection of human rights and social justice as key elements of social development.

Millennium Development Goals

Millennium Development Goals are goals for development and poverty eradication contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration signed in 2000 by 189 countries, which commits all member states to the realisation of specified targets by 2015 (UN, 2000). Various programmes have been implemented in line with the MDGs in Tanzania. An appraisal of the current status and particularly the social aspects of MDGs is crucial for bringing out specific roles that social work is or should play in order to quicken the realisation of the goals. The Tanzania Millennium Development Goals Mid-Way Evaluation Report (URT, 2008, p. 3) suggests that the country is off-track on income poverty-based measures (though performing better on food poverty-based measures). While there are general challenges such as inadequate financing, there are also specific challenges that point to a need for a more active engagement of social workers as a professional group. Such areas of intervention need to be identified within specific MDG goals and strategies for social work’s contribution laid in more specific terms. A critical aspect in appraising the role of social work in MDGs is to ensure that they are reflected in the social work curricula.
Gender and Equality

Gender refers to the set of characteristics, behaviours and practices associated with the sexual categories of male and female (Davies, 2000, p. 142). It has been further cautioned by Davies (2000, p. 142) that within social science the definition of gender is dependent upon the theoretical framework which is used to explain it. Women and men, girls and boys are affected differently by poverty and other social ills in society. At the same time, their access to opportunities and participation in the process of development differs. The persistence of high levels of inequality of income, assets and opportunities exacerbate poverty. In almost all cases, women are disproportionately affected by chronic poverty, ill health and illiteracy. They also have limited access to and control over productive assets, which exacerbates their vulnerability. Gender aside, there are also severe disparities in regional development as well as between the rural-urban contexts. As a result, it is crucial that all research, policy and programming apply a gender lens and also take into account the rural-urban and regional differentials in order to remove unnecessary inequalities. According to Dominelli (2012), social workers have significant contributions in identifying the specificity of gender inequalities that discriminate against women and children throughout the lifespan and have sought a gender equality that values them. Thus, promotion of gender equality as well as social and structural change remains inevitable intervention strategies for social workers.

Culturally Sensitive Practice

Social, cultural, economic as well as the political environments influence professional practices. In support of this, Franklin
(1990, cited in Gray, Mazibuko and O’Brien, 1996, p. 1) noted that, professions are shaped by the social and political realities of their time and by the societies of which they are a part. In view of this, it is important for the profession to be aware of this reality and develop practice models and strategies that are not only relevant but acceptable to the communities. Therefore, there is a need for recognition of the importance to indigenise/localise social work theory and practice models in the Tanzanian current context without necessarily losing the universal values and professional ethical standards.

**Summary**

This study was geared towards assessing the role of social work in poverty reduction and the realisation of MDGs. Six key variables are used to examine the adequacy of social work practice and training in responding to challenges posed by poverty and contributing to global Millennium Development Goals. This chapter has endeavoured to present meanings and the connection of these concepts to the key theme of the study.
Study Approach and Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the approach and methods used to address the research problem. It explains the design, the study population, geographical coverage, methods of selection of study participants, data collection methods, tools and techniques and data management, analysis and reporting procedures. Steps taken to obtain ethical clearance and ensure validity of data collection instruments together with limitations of the study are presented.

Overall Research Design

The study adopted a cross-sectional design. It used a blend of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Findings generated from the two methods were used in a complementary manner. Quantitative methods helped to measure occurrences and establish the averages and percentages thus establishing the magnitude of specific issues under investigation. The qualitative approach helped to understand the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of respective respondents on the specific issues studied. Moreover, quantitative and qualitative methods and approaches in data collection, analysis and presentation were used in order to ensure triangulation and enhance the validity of data. Some of the qualitative aspects explored were:

- Different policies and programmes undertaken to tackle poverty and achieve social development.
• Perspectives of respondents on roles of social work towards poverty reduction and social development.
• Perceived strengths and gaps in the existing social work curricula as reflected on by third year bachelor’s degree students, social work practitioners, educators and employers.

Quantitative aspects of the study included:
• Sociodemographic information of the study population in terms of gender, locality (rural-urban divides), educational levels and employing organisations.
• Distribution of social workers in key poverty reduction programmes in the public and private (not-for-profit) sectors.
• Gender disaggregated data on poverty, social development indicators and social work employers.
• Rural-urban differences in terms of social work employment and other related variables.
• Ratio of social work positions occupied by qualified social workers.

**Study Population, Sample and Selection Procedures**

The study involved six categories of respondents. These included; social work practitioners, clients, social work employers, policy makers, social work educators, and third year students of bachelor’s degree in social work drawn from two selected social work training institutions namely; the Institute of Social Work and the Open University of Tanzania. Each of these categories of respondents was purposely included due to its perceived potential in appraising not only the social work curricula and practice but also the contribution of the
profession towards social development and MDG realisation. Another ground for students’ inclusion was that they are immediate beneficiaries/consumers of the most recent social work curricula. They also have an opportunity to test the theories, models and skills acquired during their training, particularly through periodic fieldwork placements.

Inclusion of clients was based on the fact that they are direct beneficiaries of social workers’ services hence better positioned to ascertain the extent to which the services they receive help them address poverty-related problems and challenges. Clients were also envisioned to be potential and key informants in proposing best strategies to be used by social workers in order to help them deal with their problems more comprehensively.

On the other hand, social work practitioners, employers and policy makers were all included by virtue of their work experience in dealing with poverty-related issues while educators were viewed as potential in appraising social work curricula.

**Sample Selection Procedures**

This study was intended to have equal representation of respondents in terms of gender and locality. It also provided a relatively equal representation of respondents from both governmental and non-governmental organisations. Contrary to this intention, however, the researchers did not manage to meet the set target due to disproportional distribution nature of social workers. However, in totality field data was collected from 25 social welfare agencies across the five main regions of Tanzania namely; Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Ruvuma, Lindi and Mtwara. Key factors considered in the selection of study sites were: a) Ensuring gender balance, b) Ensuring a balance in
urban/rural divide and c) Availability of social workers and implicit programmes and interventions (whether private or public) that focus on elimination of poverty or attainment of MDGs. Though the intention of the study was to ensure equal inclusion of social workers from rural and urban settings, it was not practically possible because no social workers were employed up to the local level (ward, village or even hamlet). Thus, the rural population is hardly reached by social workers. On these parameters, social work practice can therefore be termed as an urban or semi-urban oriented professional service in Tanzania. It is yet to be extended to the rural, grass-roots level.

**Selection of Social Welfare Agencies**

Selection of organisations employing social workers was done through snowball and purposive sampling methods. A snowball method was adopted due to lack of a reliable social work database in the country. We should mention here that it was technically difficult to identify and verify organisations that directly addressed poverty issues prior to the decision to include them into the study. Therefore, the selection was by logical implications of the functions of the organisation. For instance, hospitals employing social workers were involved due to their perceived direct involvement in reduction of child and maternal mortality rates as well as provision of HIV and Aids prevention and treatment services. Despite this difficulty, researchers made a conscious effort to select agencies from key thematic areas aligned to the MDGs, i.e. poverty, hunger, education, child health, maternal health, HIV and Aids, and gender.

Thus, government social welfare agencies were used as entry points whose social workers were requested to mention
other agencies that employed social workers (from whom data was subsequently collected). The same approach was followed until the required number of respondents was reached. Purposive sampling was done to select both the government and non-governmental organisations.

**Selection of Respondents**

Selection of respondents from each organisation was systematically done depending on the size of the respective agency. However, a minimum of two respondents were interviewed including a social work practitioner and any other person at managerial level to represent the agency (employer). In total, 100 social work practitioners and 35 agency representatives were interviewed. A total of 25 organisations were involved. In organisations that had different divisions, at least one social worker from each of the divisions was involved. In most organisations that employed social workers the employer’s questionnaires were mostly referred to senior social work officials due to what was explained as limited knowledge about the profession among the non-professionals.

**Selection of Higher Education Institutions**

The study was designed to include 20 final year students from the Open University of Tanzania, but instead, 19 students were involved; and 80 from the Institute of Social Work. Both institutions are located in Dar es Salaam, which is an urban setting. Thus, the study lacked a rural representation of both educators and students. A total of nine educators also participated in the study. In each institution, students as well as educators were randomly selected and given a self-
administered questionnaire to fill at their own convenient time. Researchers made constant follow-ups to ensure that the questionnaires were duly filled and collected at the agreed time. Eight educators were subjected to a narrative semi-structured interview so as to obtain a deeper insight of the views, feelings and opinions regarding the role of the profession in poverty reduction, social development and realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The reason to include only two institutions was that by the time of study undertaking, the two were the only institutions that had students with required qualifications established by the researchers. The history of social work training in Tanzania shows that from 1973 up to 2007 there was only one social work training institution, namely the Institute of Social Work. This Institute began to offer a bachelor’s degree course in social work in 2005. By 2007, the Open University of Tanzania also initiated the course. Although there is currently a number of training institutions intending to offer the course, none of them was operational at the time of the study.

Social Work Clients
Social work clients were considered a potential target group that would inform social workers regarding the adequacy of their practice methods and services offered. To solicit their views, clients were involved in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Two FGDs were conducted in the semi-rural while the other two in the urban setting, thus making a total of four FGDs which involved between six and eight participants. However, two additional individual client interviews were conducted especially in circumstances where it was found the best option to gather individual clients’ views. The clients were mobilised through agencies that served them and the
choice of the agencies from where the clients were selected was random and depended on the availability and readiness of the agency to mobilise them.

**Selection of National Level Key Informants**

Key informants were purposively selected from relevant agencies at the local government and higher national levels to represent the views of policy makers. Respondents were selected from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs, Local Government Authorities, National Association of Social Workers in Tanzania and a representative from higher learning institutions.

In Table 2.1, a summary of study respondents and the corresponding data collection methods is given.

**Table 2.1: Study Sample and Data Collection Tools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of respondents</th>
<th>Tool/technique used</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work employers</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work employers</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work educators</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work educators</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final year social work students</td>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy makers</td>
<td>Interview guide</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>FGD guide</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clients</td>
<td>Semi-structured interview</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data Collection Methods, Tools and Techniques
Data Collection took place between 10th September and 2nd November 2011. In order to achieve the study objectives, both secondary and primary data were collected and utilised. The following methods of data collection were used:

- Desk review of published literature, policy and programme documents as well as reports;
- Questionnaires; and
- Personal interviews with agencies (employer representatives), educators and policy makers.

Primary Data Collection Methods and Tools
To gather primary data, the following data collection tools were employed:

i) Questionnaires
Four different sets of questionnaires were administered to social work practitioners, students, employers and educators. They were standardised, with both pre-coded and open-ended questions relating to key research objectives in order to allow for comparability of responses. In administering the questionnaire, a lot of flexibility was allowed. In some instances, researchers administered the questionnaire where they asked questions and filled in the responses. However, where respondents expressed the need for more time, researchers opted for self-administration of the same, hence left the questionnaires with respondents and made next appointments for collecting the duly filled ones. This was a bit costly and time-consuming but an unavoidable option due to the nature of work of the majority of social workers who chose the option. Despite the difficulties associated with
getting timely responses and feedback, the researchers managed to obtain the required information from the planned number of social work respondents. For the students, the questionnaire was self-administered. This was preferred because it was easier to get most students in one sitting; give general instructions; and distribute questionnaires for responses. The questionnaires were designed to address particular thematic areas in relation to the study objectives, namely: social work and poverty reduction, MDGs, social development, gender, culturally sensitive practice, and the social work training (including the adequacy and relevance of the curriculum and fieldwork). Questionnaires for educators and employers were also self-administered due to convenience reasons.

ii) **Personal Interviews**

Personal interviews were conducted with 20 employers, eight educators, eight policy makers and two clients. The interview guide had a combination of open-ended and closed questions to guide collection of responses and perceptions of key actors on the contribution of social work to social development, the competencies and the gaps in social work training and practice in the country. This was advantageous because the people involved, especially at the policy and agency levels, were not necessarily social workers and therefore it would have been restrictive to have pre-coded responses.

iii) **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

As indicated earlier, four FGDs were held with clients of social welfare agencies/social workers. Although attempts to have an equal representation of male and female respondents were done, female clients constituted
the overwhelming majority, that is 21 (80.7 %) out of 26 clients involved in the FGDs. It was also confirmed by social workers that female clients generally constituted the majority of their client population. FGDs with clients were considered significant because they provided evidence about the experience of social work services by different clientele and by gender as well. The outcomes of the discussions were crucial in gauging the extent to which social work as a profession is felt at the grassroots and its appropriateness in addressing diverse social problems.

Tape recording was done for all the discussions (with prior permission of the participants) alongside note-taking in order to guard against loss of data. The recording was also done in order to allow for accurate translation. Most of interviews were collected in Swahili (Tanzanian national language) and later translated into English.

**Secondary Data Collection Methods**

Secondary data was gathered through review of available literature based on thematic issues of the study. To standardise the review process, a mutually agreed checklist was developed. The checklist guided and formed a base for the literature review process and appraised the curriculum and MDGs implementation progress. Some of the key documents considered for review included:

- Policy documents (Millennium Development Goals – progress reports);
- Poverty reduction strategy papers (e.g. NSGRP);
- Unpublished academic papers (conference and workshop papers, research reports, etc.);
- Statistical data (annual reports from relevant ministries)
Curricula and course outlines from higher education institutions.

**Data Management, Analysis and Reporting**

**Data Management**

Collected data was cleaned to ensure that falsification was avoided. Therefore, editing was done at different levels as an ongoing process. Prior to data collection, pretesting of the research tools was done with the wider population of social workers during the Annual General Meeting (AGM) organised by the Tanzania Association of Social Workers held on 16th August 2011. During data collection, ongoing editing was allowed, hence, enabled the researchers to identify areas for clarifying during subsequent interviews, particularly for qualitative data. For quantitative data, particular emphasis was laid on completeness and consistency in the responses given for related questions. At the end of the fieldwork, the senior researcher re-edited all the questionnaires as a quality assurance measure before subjecting them to statistical analysis. Quantitative data was entered directly into SPSS while for some it was entered in Excel and later exported to the SPSS program for analysis. The statistical data set was then cleaned in order to remove occasional errors made during the data entry. Care was taken to only check for errors in entry and not alteration of specific responses.

For qualitative data, verbatim transcribing was done (to the possible extent) for all audio-recorded interviews and discussions. Research assistants were required to transcribe the records. This had the advantage of minimising loss of information since they could easily recall the flow of the interviews. It was also considered cost-effective compared
to hiring completely new transcribers. The senior researcher made a random transcription of some recordings in order to ensure that the process was accurately done.

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

Analysis of quantitative data was done through a computer assisted analysis programme namely the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 17). Further to this, a bivariate analysis was done to bring out relationships between different variables such as the type of organisation (public/private), locality, sex of respondents, and institution attended (in case of social work professionals). This was especially helpful in bringing out the gender as well as the rural-urban differentials with regard to different aspects of professional social work, and its current role in poverty reduction and MDG realisation.

**Qualitative Data Analysis**

Qualitative data was categorised into key research thematic areas. Then, thematic analysis was done for data collected through FGDs and interviews. A coding scheme was developed in line with the conceptual framework, theoretical assumptions, corresponding research questions and the data collected. Emerging themes and sub-themes were identified based on their level of recurrence within the data collected and in line with the key research questions. A conscious effort was made to identify the latent content in the transcribed material beyond the verbalised responses. For this purpose, in some cases, the critical words were left in their original language. Some of the presented statements are answers to the open-ended questions of the questionnaires. That explains why some remarks of the interviewees appear in keywords.
Reporting/Triangulation

Data collected through both qualitative and quantitative methods has been used in a mutually reinforcing manner to give a logical interpretation to the research findings and arrive at conclusions.

Research Clearance and Other Ethical Issues

All necessary procedures were followed to get the research clearance and conform to ethical standards of social science research. The senior researcher sought and obtained permission from the Tanzanian Commission of Science and Technology to conduct the study. The research team equally conformed to the additional requirements of some regional and district authorities that requested them to re-apply for research permits to the respective Regional and or District Administrative Directors as they would not honour the permission granted by the above stated commission. Moreover, researchers made sure that respondents were well informed of the study and its purpose prior to their involvement into the study. Researchers also complied with the condition set by some district social welfare officers that prohibited them from taking photos.

Assurance of Quality and Content Validity

Two crucial steps were taken to ensure the validity of research instruments. Firstly, the instruments were designed through teamwork. All the PROSOWO project implementing members contributed to and reviewed each tool to ensure thoroughness, relevance and clarity in terms of the information it intended to collect. Secondly, the questionnaires were pretested in large social forum like the social workers’ annual general meeting.
On the basis of the pretest, the tools were refined by the research team before being administered to the respondents.

**Study Limitations**

Researchers encountered some difficulties during the data collection process that posed as bottlenecks in the realisation of some targets. Field data was collected during the time that the Institute of Social Work was undergoing a critical period of disputation between the academic staff and management. The situation led to the expulsion of some lecturers who were a potential source of information. This partly contributed to the failure to obtain the planned number of educators. Moreover, this situation also influenced students’ responses, particularly to questions that required them to give views and opinions regarding how social work training should be improved in the country. A substantial number pointed to the need for the Institute of Social Work to find permanent solutions to its problems.
CHAPTER THREE

Poverty, Social Development, MDGs and Social Work

Introduction

In this chapter poverty reduction and social development programmes in Tanzania are presented. The extent to which the social work profession contributes towards poverty reduction and achievement of social development is also critically assessed. Based on secondary and primary data, the chapter presents an analysis of the existing programmes for poverty reduction and the extent to which social workers are involved and hence contribute to the achievement of the MDGs. The goals examined are the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, education, maternal and child health, combating HIV/AIDS and other diseases, gender equality and empowerment of women, ensuring environmental sustainability and global partnership for development. The contradiction between political rhetoric and actual implementation of the social development programmes is also discussed. The discussion is based on the secondary as well as empirical findings from this study.

Dimensions/Manifestations of Poverty - Perspectives from the Field

Research findings confirmed that poverty is still a major problem affecting the majority of social work clients. All (100%) of social work practitioners involved in the study affirmed
that poverty is a problem that mostly affects their clients. Nearly two-thirds (60 %) estimated that the level/magnitude of poverty among their client population is “high”. Figure 3.1 gives a summary of social workers’ responses regarding the estimated level of poverty among clients.

Figure 3.1: Estimated Magnitude of Poverty among Clients of Social Workers (n=100)

Findings summarised in Figure 3.1 indicate that nearly two-thirds (60 %) of social work practitioners estimated that the poverty rate among their clients is “high”. Close to one-third (29 %) viewed the magnitude as being “very high”. Very few (9 % and 2 %) felt that the prevalence is “moderate” and “low”, respectively. These findings correspond with those generated through interviews and FGDs with clients. Two dimensions of problems seemed to be dominant among clients. These entail poverty-related problems including lack of access to basic necessities of life on one side, and other gender-related problems on the other. In order to improve the situation, a
dominant change that many clients wished to see in their life is to have a “poverty-free society” (female clients, Lindi).

**Definition of Poverty - Views of Study Respondents**

Poverty has been variably defined. However, there is a general consensus that poverty is a relative term. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2006) International Poverty Centre suggests that the meaningful definition of poverty depends on “Who asks the question, how is it understood and who responds.” On this ground, in this study an attempt was made to gather views of study respondents regarding their understanding and conceptualisation. Findings suggest that the dominant perspective by social work practitioners related poverty to a state of deprivation. A male social work practitioner working with Tanzania Prisons Service Force in Dar es Salaam stated that “poverty is a situation whereby an individual, group or community fails to meet their basic needs or meet unsatisfied needs.”

Poverty was also conceptualised as a situation that can place people at a risky and vulnerable condition. A male social work practitioner who works as the Community Development Officer at the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Dar es Salaam, defined poverty as “a condition that places people at risk due to problems that come around as a result of inadequate resources, especially income.” It was also stated that poverty finally places people in devastating living conditions which are far below the minimum standards. Therefore, people’s abilities to meet the basic human needs such as food, shelter and clothing, including access to quality medical care and education are significantly affected.
Based on an analysis of the views gathered from clients, poverty was defined within the framework of two dominant dimensions; the economic and the social one. A state of deprivation and its related vulnerability and discrimination coloured the definition as one female client respondent said:

Poverty is a state of lack of ability to meet your basic necessities of life and this situation can make you become discriminated against even by your close relatives. For instance, I am HIV positive hence, when once I was sick no relative, even my own children, came to me because I had nothing, but when I started a small business they began to come.

Moreover, various causes of poverty were pointed out. Some social workers attributed poverty to weaknesses of social work practitioners to perform their duties including that of assisting clients solve their economic problems. Others felt that the root cause is the “failure to utilise the available resources” (female Social Work Practitioner, Mtwara). It was also mentioned that clients themselves are responsible for their own poverty. “Unavailability of resources to help clients to achieve development” was pointed as a major stumbling block. (female Probation and Community Service SW Practitioner, Iringa).

Nevertheless, poor leadership coupled with bad implementation and monitoring of plans was also mentioned as root cause of poverty. In another perspective, poverty was associated with the state of dependency which in turn restricts personal autonomy and hinders freedom of action. Another respondent mentioned that the root cause of poverty was “poor education and ignorance” (male SW Practitioner, Songea).
Regarding the dimensions of poverty, the majority of practitioners had opinions that poverty can be encountered by an individual, a family or even the whole society. Deducing from the respondents’ views, poverty was socially defined as a term that refers to a condition encountered by people who are below the economic stability line drawn by the society. It leads to marginalisation, vulnerability and deprivation from individual, social and cultural development. It restricts people to live up to their full potentials as well restricting their autonomy. Poverty was also explained as a state and condition of “taking away people’s rights, freedom, dignity and well-being.” It “puts people’s lives in danger and robs them of their future” (female SW Practitioner working at Future for Most Vulnerable Children agency, Dar es Salaam). A general conclusion regarding poverty is that it is more than one “just” being badly off economically. It also implies feelings of helplessness, voicelessness and the inability to properly contribute and engage in the social fabric. One of the social work practitioners defined it as “a state of being inferior in quality or insufficient in amount” (female SW Practitioner, PASADA, Dar es Salaam). In conclusion, poverty is seen as a major constraint of social development of a flourishing society.

**Key Poverty Reduction/Social Development Programmes**

**Post Independence Programmes**

Efforts and strategies for poverty reduction in Tanzania date back from the post-independence era. During his reign, the first president of the United Republic of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, declared poverty, ignorance and diseases as the major enemies of development. Thus, various policies and
programmes were developed during the post-independence era in order to enhance socio-economic development. For instance, primary education and agricultural development programmes were among the programmes geared towards the improvement of people’s standard of living.

**The Post-1980s Programmes**

Tanzania is among the 189 countries that endorsed the Millennium Development Goals in September 2000 at the General Assembly of the United Nations as part of the internationally agreed-upon development goals (URT, 2008, p. 1). The MDGs call upon both the developing and developed countries to work together towards creating a world with less poverty, hunger and disease, guaranteeing basic education for children, equal opportunities and prospects for mothers and infants, for women, and a healthier environment (ibid, p. 1).

In order to eradicate poverty and realise the globally agreed-upon goals, Tanzania recorded a remarkable progress in policy and programme development. For instance, deliberate efforts have been done to align and mainstream the MDGs with the national medium-term strategies and long-term policies such as the Vision 2025 for Tanzania Mainland (URT, 1999) and Vision 2020 for the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (RGZ, 2002). These two long-term policies share a common goal which is to transform the country from a least developed to a middle income one with a higher level of human development. A summary of major policies addressing poverty reduction both prior to and after endorsement of MDGs include:

i) **The National Agricultural and Livestock Policy (1997)**

The Tanzanian Government recognises that the agricultural sector significantly contributes to the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), export earning and employment creation.
Therefore, it embarked on the formulation of Agriculture and Livestock Policy (URT, 1997) in order to increase the contribution of the sector in the economy. There has also been different plans and commitments made to reduce poverty through improving the use of agricultural inputs and fertilisers. Despite these efforts, income poverty for the majority of the rural population is yet to be significantly reduced. In general, the majority of the population in rural areas is not reached by social workers. Findings of the study presented in this book have reaffirmed that. Thus, the need to ensure that rural societies are adequately covered by social and economic developmental programmes is essential.

ii) **The National Employment Policy (1997)**

Unemployment is one of the critical problems that face growing economies of the so-called third world countries such as Tanzania. It contributes to increased poverty rates. Therefore, in order to effectively address the unemployment problem, the government of the United Republic of Tanzania has formulated the National Employment Policy in 1997. The aim was to guide and ensure effective utilisation of the labour force, increase per capital income which will in turn reduce the level of poverty. Despite the availability of this policy and other self-employment programmes, the estimates of unemployed persons by year 2011 were 2,368,672 persons which is equivalent to 10.7% of the labour force population. This situation calls for joint, multi-faceted and trans-professional approaches and efforts to redress it.

iii) **National Development Vision 2025**

The country also formulated a Development Vision 2025 (URT, 1999) which aims to guide its economic and social development efforts up to 2025. The Vision has ambitions
to see Tanzania having attained high quality of life, peace, tranquility and national unity, good governance, an educated society and a competitive economy for the growth and benefit of all people by 2025. The researchers are convinced that the attainment of these ambitions can be possible through adoption of people and human rights-based approaches as advocated by the social work profession. Needs and interests of all people, including the most vulnerable disadvantaged and marginalised, should be integrated in the development plans. Therefore, the role of the social work profession in addressing social and developmental issues ought not to be underestimated.


The country also formulated a Health Policy (URT, 2003a) in order to ensure that people’s right to and access to health services is realised. Other policies to address specific problems such as the National HIV/Aids policies have been formulated. Outcomes for implementation of health-related policies and programmes have resulted into increased access to health services and improvements in the reduction of health-related problems such as child and maternal deaths and HIV/Aids prevalence.

v) National Strategies for Growth and Poverty Reduction (NSGRP/MKUKUTA I & II)

The two strategy papers are the most common and popular poverty reduction policies formulated in order to translate the long-term national developmental policies. Both, the National Strategy for Growth and Poverty Reduction2 I of 2005/06 to 2009/10 and II of 2010/11 to 2014/15 (URT, 2005; 2010)

---

2 In the Tanzanian lingua franca, Kiswahili, the two policies are known as Mpango wa kwanza (2005/06 - 2009/10) na wa pili (2010/11 - 2014/15 wa Kukuza Uchumi na Kuondoa Umaskini Tanzania or MKUKUTA I and II.
have three strategic priorities that focus on (i) Accelerating economic growth and reducing poverty, (ii) Improving the standard of living and social welfare of the people of Tanzania as well as (iii) Achieving good governance and accountability. MKUKUTA I was marked with improvements in provision of public services like education, health, water, energy, telecommunication and infrastructure particularly roads. It was also marked with impressive progress in improvement of the judicial system and management of public finances, increasing gender equality in leadership positions and fighting against poverty. However, the URT (2010) explicitly points that the country has not done well in increasing economic growth and raising people’s income in MKUKUTA I. This is one of the major gaps that MKUKUTA II strives to fill. Involvement of social workers and the application of developmental social work could be one of the very effective and appropriate means that are most likely to enable the country to realise what was not achieved in MKUKUTA I.

Other policies like those of tax consolidation, Universal Primary Education, or privatisation were also related to poverty reduction. With regard to programmes and plans, views from clients indicate that programmes that have been designed to eradicate poverty include; provision of loans, improvement of agriculture and promotion of small scale businesses for the people. Other programmes that were mentioned included a popular agricultural policy called, “Kilimo Kwanza” (meaning “agriculture first”) and that of loan provisions through the president’s commitment commonly referred to as “Mabilioni ya Kikwete” (meaning the “millions” of Kikwete the President) in 2006.

The trend clearly indicates that Tanzania has a number of policies and strategies geared towards poverty eradication.
Information from the Department of Social Welfare (2012) also supports the existence of comprehensive legal and policy framework for an effective social welfare service delivery system. It was, therefore, the interest of this study to establish the extent to which the rhetoric policies translate into the intended changes. Therefore, views of policy makers regarding this were sought. Findings point to the reality that the level of progress to reduce poverty is only to a “small extent.” Most policies were said to be “in paper than in practice.”

In support of the above, a Songea District Social Welfare Officer noted that:

The country has succeeded to a very low extend. This is because very little funds are allocated in helping people who are absolutely poor. For instance, we have many children who live in difficult circumstances but very limited budget is set aside to support them.

A key informant from the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare pointed that:

The country has succeeded to a very low extent. Poverty reduction policies such as “Kilimo Kwanza” (meaning “agriculture first”) are in place but they remain on paper. People are encouraged to invest in agriculture but the prices of produce are low and our level of science and technology is very poor, we still rely on rainfall only.

Despite the weaknesses, some policy makers highlighted some of the successes (even if modest) reached by the country in reducing poverty. These are associated with increase in microfinance organisations which provide training and capital to many people to start income generating activities (IGAs). In relation to this observation, an official from Songea Municipal Council noted that “Many citizens are increasingly reported to engage in savings and credits groups known as
SACCOs (Savings and Credit Co-operatives). This has helped citizens to access loans more easily, unlike in the past.”

Apart from explicit poverty reduction policies and programmes, findings from policy makers further indicate that the country has formulated specific policies to protect the rights of different groups and ensure provision and access of basic social services like education. They include Child Development Policy of 1996, National Policy on HIV/AIDS (URT, 2001), Universal Primary Education Policy, National Ageing Policy (URT, 2003b), National Policy on Disability (URT, 2004) and Community Development Policy. These policies are not exclusively independent but interconnected to other government policies to enhance socioeconomic development in the country.

Nonetheless, some specifics were provided about particular policies. For instance, it was reported that Universal Primary Education Policy is partly focused on promoting gender equality in the sense that pregnant girls are now allowed to continue with education after delivery. One of the policy makers informed about an act/regulation on “Mirathi” (meaning “inheritance”) which provides equal rights to all children to inherit their parents’ properties.

In a political perspective, it was pointed out that Tanzania has plans to have a 50/50 ratio between men and women in the House of Representatives in order to ensure increased gender equality and female involvement in decision-making. Amidst such plans and policies identified, policy makers could not easily assess major gender-related achievements. They viewed that achievements attained so far are still minimal.

Therefore, appreciation and adoption of gender-sensitive and participatory approaches to development need to be emphasised.
Major Actors in Poverty Reduction/Social Development

Based on findings from interviews with employers, sustainable poverty reduction is a function of different actors ranging from government, civil society, private sector, community, individuals (including children), families and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The government is the key actor. Thus, it was urged that, in order for the government to reduce poverty it should invest in empowering citizens particularly those from the grass-roots level. The focus should also be on enabling the unemployed to secure jobs, equipping the non-skilled with entrepreneurial skills and empowering youth with vocational skills. Another mentioned dimension of empowerment referred to the importance of raising people’s awareness, knowledge and skills on how to make use of the available resources within their reach (monetary and non-monetary including social capital).

Communities are also key actors in poverty reduction. It was asserted that community member’s participation in poverty reduction efforts is paramount. Suggestions were made that community members ought not to be seen as mere recipients of government and civil society support but active role players in fighting poverty. Therefore, all community members including youths were urged to re-evaluate their perception, attitudes and mind-set from being development recipients to taking active role in poverty reduction initiatives. This was confirmed by an Education Coordinator of a youth organisation who remarked that “people, particularly the youth should change their mind-set towards work.”

Social workers were also seen as key actors in poverty reduction. Unfortunately they are not fully engaged. Hence,
the need to broaden the scope of social work influence towards poverty reduction is inevitable and urgent.

In relation to the above observations, some policy makers further identified general roles played by different actors in the realisation of the national and global goals geared towards poverty reduction. Such roles included; sensitisation, awareness raising, resource mobilisation and social services provision to the community members. Other roles included advocacy, lobbying and education for community members. Therefore, social workers have broad and various roles to play in enhancement of people’s well-being if they are fully involved at all levels of development.

**Programme Linkages to the Millennium Development Goals**

Study findings indicate a clear weakness in social work practice and focus to the realisation of MDGs. Majority of the social work practitioners “partly” contribute towards the achievement of three major MDGs namely; poverty reduction and hunger, education and health with a representation of 58 %, 39 % and 45 %, respectively. The ways to which they contributed to poverty reduction differed according to the nature of the organisation and services provided. For instance, the following sentiments indicate the nature of contribution of some social workers working in probation division and those dealing with people affected by HIV/AIDS:

> We prevent offenders who haven’t committed capital offences from custodial punishment. This helps to prevent family disintegration. The offenders as part of community service (a form of punishment) contribute a lot in community work
such as planting trees for the purpose of environmental conservation. (A Senior Parole Officer)

The services we offer really contribute to the realisation of the goals since we work directly with the poor, marginalised, HIV affected/infected clients. We provide them with education and health services and we also contribute to economic strengthening. (PASADA OVC Project Director)

Despite the different levels of contribution by social workers to the MDGs, respondents still felt that there is a link between the role of social work, poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs. Key informants confirmed through these assertions:

The link is obvious. Social work is a profession that can play different roles and if well understood by the society, social work intervention can effectively reduce social problems, including poverty. Hence, this is a realisation of one of the UN MDGs. (Municipal Council Official, Lindi)

General observations suggest that social workers, employers and policy makers have a relatively common believe that social workers have a significant role to play in poverty reduction and the realisation of MDGs. However, this impressive perception is contradicted by the fact that social work is still an underestimated and under-resourced profession in the country.

**Political Rhetoric vs. Actual Implementation – Probable Contradictions**

As explained earlier, significant efforts have been made by the Tanzanian government in terms of policy formulation and planning towards poverty reduction. However, findings from this study indicate a mismatch between policy and
practice. The developed poverty reduction policies are mostly known by higher level government officials while the actual implementation is done by the lower level officials. Similar findings also emerged in a study by Spitzer, Mabeyo and Rwegoshora (2009) where the majority of government officials responsible for implementation of older people’s policy and older people themselves were not aware about the existence of the policy and the entitlements enshrined therein. Moreover, findings of this study also entail that participatory planning is not adequately done. Consequently, in some instances community members are conceived as mere recipients rather than active actors in poverty reduction efforts. Therefore, a bottom-up planning approach is more relevant and viable in poverty reduction. Contrary to this, the actual practice indicates that most poverty reduction strategies seem to be top-down. Such a practice has made some of the social work clients to feel left out in the poverty eradication efforts made by government.

The following comment made by an interviewed client indicates a clear gap between policy and practice at the community level. When asked to comment on impact of poverty reduction policies on her life, a client from Lindi said: “I am not sure but I think the policies want to reduce poverty but they do not do so for those who are not really poor.”

**Summary**

Deducing from the above, one is inclined to say that the existing poverty reduction strategies are yet to significantly translate into decreased income poverty and improved life and living standards of the poor and marginalised populations. Respondents could not relate how the laid down policies have
improved their lives. They felt that a lot still needs to be done to achieve the desired change. These findings correspond with those from a popular Tanzanian report entitled “Views of the People” of 2008 which indicated that one-third of the Tanzanians reported not to be economically better off, even after the three years of implementation of poverty reduction policies, such as MKUKUTA I. Social workers’ contribution to bridge this gap becomes an obvious but untapped potential.
CHAPTER FOUR

Social Work Practice

Introduction
Social work has been practised in Tanzania since 1947. However, not much has been documented regarding its development and contribution to the socioeconomic development of the country. Limited information makes it difficult to ascertain and establish facts regarding: the number of social workers in Tanzania, their educational and employment backgrounds, practice methods and approaches used, major clients they serve, problems that clients present and how adequately and appropriately are clients’ problems solved. In this chapter, we present social and demographic characteristics of the study respondents that shall partly bridge the gap. More specifically, the chapter presents information regarding roles played by social workers and their contribution towards poverty reduction and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Status of Social Work Practice
In this section, a summary of findings regarding main responsibilities and problems that social workers deal with at their employing organisations are presented.

Main Responsibilities of Social Workers
Findings from interviews with employers indicate that social workers play various roles. These include:
The Role of Social Work in Poverty Reduction and Realisation of MDGs in Tanzania

- Providing psychosocial support
- Awareness creation
- Linking clients to resources
- Administration of welfare service
- Resource mobilisation
- Rehabilitation activities (such as probation service)

Based on social workers` views, they pursue many roles and responsibilities as summed up in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1: Major Roles Played by Social Work Practitioners (n=100)

Findings indicate that social workers perform a number of roles. However, counselling was mentioned by the biggest number (30 %) of social workers. Other roles include administration of programmes (15 %), brokering (15 %), educating clients (14 %) and community development and organisation (12 %).
Problems that Social Workers Deal with

Social workers were asked to state problems that they dealt with in their daily work. Poverty emerged to be the major problem. Health-associated problems were the second. The third problem was ignorance and/or lack of education. Family conflicts followed. They included problems such as divorce, wife battering, matrimonial misunderstandings, maintenance of children in cases of divorce, children born out of wedlock, male chauvinism and gender imbalance in sharing of responsibilities. Other problems included unemployment, violation of human rights, exploitation and/or oppression of the poor and the vulnerable, especially women. Weak social protection systems are affecting mostly vulnerable children, adults and the aged. Furthermore, marginalisation of people or communities in access to resources and gender-based and sexual violence are additional problems that social workers are confronted with in the course of their day-to-day work.

Employing Organisations and Designations of Social Workers

It was the intention of this study to understand types of organisations employing social workers and their designations. Findings (as per Figure 4.2) reveal a variation between the actual and expected employers for social work practitioners and students, respectively.

Figure 4.2: Actual Versus Expected Employers of Social Workers
Findings portray that the majority (71%) of social work respondents were employed by the government. However, NGOs also employed a significant number (27%) of them. Private/commercial and faith-based organisations (FBOs) were the least employers. However, it is important to note that some NGOs from which some practitioners were drawn were also referred to as FBOs in nature, hence their under-representation should not be over-estimated.

In a different perception, 78% of educators were of the opinion that their graduates are largely absorbed in the private sector. This gap suggests that social work educators are not well informed about places where their graduates are likely to be deployed. This exposes the need for social work training institutions to assess their market and the corresponding needs so that they can adequately and appropriately prepare students to address professional challenges.

Findings also indicated that there are different governmental organisations employing social workers. They included: the Department of Social Welfare of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Local Government Authorities (LGAs), government hospitals, Prisons Department of the Ministry of Home Affairs, and government agencies like the Tanzanian Human Rights Commission. Findings also entail that social workers occupy different positions. Some work at operational/lower while others at leadership/senior administrative levels. Social workers employed as welfare officers through the Department of Social Welfare or Local Government Authorities form the generalised majority. Each of the two employed slightly more than one-third (34%) of all the respondents. Findings equally suggest that social workers are also engaged in probation and behavioural modification services as 7% of them pointed to be employed as parole, 4%
as probation and 3 % as prisons officers. Moreover, findings revealed that social workers are also employed in medical settings as medical social workers, they also work as executive directors, programme/project coordinators, monitoring and evaluation officers, counsellors and educators. They equally work as child protection officers.

**Gender and Sociodemographic Characteristics of Social Workers**

**Distribution of Social Workers by Sex and Locality**

The study was aimed at equal involvement of both male and female as well as participants from both rural and urban settings. However, this goal was not realised. More female and urban-based respondents were drawn as it is depicted in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Locality and Sex**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of respondents</th>
<th>Locality</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Social work employers | Rural   | 4    | 2      | 6     |
|                       | Urban   | 15   | 14     | 29    |
| Total                 | 19      | 16   | 35     | 100%


Females constituted the majority of the practitioners by 60%. Findings also amplify a gender disparity in terms of female representation in management positions. Male participants constituted the majority of social work employers. A total of 19 (54.3%) out of 35 employers were male as opposed to 16 (45.7%) female employers. In terms of locality, the majority (that is 70%) of social workers and 82.9% of employers were working in urban settings. This happened despite deliberate efforts to get as many rural respondents as possible. This situation is explained by the reality that social welfare services are yet to be fully decentralised to the local (village and ward) levels. As a consequence, the majority of the rural poor and vulnerable populations are not reached by social workers. The importance of having social workers at grass-roots level is therefore emphasised.

**Age of Social Work Practitioners**

The study was planned to establish the approximate age of social work practitioners in the country. The purpose was to be able to establish the relationship between age and the nature of practice methods and approaches being applied. Though many other factors may apply, there is direct correlation between the ages of practitioners, the year in which they completed their education and the practice methods used. Figure 4.3 provides a summary of the category of social work practitioners by age.
Three-quarters (76 %) of the social work respondents were at a young and productive age. They were aged between 30 and 50 years. Others were aged above 50 years (13 %) and below 30 years (11 %). Despite their relatively young age, social workers seem to be not well and adequately equipped to deal with the contemporary social problems. As it shall be discussed later, there is overreliance on traditional social work practice methods than more modern developmental ones. Their knowledge and abilities to address the contemporary and other issues of global concern remain questionable.

**Educational Qualifications of Respondents**

**Social Work Practitioners’ Educational Qualifications**

Since its inception, the social work educational system in Tanzania has been undergoing a series of changes. Such changes and transformations have led to formation of different social work educational qualification awards. Accredited educational awards offered/conferred to social workers in the country include:

- A one-year Certificate in Social Work (CSW) course/award that “produces” frontline social workers who work
under the supervision of highly qualified social workers. This award is also referred to by the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE)\(^3\) as National Technical Award (NTA) Level 4 and 5.

- A two-year Ordinary Diploma in Social Work (ODSW) course/award - also referred to by NACTE as NTA Level 6.
- A three-year Advanced Diploma in Social Work (ADSW) course/award which has been phased out in NACTE technical awards system. The award can be equated to the bachelors’ degree course. The training prepared social workers to work as competent, qualified and independent practitioners in various social settings.
- A three-year Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work (BSW) course/award, also referred to by NACTE as NTA level 8. As above, it prepares learners to become competent and independent practitioners in different social work settings.
- A one-year Postgraduate Diploma in Social Work (PGDSW) course/award which is not included in NACTE technical awards but offered as a standing additional post bachelor’s degree qualification in social work training and;
- A two-year Master’s Degree in Social Work (MSW) award which is referred to by NACTE as NTA level 9.

Within the above framework, social work practitioners who were involved in this study had social work educational qualifications ranging from a certificate to master’s degree levels. However, study findings portrayed in Figure 4.4 indicate that there were also professionals practising social work without professional training.

---

\(^3\) NACTE is the council that was established in 2005 to regulate and coordinate all matters pertaining to technical education and training in Tanzania.
One-fourth (25%) of the social work practitioners had postgraduate diploma in social work. Slightly less than a quarter (23%) and 20% had bachelor’s degree and advanced diploma in social work, respectively. Others had ordinary diploma (14%), certificate (9%) and master’s degree in the same (6%). There were more females than males in all levels of educational qualifications. It also became evident that there are some professional quarks that lacked social work skills but were trained in other social science-related fields such as youth work and community and economic development.

**Years of Study Completion**

The study was aimed to assess the period and institutions in which social workers studied. Figure 4.5 gives a summary regarding years of study completion by social work practitioners.
An overwhelming majority of social work practitioners were trained in the period between 2000 and 2009. This can be correlated with the fact that the number of people joining social work education has been dramatically increasing over the past 15 years. For instance, if we consider the Institute of Social Work as a case example, available information shows that in 1974 the institute had a population of only 25 social work students while in 2014 the number had raised to above 2000.

**Employers’ and Educators’ Educational Qualifications**

The study involved an assessment of educational qualifications of both employers and educators of social work. Employers were found to have different types and levels of education. Out of the 35 employers, 26 of them had social work qualifications with the majority (25.7%) having a diploma, followed by 20% with bachelor’s degree and 17.1% with postgraduate diploma in social work. Other employers had non-social educational qualifications. They were rather trained in other fields of social science such as sociology, human resources management, community work, counselling, healthcare and education. On
the part of social work educators, study findings show that 44.4% had bachelor’s degree in social work, 33.3% master’s degree in social work while the remaining 22.3% had masters in sociology and public administration. A summary of the findings on this aspect is given in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Employers’ and Educators’ Educational Levels**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest social work qualifications</th>
<th>Category of respondents</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in social work</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in social work</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in social work</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate diploma in social work</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced diploma in social work</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other qualifications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in healthcare</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s degree in sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced diploma in human resources management</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in public administration</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in community work</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma in counselling</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s in Sociology</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In line with the above, this study was equally aimed to find out where social work respondents studied. That entails; whether they studied in the country’s public or private training institutions or outside (in other African countries or abroad). Summarised findings in Figure 4.6 show where social workers studied.
It has been quite impressive to learn that the majority (95%) of educators, social workers and employers were trained in the national public institutions. Very few (2%) studied in national private and in institutions outside of Africa (3%). These findings correspond with the information obtained from report on the assessment of social welfare workforce in Tanzania by the Department of Social Welfare (2012, p. 22) which indicated that the majority of social workers employed by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) were trained within the country particularly from Institute of Social Work which has been the sole institute of social work in the country since 1973 to mid-2000.

In a nutshell, findings generally suggest that the majority of social workers in the country are females. They have background training in social work. They are largely based in urban and or semi-urban settings and aged between 30 and 50 years. Findings further suggest that the vast majority of social workers in Tanzania are trained in the national social work training institutions. Very few were trained outside the country. Despite the fact that the majority of social workers are trained in Tanzania, the curriculum is highly influenced by Eurocentric rather than Afrocentric models. Therefore, as advocated in Kreitzer (2012, p. 4), it is high time that
social work training in Tanzania delivered African-centered curricula that addresses the needs of the country instead of adopting by 100% the European curricula that is likely not to adequately address the current needs of the developing countries.

**Social Work Practice Levels, Methods and Models**

In this part, levels, methods and models of social work practice are presented.

**Levels of Practice**

Views of social work practitioners, employers and students regarding levels of practice were sought. Figure 4.7 gives a summary of their responses.

**Figure 4.7: Levels of Social Work Practice**

Social work practitioners offered their services at individual (31%), community (34%) and national (28%) levels. A small proportion (7%) worked at all levels. On the other hand, students had different perceptions regarding their expected levels of operation. The majority (37.8%) had the opinion that they were prepared to work at the national level, 34.7% at
the community, 13.3 % at the individual and 14.3 % at all the levels mentioned above.

### Social Work Methods and Approaches

Views of respondents regarding main social work methods and approaches were gathered. Findings in Figure 4.8 give a clear picture regarding the dominant social work methods and approaches used by social workers in Tanzania.

**Figure 4.8: Main Methods and Approaches Used**

Slightly more than three-quarters (77.1 %) of practitioners were convinced that social work training adopts a generalist approach. With regard to the practice method, findings from employers and practitioners suggest that the main method is individual casework (70 %) and the remedial/correctional/therapeutic social work (56 %).

Therefore, generalist social work is the dominant training approach used. Findings also indicated that developmental
social work is not so much applied. With regard to practice, findings indicate that social workers are more inclined towards provision of individualised remedial services to their clients. Seventy per cent of the social work respondents pointed so. Findings also clearly indicate that there is less application of social work research, social action, group work, social welfare administration, social development and community organisation. These findings give a clear indication that methods of practice applied by social workers help clients to only address the “symptoms” rather than the “root causes” of their problems. As already discussed, poverty emerged as one of the major problems facing clients of social workers. Hence, therapeutic methods of intervention are less likely to appropriately address this issue. It was learnt from client’s interviews and FGDs that in addition to therapeutic measures clients needed to be economically empowered. When asked to state what she would like to be helped by social workers in order to live a good life, a female client from Lindi said:“I need to be empowered in many ways. For instance, being financially and economically empowered. If one has such an economic power one can live a good life.”

**Social Work Models Used in Service Delivery**

In order to understand the adequacy and relevance of social work in addressing poverty and social development needs of the Tanzanian population, social work models applied by social workers were assessed. Employers were asked to give their views regarding delivery. A summary of their responses is given in Figure 4.9.
Figure 4.9: Employers’ Views on Models Used

The majority (54.3%) of social work employers expressed that the service delivery model used is of a mixture of local and Western-oriented approaches. Very few (11.4%) were of the opinion that the models are locally-based while 34.3% were of the view that the approaches are Western-oriented.

Therefore, the study has confirmed that locally-generated, indigenous models to problem-solving and service delivery are not adequately applied by the social workers due to over reliance on Western approaches. Therefore, views advanced by Kreitzer (2012, p. 2) that the Sub-Saharan African university students are mainly taught the history and practice of social work from a European perspective with little attention paid to how social supports evolved in Africa apply in the Tanzanian context.
Nature of Work and Practice Methods and Approaches

The Nature of Bulk of Social Work

Furthermore, in order to understand the status of the practice, the study sought to understand the nature of the bulk of work for social workers. Hence, social work practitioners were required to point out how they categorised the bulk of their work. Table 4.3 gives a clear descriptive picture of the nature and focus of social work.

Table 4.3: Focus of the Bulk of Work - Social Workers’ Views

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisation category</th>
<th>Direct service delivery</th>
<th>Policy development</th>
<th>Advocacy</th>
<th>Social welfare administration</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FBO</td>
<td>n 1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private (Commercial)</td>
<td>n -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% -</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>n 21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 21.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Department</td>
<td>n 52</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 52.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>71.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>n 74</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 74.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social workers are largely involved in the provision of direct services to their clients and to the pursuit of other administrative functions. Seventy four per cent and 14 % reported so, respectively. Very little is done with regard to policy development and advocacy. It was only 3 % and 7 % of social workers who indicated to be involved in policy and advocacy work, respectively.
Target Group and Types of Intervention by Social Workers

Understanding the status of a given profession is not limited to obtaining information regarding roles and functions of its practitioners only. It also includes understanding the types of clients or target groups it serves. It equally entails understanding problems that such clients face and how the concerned profession strives to address them. On that basis, this study sought to find out the major categories of clients/target groups of social workers. We would like to mention here that findings regarding the main target groups can be understood better if they are related to the main approaches of social work already discussed in the previous sections. Since social workers apply generalist approach, their major target group included the community in general (79%), as findings in Figure 4.10 below reveal.

Figure 4.10: Major Target Groups of Social Workers

It is important to highlight here that the majority of social workers employed by the Department of Social Welfare could not create a clear demarcation of who constituted their
target group. This was attributed to the fact that, in practice the department serves all people who are in need of social work services. In that regard, they best described their target group to be the community in general. Moreover, 40% of the employers equally indicated to serve the community in general.

Types of Interventions Applied by Social Work Practitioners

Knowledge regarding the type of intervention for social workers was assessed. Findings regarding that are summed up in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11: Types of Intervention Applied by Social Workers (n=35)

A majority (53%) of social work practitioners indicated that their intervention is geared towards helping clients address their immediate needs while 33% noted that theirs is focused on making changes in clients’ lives for long-term improvement of their socioeconomic status. On the other hand, 12% indicated that the focus of their intervention is
preventing clients from falling into undesirable situations while 2 % focus on other interventions.

These findings confirm earlier observations that social work practitioners are more focused on helping clients to address their immediate needs and social problems. Thus, they often do not address the root causes of client’s problems. This further indicates a clear disconnect between the focus of intervention applied by social workers and the real needs of their clients. This situation was amplified by findings generated through interviews and FGDs with clients, where the majority raised concern for the need of being helped to overcome poverty and gender-related inequalities.

**Social Workers’ Roles in Poverty Reduction and Social Development**

This section presents empirical findings regarding social workers’ levels of knowledge in poverty reduction and roles that they play in its reduction. Findings regarding the contribution of social workers towards social development are also presented and critically discussed.

**Social Workers’ Knowledge about Poverty Reduction Strategies**

Social work educators, practitioners and students were asked to give their views on how they evaluate their competencies in relation to poverty reduction. The evaluation was based on how the curriculum equipped them with skills to address poverty issues. Table 4.4 and Figure 4.12 illustrate the findings on this aspect.
### Table 4.4: Views Regarding the Curriculum and How It Addresses Poverty Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educators' views</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your curriculum explicitly refer to national poverty reduction and development strategies?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are your graduates adequately equipped to address issues of poverty?</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students' views</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are issues of poverty and poverty reduction adequately covered in the curriculum?</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have acquired adequate knowledge, skills and competences in integrating social and economic development goals through my social work training.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Nearly a half (44.5%) of educators agreed that the curriculum explicitly refers to national poverty reduction and development strategies. Moreover, 66.7% of them were of the opinion that their graduates are adequately equipped to address issues of poverty. Findings also show that, the majority of student respondents (56.1%) agreed that issues of poverty and poverty reduction were adequately covered in their curriculum. Another 55.1% agreed that they had acquired adequate knowledge, skills and competences in integrating social and economic development goals through their social work training.

On similar grounds, views of social work practitioners regarding adequacy of the curriculum in addressing poverty issues are presented in Figure 4.12.

**Figure 4.12: Social Workers’ Views on the Adequacy of the Training**

More than a half (55%) of social work practitioners felt that poverty was adequately (referring to “much” or “very much”) covered in their training. However, nearly one-third (i.e.
28%) expressed that poverty was “little” covered. A general remark that can be made from these findings is that poverty was generally covered in the social work training curriculum. Very few respondents (4%) said that poverty was not covered in their training at all.

When these findings were cross-tabulated with those of practice methods, a different picture emerges. Despite the fact that slightly more than half of social work practitioners agreed that poverty was generally covered in their training, their practice methods and approaches are not directly geared towards poverty reduction and social development. As already discussed, the majority of social workers are involved in addressing immediate problems of their clients through provision of counselling. Poverty, which is the root cause of most problems brought to social workers’ attention, seems to be not comprehensively and adequately addressed.

Social Workers’ Skills and Roles in Poverty Reduction and Social Development

It was the interest of this study to establish whether social work practitioners had sufficient skills in addressing poverty and social development issues. Findings regarding this are presented in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Social Workers’ Skills vs. Practice Levels in Poverty Reduction and Social Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social workers’ abilities in:</th>
<th>Skill level</th>
<th>Practice level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>To a slight extent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowering target population</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating/ training target population</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitating change (change agent)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brokering (linking to relevant resources)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy development</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>34.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Seventy five per cent of the practitioners had acquired skills in empowering, educating and linking their clients to relevant resources. Besides, 52% indicated that they had sufficient skills on policy development. On the contrary, actual practice suggests that the majority of social work practitioners (55% and 40%, respectively) are involved in empowering target population and policy development to a “very slight extent”. In addition, social work practitioners pointed out to be more
involved in educating, facilitating change and linking clients to relevant resources (60 %, 54 % and 57 %, respectively). Based on these findings, there is a visible gap between the levels of skills acquired by social workers and the application of the same in the field. Possible causes for such a gap cannot be adequately explained here. Further study in this area is recommended.

In connection with the above, the research study endeavoured to assess the level of contribution of social workers towards poverty reduction and social development. Table 4.6 gives a summary of the findings.

**Table 4.6: Social Workers’ Contribution to Poverty Reduction and Social Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Level of contribution</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My current work has a direct focus on poverty reduction.</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a slight extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use a developmental approach in all my service interventions.</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>49.0</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a slight extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The service I offer has a felt impact on the broader society.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a slight extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My current service integrates both social and economic development goals of the target population.</td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a slight extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To a great extent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Role of Social Work in Poverty Reduction and Realisation of MDGs in Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Level of contribution</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and/or protecting social and individual rights is part and parcel of my current work.</td>
<td>Not at all Not sure To a slight extent To a great extent</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>20.0</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Me or the social service I work at is engaged in social research.</td>
<td></td>
<td>19.0</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues are mainstreamed in the interventions I undertake.</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The overall assessment of the level of contribution of social workers towards poverty reduction and social development suggests that a majority (75%) of the practitioners contribute towards promoting and/or protecting social and individual rights of their clients in their current work “to a great extent.” In addition, 48% of them felt that their work had impact on the society “to a great extent” whilst 40% said they integrate both social and economic development goals of the target population to the same extent. Findings further indicate that principles of social development are “slightly” used by social work practitioners. Nearly a half (49%) of social work respondents viewed so. Additionally, 49%, 46% and 45% of social work practitioners focus on poverty reduction, gender and research issues, respectively, only “to a slight extent.”

Therefore, it becomes clear that there is a need to increase the influence of social workers’ contribution to poverty
reduction. This position became evident when employers were asked to give their views on what social workers should do in order to properly address the particular needs and challenges of people living in rural areas. Community development approach became the dominant proposed strategy for helping social workers to address poverty. One staff from WAMATA emphasised that social workers should work “with” and not “for” the community. Another social worker from the Commission for Human Rights and Good Governance said:

Social workers should not work for members of the community but with members of the community since they themselves are the ones who understand better of their needs.

Another suggestion that was made in order to increase the influence and contribution of social work in poverty reduction and the realisation of MDGs was for social workers to become more involved with the rural than urban population. The following sentiment made by a social work employer indicate the dire need for such a shift:

They should reach the rural areas first. Most social workers are in urban areas. They should use para-social workers effectively to identify those in need and how to help. (Social Welfare Officer-CCBRT)

Similar to above, some employers were also in favour of the view that social workers should work directly with the poor through community work. The Acting Assistant Director of WAMATA had this to say in this regard: “Social workers should change their approach of work. Let them do a lot of community work.”

In the same way, Newala District Council Social Welfare Officer is noted to have said: “more social workers should be employed at ward levels.”
Some employers felt that collaboration with different stakeholders is another important strategy for social workers to effectively address poverty. In support of this, one employer suggested that “they should work in collaboration with local government as key stakeholders in rural areas.” In a similar perspective, a senior staff of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare was of the view that “social workers should cooperate with key figures of the communities (the elderly for instance) so that development plans can be owned by the community members themselves.”

Despite the above important insights, however, some employers raised a structural concern regarding the motivation for social workers to work in rural and hard-to-reach areas.

Additionally, some clients were of the opinion that social workers should be close to the people they serve. They equally noted that social workers should create public awareness regarding their services so that many people in need can know and make use of them. This was supported by findings from the FGDs when a client from Kinondoni Municipality remarked:

Social work services should get closer to the people at the local level. Social workers should also market their services so that more people understand and use them.

Another interviewed client from Lindi commented on the importance of social work community outreach:

Social workers should visit those of us who live in poverty. They should learn our ways of living. For instance, if you visit me, you can assess my problem and see how I live hence know how to help.

In line with the above, it was suggested by some clients that social workers need to conduct seminars and workshops on
poverty reduction strategies. Other clients suggested the need for creation of more employment opportunities for women. They added that social workers need to encourage self-employment as well as encouraging communities to engage in IGAs and saving schemes.

In support of the above, a participant of FGD from Kinondoni Municipality articulated:

People should be employed without gender restrictions. There should be equal opportunities between men and women in the labour market so that women who are left with breadwinning responsibilities are able to handle them comfortably. Community members should also be encouraged into self-employment and also engage themselves in small money rotating groups.

Drawing from the above, it is obvious that social workers need to redefine their roles, extend coverage and change practice methods if they want to truly and appropriately target on poverty eradication and social development. They ought to do more outreach programmes in line with provision of social services. They should equally visit their clients, organise sensitisation campaigns, workshops and seminars in local communities, advocate gender balance, and encourage self-employment and savings schemes. Without adopting new practice strategies, the profession will be at risk of failure to make a significant and sustainable impact to the lives of its target population.

Social Work and Realisation of Millennium Development Goals

In this section an attempt is made to appraise and assess the role and place of social work in the realisation of MDGs. Social workers as change agents, advocates of human rights, social
policy formulators and implementers have significant roles to play in assuring that the Millennium Development Goals are realised. The question is whether they are well positioned themselves to contribute to this. This is the missing link that this study attempted to reveal.

**Awareness and Levels of Contribution to UN MDGs**

Social workers’, employers’ and students’ levels of awareness of MDGs were assessed and the findings are as summarised in Figure 4.13.

As per Figure 4.13, a majority of the respondents were aware of the UN MDGs (65.7 %, 53 % and 44.9 % of employers, social work practitioners and student respondents, respectively). However, it was only an average of 8.2 % who indicated to have a detailed understanding of the goals, while 36 % of the social work practitioners, 22.9 % of the employers and 35.7 % of the students were only “slightly aware” of them.

**Figure 4.13: Respondents’ Levels of Awareness of MDGs**
Apart from assessing the level of respondents’ awareness about the UN MDGs, the study was designed to find out if social work practitioners and employers were aware of the existing programmes geared towards the realisation of the UN MDGs. Figure 4.14 illustrates their responses.

**Figure 4.14: Awareness of Respondents on Specific MDGs Programmes**

A majority of social work practitioners and employers (83% and 62.9%, respectively) were aware of programmes undertaken to achieve MDGs. In support of this, qualitative data from social work practitioners, employers, key informants and clients further indicated that there are a number of policies and programmes that have been designed by the country in order to achieve MDGs. However, the majority of the policies are not popularised. To emphasise this, an OVC project coordinator from PASADA commented:

> The strategies for poverty reduction are only known at the ministry levels yet the fight against poverty ought to be approached at all levels.

A similar emphasis emerged from interviews with clients whereby a client from Lindi confirmed to have heard about MDGs from the radio but did not understand what they meant.
The above is a typical example of many policies and programmes run by the government. Spitzer and Mabeyo (2011) equally confirmed that the majority of older people and government officials are less informed about the policies that they are required to implement. This situation calls for a dire need for the government and other key stakeholders to intensify sensitisation campaigns on policies and programmes geared towards the enhancement of the well-being of the general public.

The failure by the government to popularise its policies and programmes has made the public create apathy in them. This became very evident in this study when clients were asked to give their views on whether they felt that such policies concern them in any way. It was revealed that the impact is not felt by them. To affirm this, a client from Lindi said:

I am not sure if these policies concern us who are poor. I think they intend to reduce poverty but they do so for those who are not really poor.

Social workers and employers were further requested to assess their level of contribution towards realisation of MDGs. Table 4.7 summarises their responses regarding that.

**Table 4.7: Level of Contribution to MDGs by SW Practitioners and Employers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of MDG</th>
<th>Type of respondents</th>
<th>Level of contribution</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of MDG</td>
<td>Type of respondents</td>
<td>Level of contribution</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
<td>Partly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>25.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender equality and empowerment of women</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>65.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure environmental sustainability</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>77.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A global partnership for development</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contrary to the level of awareness, the majority (58 %) of the social work practitioners “partly” contribute towards reduction of poverty and hunger while the majority of the social work employers (48.6 %) “do not” directly contribute towards the reduction of poverty and hunger. Also findings indicate that the majority of the social work practitioners “partly” contribute to the achievement of gender equality and empowerment of women, health and education with a representation of 49 %, 45 % and 39 %, respectively. Similarly, 42.9 % of the social work employers indicated that they contribute towards the improvement of education. However, findings generally indicate that the majority of the social work employers “do not” directly contribute towards the achievement of environmental sustainability (77.1 %), global partnership for development (74.3 %), gender equality and
the empowerment of women (65.7 %) and health (45.7 %). On the other hand, the majority of social work practitioners did not indicate to have significant contribution towards the achievement of environmental sustainability (51 %) and global partnership for development (48 %).

a) Specific Areas of Contribution to MDGs

In order to understand the role of social work in poverty reduction and realisation of MDGs, the study endeavoured to assess the specific areas of contribution by social work practitioners and employers of the same. Table 4.8 gives a summary of the findings.

**Table 4.8: Specific Areas of Contribution to the MDGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of MDG</th>
<th>Concrete area of contribution</th>
<th>Employers</th>
<th>Social work practitioners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger</td>
<td>Reduce poverty</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce hunger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce both poverty and hunger</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Achieve universal primary education</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other educational targets</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>45.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Improve maternal health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduce child mortality</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Combat HIV/Aids, malaria &amp; other diseases</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other health sector</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td><strong>35</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings confirmed that environmental sustainability and global partnership for development are the MDGs that receive least attention by social workers. However, the dominant goal to which the majority of social workers (56%) and employers (42.9%) contributed was eradication of extreme poverty and hunger. Despite this fact, views generated from FGDs with clients give a different picture. Based on clients’ views,
poverty reduction still seems to be a marginalised area of focus by social workers. Nearly half of the clients indicated that poverty is one of the major problems affecting them.

Levels of social workers’ contribution to MDGs differed from one agency to another. Nonetheless, contribution to the achievement of universal primary education was the predominant. Services that were reported to be conducted in achieving the goal included; supporting/educating children with disability, raising public awareness and sensitisation of children about the importance of attending school, supporting MVC (most vulnerable children) with scholastic materials, supporting vocational training of young people, including payment of fees, provision of reproductive health education, and construction of community schools.

Practitioners whose organisations contributed to the first MDG which focuses on eradication of extreme poverty and hunger pointed that they did so through linking clients with skills-building groups, economic empowerment, awareness raising and capacity-building on use of available community resources. They also paid school fees for secondary and primary school pupils.

Organisations that reported to contribute to goal 4 on promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women did so mainly through educating women about their rights and entitlements.

Organisations that contributed to MDG 6 on combating HIV/Aids, malaria and other diseases reported to be engaged in HIV and Aids sensitisation, providing anti-retroviral therapy (ART), tuberculosis screening and treatment and
psychosocial support to groups of people living with HIV/AIDS.

**Skills on MDGs**

In relation to the above, the study explored whether social work training equips trainees with adequate skills and competencies to address the MDGs. Table 4.9 gives a summary of the findings.

**Table 4.9: Respondents’ Views on the Adequacy of the Training on MDGs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type of respondents</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our social work curriculum adequately prepares graduates to contribute to the achievement of the UN MDGs alongside other professionals.</td>
<td>Educators</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think your social work training equipped you adequately to address issues related to the MDGs?</td>
<td>Social work practitioners</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>82.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The social work training has equipped me with adequate knowledge about the MDGs.</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The role of social work in poverty reduction and realisation of MDGs in Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Type of respondents</th>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The social work training has adequately prepared me to contribute to the</td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>realisation of MDGs alongside other professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Social workers (82 %) and students (59.2 %) affirmed that the social work training had equipped them with the requisite knowledge and skills to contribute to the MDGs. Another 44.9 % of students and 44.4 % of educators agreed that the training had adequately prepared them to contribute to the realisation of the MDGs alongside other professionals.

In a nutshell, findings suggest that social work training equips social workers with adequate knowledge and skills to address issues of poverty including MDGs. However, it was in the interest of this study to gather opinions and views of study respondents on how best social workers can contribute towards realisation of MDGs. Improvement of training and the need for social workers to work directly with the community as well as involvement in policy implementation were emphasised. In support of this, a social work practitioner working as a Quality Assurance Officer at Comprehensive Community Based Rehabilitation (CCBRT) Centre said:

"Social workers should get out of their offices, go out to meet their real clients in their real environment and work with them based on real evidence."
Empowerment was also identified as an important strategy in working with the community. At policy level, employers insisted that social workers should be more involved in policy formulation and implementation so that they can act as a “mouth piece” for the voiceless, bringing the social, economic and environmental concerns of their clients on the policy agenda. In addition, social workers were urged to work together and network with other professionals.

**Additional Skills Needed**

Views of social workers regarding additional knowledge and skills needed in order to effectively contribute towards the realisation of MDGs were sought. Deducing from responses of the interviewees, the following is a list of skills required:

- Project proposal writing
- Resource mobilisation
- Poverty reduction skills
- Advocacy skills
- Community development skills
- Project development skills
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Policy development skills
- Empowerment skills

**b) Ways of Contributing to the Achievement of MDGs**

Despite the fact that the majority of social workers agreed that they had adequate knowledge and skills in the realisation of MDGs, evidence shows that the majority of policy makers included in the study lacked a clear understanding of the professional focus of social workers in steering their work towards the realisation of MDGs.
However, some policy makers were aware of the roles of social workers with regard to poverty reduction and the achievement of MDGs. They mentioned that the roles should include socioeconomic empowerment, direct engagement with communities through community mobilisation, awareness creation, psychosocial support, human rights education and advocacy, coordination, follow-up, monitoring and evaluation of community programmes.

At the other extreme level, one policy maker did not find a place for social workers with respect to the realisation of MDGs. He expressed that, since social workers receive poor clients and have limited resources, they can hardly contribute to the realisation of the MDGs. Such a position throws a strong message to the profession regarding its identity, protection and recognition.

Findings also indicated that, ways through which social workers contribute to the realisation of MDGs cannot adequately reduce client’s poverty. For instance, findings from interviews with employers show that social workers are preoccupied with counselling, education, advocacy and linking clients to resources. Their contribution in economic empowerment and social development is perceived as inadequate and invisible.

c) **Specific Individual Contribution to the Achievement of MDGs**

Deduced from the submission of the different social work practitioners, it was learnt that their individual contribution is in the forms of educating and sensitising, counselling, advocating, capacity-building, and linking
their clients and communities to resources within and outside their agencies and communities. This summative picture ought not to give the impression that it applies to all practicing social workers. As heard from some, a reasonable number of social workers had no clue about whether or not and how they were contributing to the achievement of MDGs. This sends a compelling message regarding the degree of awareness, knowledge and understanding of MDGs among social workers.

**Challenges and Dilemmas Facing the Social Work Profession**

Information from the Department of Social Welfare (2012), Linsk *et al.* (2010), and Correll and Correll (2006) indicates that the social welfare system of Tanzania is faced with a lot of challenges including being under-staffed, under-developed and under-resourced. In order to understand the intervention strategies for social workers in addressing poverty issues, views of study respondents regarding challenges faced were gathered. The challenges identified can be categorised into the following:

i) **Limited resources**

As a result of limited resources, social workers are handicapped in service provision and the ability to reach out to the needy target groups located in the areas. They also lack the means to empower their clients.

ii) **Inappropriate approaches**

The dominant social work approach is challenged for being reactive as opposed to proactive. The implications of this scenario could be straightforward. Being reactive may
possibly imply that the profession stands limited chance to set parameters of development intervention. Arguably, the profession turns out to be relief and rehabilitative rather than preventive and developmental in nature. Thus, it may be hard for the profession to adequately and effectively contribute to poverty reduction and the realisation of MDGs if approaches remain the same.

iii) Limited public awareness and mandate of the profession

Social work profession suffers from exclusion from various developmental initiatives due to its invisibility. Little is known by the majority of target population about the profession and services it can or offers. The profession is not protected from intrusion by other professionals due to lack of a regulatory framework. Thus, more sensitisation, protection and control over the profession is required in order to enhance its contribution to the development process.

iv) Limited number of professional social workers

Social welfare services are increasing in demand as the Tanzanian population continues to grow (URT, 2007b, p. 9). However, views from study respondents and the report by the Department of Social Welfare (2012) indicate that social workers are still few compared to the actual population in need of their services. This suggests that, unless deliberate efforts are taken to bridge this gap, many clients, and more specifically those from the rural communities, will remain out of reach of social workers.

v) Cultural and gender issues

During the study, practitioners were requested to mention gender and cultural issues they are usually confronted with. A number of issues were raised including:
• Beliefs in traditional medicines and witchcraft which contribute to delays of clients to report to hospitals. A female health social worker, who works at the National Hospital observed: “Clients attend to traditional healers before seeking for professional advice. Therefore, by the time they reach hospitals they are at very advanced stages.”

• Gender inequality, discrimination and bias contributed by the patriarchal order. Respondents reported that unequal distribution of resources/property exists between men and women. A male social welfare officer, who works in Dar es Salaam remarked: “Culture favours men more than women in property ownership.” This was reported to result into women dependency.

• Lack of decision-making powers among women. It was also argued that in some ethnic groups women are not given the right to contribute ideas in public and family issues. In support of this, the project coordinator of an organisation that supports most vulnerable children (FMVCT) in Dar es Salaam pointed out: “In some tribes, women are not allowed to speak before men.” In the same tone, a female social welfare officer in Dar es Salaam expressed: “Women are kept aside from decision making at the family level.” A female counselor who works at WAMATA in Dar es Salaam also observed that “issues to do with freedom of speech at the family level are still problematic.”

• Polygamy is also a cultural issue and challenge for social workers. In support of this, a female social welfare officer, who works in rural Iringa stated that “the culture of marrying more than one woman and abandonment of children is one of the issues which I am usually confronted with.”

• Early pregnancies and marriages. It was said that some children are either married or become pregnant early. As
a result, they are likely to become infected with HIV/Aids and lack the necessary knowledge and skills on how to address their own life challenges.

- Poor communication between parents and children. It was said that some cultures do not allow parents to talk to their children on issues of sexuality. The practice has partly contributed to the spread of HIV/Aids as children lack guidance on sexuality.

- Discrimination, stigmatisation and labelling of people with disability (PWD) are also a dilemma. It was mentioned that there is stigmatisation of children with disabilities, including killing of those with albinism. In support of the above, a male social welfare officer, who works in Dar es Salaam observed that “stigmatisation of children with disability in the community is common practice.”

Professional Dilemma

Social work practitioners were also asked to state the common dilemmas that they are faced with while working. A number of issues were raised some of which relate to the above-mentioned. Gender discrimination and prejudice was a common one.

- One dilemma is associated with disclosure of diseases. For instance, HIV/Aids is still taken as an issue that should not be disclosed to children especially when they are tested positive. On this, one male programme officer at PASADA said:

  There are some cultural beliefs regarding social issues like HIV/Aids. Some cultures do not allow children to know their health status. Therefore, breaking bad news to the child who is HIV/Aids positive becomes a dilemma.
• Communication regarding issues of sexuality is a restricted affair in some ethnic groups thus making it difficult to break sexuality news to children. This poses a professional dilemma.

• Another dilemma that social workers are faced with is dealing with discordant couples. It was noted that when women are infected with HIV and men are not, they are more likely to be abandoned. Others noted that another cultural challenge and common dilemma is associated with inheritance of the widows and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). This was confirmed by a counsellor who works in Dar es Salaam who said:

> There is a dilemma that is associated with conservatism as people don’t want to change. For instance, people resist changing attitudes regarding FGM.

• Another dilemma was associated with strict adherence to cultural practices of initiation which interferes with girls’ schooling. In support of that, a male social welfare officer, who works in Lindi, pointed out that “the culture of coastal people of initiation for girls at puberty affects their girls’ concentration in class.”

• Another dilemma that was raised by the practitioners was early marriages and pregnancies. In support of this, a training coordinator, who works in an urban setting, explained that “early marriages and pregnancies are common traditions in my clientele community.” They noted that this can be worse in polygamous marriages where men lack the capacity to look after their children and wives.

---

4 This is a traditional practice where girls are prepared to become women. Hence, they are taught how to best handle their social as well as sexual roles and responsibilities.
Language barrier was also mentioned as another professional dilemma. A male social welfare officer who works in a rural setting observed:

Sometimes, I receive a client speaking only in her/his local language. This is an obstacle in delivering proper service to her/him.

Other Sociopolitical Issues Affecting Social Workers

Social work practitioners were requested to state sociopolitical issues which affect their roles in social development and poverty reduction endeavours. They mentioned a number of them including:

- Lack of priority setting. It was noted that some of government plans do not reflect the reality. For instance, it was argued that there is poor implementation of welfare policies. On this issue, a programme officer who works in the health sector in Dar es Salaam noted that “most politicians promise the public about the provision of social welfare services. Yet, there are no funds allocated.”

- Some social work practitioners said that the government does not give enough priority to social welfare services. They complained of lack of financial resources to fund the activities of empowering the vulnerable groups. They noted that there is lack of political will to support the activities of social workers. Others said that the local authorities (LAs) do not allocate enough funds for meeting social welfare needs.

- Another political issue is false promises by politicians. Such promises create false hopes among clients. Some social workers argued that clients always expect a lot from them while they are not given enough resources to meet such demands. A female social welfare officer, who works in Dar es Salaam, explained that “promises made by the
political leaders create hopes to clients that cannot be met by service providers.”

- Others said that the role of social work is not well understood. Leaders lack adequate knowledge on what social work is and what social workers do - something which affects their work.

- Some said that there is professional interference with community development. Implementation of social welfare policies is interfered with by politicians.

- Additionally, it was also noted that there is lack of economic and political commitment to address poverty. It was said that government enacts policies but fails to adequately and fully implement them. Failure to realize objectives and targets of various development policies targeting different vulnerable groups like older people and people with disability support this argument.

**Things Not Adequately Covered in the Training**

Social work practitioners were asked to identify things that they felt were not adequately addressed during their training. The following is a summary of them:

- How to assist clients without interfering with their taboos. A female principal social worker noted that “addressing clients’ issues without interfering very much with their taboos was not adequately covered in the social work training.”

- How to deal with beliefs that affect welfare of clients. It was noted that there are some traditional beliefs that act as blockades to accessing welfare services. Some practitioners said that they did not learn how to address issues of beliefs particularly those that cause risks to the welfare of clients.
• How to handle culturally specific issues. On this note, a project coordinator of the Tanzanian Social Worker’s Association stated that “skills of dealing with people of different cultural orientations were not taught in the social work training.”

• How to deal with gender-based violence and oppressive practices. It was said that approaches and methods of addressing gender related problems such as the problems of male domination and harmful attitudes towards women were not well covered. Some noted that they were not taught how to address discrimination, yet these are the issues they deal with on a daily basis.

• Approaches for linking the social work methods learnt in class with the African ways of raising children were not well taught. It was noted that the linkage remained inadequate since the traditional ways of raising children are different from those studied in class.

• Issues of inheritance of family property. Some participants pointed that they lacked knowledge on the inheritance or succession law and procedures. One respondent confirmed “social work-related laws including that of inheritance was not adequately covered in social work education.”

Professional Identity for Social Work Practitioners

Awareness and Membership to a Professional Body

In Tanzania, there exists an Association of Social Workers (TASWO) which was formed in 1982. The association aims at uniting social workers within the country in order to have a formal forum for knowledge and experience sharing and discussion of issues of professional interest.
This study attempted to establish the extent to which social workers are aware about the association, their membership status and willingness to join any other professional association. Figure 4.15 presents a summary of their responses.

**Figure 4.15: Awareness and Membership to a Professional Body**

![Graph showing awareness and membership to a professional body]

- **Are you aware of the existence of a national social work association in your country?**
  - Yes: 99.0%
  - No: 1.0%

- **Are you a member of a national social work association in your country?**
  - Yes: 81.0%
  - No: 19.0%

- **Would you be willing to join a professional social workers’ association?**
  - Yes: 89.0%
  - No: 40.0%
  - N/A: 7.0%

It was quite impressive to learn that the overwhelming majority (99 %) of social workers were aware about the association of social workers; 81 % were members; and 89 % were willing to join other professional bodies of social work. These findings suggest that the majority of interviewed social workers had a good understanding of the importance of being affiliated to a professional body. This became evident when they were asked to give reasons that would motivate them to join another association if given a chance. Many had positive views and opinions regarding the importance of joining another professional body as they are further presented.

To some, joining an association would make them able to organise professional activities that will have direct and bigger impact to the community. In support of this, a male programme officer from PASADA noted:
It helps us as a team to address different issues concerning social work in our country. Ideally, when people come together under the same umbrella, they have an opportunity of doing something tangible for the community in which they are operating.

Some gave the reason that joining an association contributes to the professional recognition. It was argued that having an association also helps social workers to market their activities and get public support. Having an association helps community members to know about the services offered by the social workers. Moreover, some practitioners argued that having a professional association is important because it adds more value to the profession. It also guides and monitors training and practice.

In addition, a professional association can help to ensure that standards of practice are maintained. On this, a female social welfare officer in Dar es Salaam remarked: “A professional association will have a mandate on monitoring the practice so as to place more value in our profession.” Another social welfare officer based in Songea stated:

Professional associations help professionals to adhere to the professional ethics, protect professional rights and monitor all matters pertaining to the profession.

Some practitioners pointed out also that an association is vital because it helps to educate its members. This, in turn, builds uniformity in doing professional activities. Others stated that they would join associations in order to meet, share, learn from, understand and work with other professionals within the same field. They argued that it helps practitioners to have power and identity as members of the same profession. In
this regard, a female counsellor at PASADA in Dar es Salaam stated:

I can join professional body because I want to share with other social work professionals to overcome some of the existing social problems like HIV/Aids, child abuse and poverty among the Tanzanians.

They looked at associations, especially the international ones, as way of becoming part of global professional community and visible worldwide. Some said that joining associations outside Tanzania will help them gain more professional skills.

However, despite the above, there were other social workers who were not interested in joining any association. They attributed their reluctance to the fact that they are almost retiring from the practice. On this note, a female social welfare officer who works in Dar es Salaam stated “I am almost retiring; I would like to see those who are junior joining the professional association.”

Another reason for reluctance to join is the failure of members to know what the associations are supposed to do for their members. They argued that they would join after looking at the achievements as well as responsibilities of those associations. In support of this, a male social worker of PASADA in Dar es Salaam said: “I would join after getting thorough knowledge about its responsibilities, and its current achievements.”

Professional associations also provide a forum through which members’ rights are protected and their voice heard. It also prevents quacks (disguised unprofessional workers) from intruding into the profession. More significantly, professional associations give members a sense of identity to the profession.
Social Workers’ Perceptions Regarding the Profession

Apart from understanding their membership status, social work practitioners were asked to give their views and feelings for being social workers and on the public recognition of the profession. Figure 4.16 gives a summary of the findings.

**Figure 4.16: Social Workers’ Perceptions Regarding the Profession**

Practitioners had varied views and feelings about the profession. Some (43%) said they were proud of being social workers. Others (26%) felt that they are able to contribute to their country’s development, while 18% felt that they were happy with the job despite the fact it does not pay well enough. A peculiar finding worth noting is that very few social workers (2%) would opt to go to another professional field. This indicates that they like their profession despite the challenges that they are confronted with.

With regard to public recognition of the profession, findings suggest that the profession is noticeably underestimated. Only 19% of social work practitioners pointed out that social work is sufficiently appreciated and adequately recognised. This
brings us to the conclusion already previously highlighted that there is a need for public awareness creation of social work profession and its role.

**Social Workers as “Change Agents” – What Needs to Be Done**

**What Needs to be Done**

Social workers are expected to help clients create coping and positive problem-solving strategies and hence appropriately address their problems. Since poverty has emerged as one of the robust problems affecting clients, there are numerous suggestions that ought to be applied by social workers in order to effect positive and sustainable changes into their clients’ lives.

Deducing from views gathered from the study, it becomes clear that there is a need for social work profession to widen its scope and coverage so as to reach out to the rural population. There is also a need for transformation of practice approaches from reactive and therapeutic ones to those that are proactive, developmental and preventive in nature. Findings also point to the need for intensifying the use of community developmental approaches and approaches that are geared towards helping members generate income. There was also a common call for strengthening the social work professional association. Through the association, social workers can collectively have a broader voice to advocate, act and design programmes to address poverty.

In order to become true change agents, it has become evident that social workers have to address gender issues that affect their clients. The importance of gender equity and economic empowerment of women became crucial as well.
Desired Changes

Both clients and practitioners were also asked to specify major changes that they commonly desired. A number of desired changes were mentioned. Some practitioners said that they desired having less costs but increased access to medical services especially for special populations. Others desired to have more attention to public and primary health services and to see more Most Vulnerable Children (MVCs) getting access to better health services.

Social workers also desired to see free medication for vulnerable groups. This was supported by a female prison’s officer of Dar es Salaam who stated that “a free health service to the vulnerable groups in the community is the change that I desire.”

Others desired to have the current education system improved. They said that there are poor teaching and learning environments. Children walk long distances to school and some (especially the vulnerable ones) completely miss the service. A female project coordinator at FMVCT in Dar es Salaam desired “to see all most vulnerable children go to school like other children and all MVC get access to better health services.”

Practitioners said that they would desire to see changes in risky behaviours. Others wished to see the unemployment problem being addressed drastically. On this, a female peer educator at the Tanzania Youth Alliance in Dar es Salaam stated that “…reduction of the number of unemployed youths in the community is the desired change I want.”

Gender inequality was also mentioned as an area for desired change. Some respondents wished to see serious measures being undertaken to rectify gender imbalances
especially in property ownership at the family level. They wished to see both men and women having same and equal opportunities. A female social welfare officer who works in Ilala, Dar es Salaam, said in approval of that “women need equal opportunities as men in terms of education, employment and decision-making.”

For others, the desire was to see poverty reduction and an increased individual capital in the society. They noted that they desired to have a poverty-free society. They wished to have a society where at least everyone earns some money that can cater for their basic necessities of life. A female social work practitioner of Temeke Municipal Council elaborated that “the desire is moving from being poor to at least medium income earners.”

In short, it can be said that most of the desired changes target on the achievement of MDGs whereby gender equality, reduced poverty, access to medication, education, behavioural change and reduced unemployment should be achieved.

**What Needs to Be Done to Professionalise Social Work**

The study gathered views of social work educators regarding what they thought needs to be done to professionalise social work. The following were the major suggestions.

i) **Formation of the East African Association of Social Work**

   More than half of social work educators proposed the need to have an East African regional association. They viewed that having such a body would make it easier to standardise social work training curriculum in the region as well as enabling social workers in the region to have one common voice. One of the educators observed that
“the East African regional association should unite all social workers in the region to have one voice.”

From the above it can be deduced that establishing a functional East African regional social work association would facilitate information and knowledge sharing among members and eventually lead to professionalisation of social work.

ii) **Strengthening the Existing Social Work Association**

The existing association was viewed to be weak. In confirmation, one female educator remarked that “there is a need of strengthening the existing professional association of social work in order to professionalise social work practice.”

iii) **Strengthening Social Work Curricula**

There were calls for a standardised curriculum in the region. This became visible when one educator stated that “social work education should be strengthened by standardising curricula of all universities/institutions that offer social work education.” By having a standardised curriculum, graduates will have mutually shared values, virtues, knowledge and approaches to social work. In addition, there was a need for social work educators to undertake further social work studies and attend continuing education programmes. This may somehow help them to develop innovative social work approaches and relevant strategies for addressing community problems. In affirmation, one educator clarified that “in order to strengthen and standardise social work, there is a need to professionalise social work practitioners through advanced training.”
Apart from advanced and continuing education, the need for having social work seminars and workshops is vital. There was a call for the institutions of social work to network and hold academic seminars. It was viewed that such seminars would bring social workers together and enable them to share knowledge on new developments in the field. As a result, they would be more responsive to the emerging issues and problems at the community level.

iv) Increase Local Publications in Social Work

Some educators stated that professionalising social work requires increased publications in the area of social work. It was envisioned that if culturally relevant social work literature is published and widely shared, the process of professionalising social work will be taken a notch higher. This was confirmed by one educator who said that “social workers should write about social work in the country.” By implication, if there is increased publication in the field of social work, its visibility will also raise.

v) Raising Public Awareness about the Profession

It was also noted that, public awareness on the importance of the profession is crucial in speeding the professionalisation process. The more people know about the profession and its due importance the more likely they are to contribute towards its professionalisation.

This can be done through but not limited to holding social work awareness forums at different levels (including from the community grass-roots to the national level) and through the print and electronic media. Partnership and collaboration with other social workers outside the country can also expedite the professionalization process.
vi) Establishment of a Regulatory Body

The study also revealed that there is a need to have a professional regulatory body that can help to protect the profession, license and regulate the practice of social workers in the country. It is important to point that despite the fact that social work has been practiced in Tanzania for almost half a century now, there is neither comprehensive law nor policy protecting the profession. Thus, the need to have such a body cannot be overstated. One of the educators pointed out that “there should be a council that regulates the practice of social workers.” In agreement, another noted that “social workers need to be legalised. We also need an independent Ministry of Social Work.”

Social workers in the country adhere to international code of ethics that need to be ratified and adopted through a national instrument which does not exist yet.

Summary

The study produced findings that help to describe the nature of social work practice and training in the country particularly with regard to poverty reduction, social development and the realisation of MDGs. Social work practice can be described as a female-dominated and urban-based profession. It adopts a generalist approach. The majority of social work professionals (71 %) are employed by the government and are trained in public national institutions.

Findings confirmed that there is discrepancy between social workers’ skills and their practice abilities. More than a half (55 %) of students and practitioners appreciated that they acquired adequate knowledge and skills to address poverty.
However, in practice, 46% of social workers pointed out that their current work addresses poverty only to a “slight extent”. The same scenario happens on addressing gender and social development issues.

With regard to the achievement of MDGs, findings indicate that a larger proportion of practitioners and employers (53% and 65.7%, respectively) than that of students (44.9%) are aware of MDGs. MDG 1 on the eradication of poverty and hunger is the most contributed to.

Findings also confirm less involvement of social work educators in the indigenisation process, research and policy. There is also no clear-cut consensus regarding adherence to global standards of social work.

An overwhelming majority (99%) of social workers were members of the professional association and 89% were ready to join other social work related professional bodies. Many social workers were proud of being social workers despite the fact that the profession is underestimated.

Counselling is the major role of social workers. Other roles are administration of resources, linking clients to other resources and education. Remedial, therapeutic and individual approaches are the most applied. The majority (53%) of social workers confirmed that their work focuses on addressing immediate needs of the clients.
CHAPTER FIVE

Reflections on Social Work Education and Training

Introduction

This chapter presents findings regarding social work training and its adequacy in addressing issues related to poverty, gender, social development, indigenisation and the realisation of MDGs. Perceptions and experiences of social work practitioners, educators and students are presented and critically discussed. Gaps in training and practice are identified and recommendations for future improvement of the two with regard to poverty reduction and social development are proposed.

Policy and Legal Environment for Social Work Education and Practice

The study assessed the level of participation of social work educators in policy development and social planning. Their responses regarding this are summarised in Figure 5.1.

Figure 5.1: Educators’ Level of Involvement in Policy and Social Planning
The majority (55.6 %) of the social work educators indicated that they participate in issues of policy development and social planning “to a slight extent.” The findings concur with those from social work practitioners which indicated that their level of participation in social policy was very low. Therefore, findings suggest that both social work practitioners and educators are marginally involved in policy development and social planning. This is a gap that we recommend for rectification. Thus, the role of social workers in policy formulation, implementation and evaluation should be elevated.

Social Work Training/Curriculum in Different Institutions - Students’ Views

The study sought to gather students’ views regarding social work. Students had different perceptions regarding the status of the profession in the country. The value and importance of a professionally organised social work training programme was highly recognised and appreciated unanimously by them. One student from the Institute of Social Work noted:

Social work programme is good as it prepares students to work in various settings and levels. It also deals with individuals, groups and macro level problems holistically. Professionally trained social workers are regarded as important players within society as they provide services that are highly required by their clientele. However, respondents felt that the number of social workers does not match the actual demands as one student noted that “social work programme is good to be taught, but my assessment is that the numbers of social work graduates are very few compared to the need.”

Social work students had no doubt about the relevance of the profession but criticised its invisibility and neglect by political leaders and society at large. In this context, one
student stated that “social work is a “hot cake”, a highly needed profession but it is not known.” Another one claimed that “the government should recognise and improve social work profession.” Another student from the Institute of Social Work held social work students and educators liable for inadequate and ineffective promotion of the profession when he said:

Social work training should be systematic on its programme and we should make more efforts on advertising it so that people can be aware of it. This means that we should promote it, all of us including our teachers.

Based on the above, it was obvious that students had a positive view regarding the importance of the profession, although they highlighted weaknesses that needed to be solved.

Scope of Social Development Approach, Gender, MDGs and Global Standards

Social Work Training and Social Development Issues

The study intended to assess the coverage of social development, gender and MDGs and global standards in the training. It sought to understand the level of knowledge of respondents regarding the concepts. It also assessed their levels of contributions towards the same.

Meaning of Social Development

Social work educators were asked to define the concept of social development. One educator explained that “this is a more holistic approach to problem-solving that calls for more empowerment of clients than case work.” In support of this, another educator observed that “it is an approach that advocates empowerment of the society as a whole as opposed
to offering individualised services to only a few clients.” Similarly, another social worker stated that “it is an approach that calls for change of practice of social workers to focus more on empowerment of clients.”

Therefore, there was a general believe that social development is about empowering clients and communities in general. The agitation for a holistic approach entails the use of community work and development approaches rather than casework. However, this does not eliminate the application of traditional individualistic conventional methods.

The study also attempted to establish whether social work training adequately prepares students to address social and development issues. Findings generally suggest that social work training is generalist in nature and social development is not taught as a cross-cutting course. However, some social workers felt that the curriculum prepared students in addressing social development issues. They revealed that social development is introduced to students during their study time where they are taught how to assist people to improve their lives through undertaking collective action. Others felt that the curriculum prepares them to “a limited extent.” One interviewed educator commented by saying that “…yes, it prepares them to some extent because social development is also taught to them as a best method to address problems facing clients.”

Contrary to the above, some educators viewed that social work training does not prepare students for social development issues at all. Some further explained that students learn how to help people individually and how to solve their day-to-day problems without focusing on social development in a broader context. One of the educators said that “trainees are largely taught on how to handle problems at individual/group and community levels but social development is not a major
orientation.” This was supported by another educator who observed that “the training prepares them to deal with day-to-day problems of their clients.”

Deduced from the above, social work educators could not come to a common agreement regarding the extent to which social work training prepares students for social development issues. Thus, a need to mainstream developmental approach in the realm of social work training becomes relevant, timely and important.

**Key Social Development Challenges in Rural Areas**

Social work educators were asked to identify key social development challenges in rural areas. Major challenges identified included high level of illiteracy/ignorance, laziness, dependency syndrome, poor/low participation of community members in developmental issues and decisions and retrogressive traditional cultural beliefs and practices including beliefs in witchcraft.

Just like other developing countries, the rural communities of Tanzania are characterized by remoteness, low levels of education among the dwellers, limited access to basic social services and pervasive poverty among the majority. These characteristics pose developmental challenges to both the rural populations and social workers. Tanzanian experience indicates that social workers can hardly reach the rural communities due to structural problems. Their services are not decentralized to the rural grass-roots level. Given such a situation, achievement of meaningful changes and social and economic development of the rural and poor communities remain a dream hard to realize.
Adherence to Global Standards of Social Work Training

The study assessed the extent to which social work curriculum complied with the global professional standards. Figure 5.2 presents a summary of social work educators’ views regarding adherence of the curriculum to global standards.

**Figure 5.2: Educators’ Views on Adherence to Global Standards**

More than a half (55.6%) of the social work educators believed that global standards are “partly integrated” in their curriculum. Meanwhile, 22.2% said that they are “fully” met while a similar number admitted not being aware of them. Therefore, findings generally suggest that the curriculum partly complies with the global standards.

Moreover, the study strived to understand if the curriculum is constantly reviewed. Hence, educators’ views regarding this were gathered. Opinions and perceptions differed depending on the institution in question. Some educators said the curriculum is reviewed after every three years while others said it is done after every five years.

For instance, an educator from the Institute of Social Work remarked: “The curriculum is reviewed after every three years because that is the required standard.” Another educator from the Open University stated that “the curriculum is reviewed
after every five years.” Therefore, review of curriculum by both institutions involved is done in accordance to the standards of the accrediting body. It is important to mention that the two institutions involved in this study are accredited by different accreditation bodies. The Institute of Social Work is accredited by the National Council for Technical Education (NACTE) while the Open University of Tanzania is accredited by the Tanzania Commission for Universities (TCU). The two are the main educational accreditation authorities in Tanzania.

**Educational Materials and Methods Used**

The study sought to find out the nature of social work training and practice. Two variables were assessed; one is the orientation of the training and the other is the source of references and other educational materials.

Social work educators were asked to state the organisation of the training and curriculum. That is whether it is more Western, local or mixed in nature. Six out of eight interviewed educators pointed that the curriculum is more Western-oriented. In support of this one educator stated that “the curriculum is more Western because we do not have indigenous and local models of social work.” Similarly, another educator pointed out that “the curriculum is largely foreign and European-based especially in terms of modules and approaches.”

Other two educators contended that curriculum was based on mixed elements. They explained that it is organised in such a way that it tries to indigenise the foreign/Western knowledge into the local context. One of them remarked that
“it is mixed, it tries to observe indigenous issues as well.” In support, another educator stated that “it is mostly Western because that is where it originated. However, we use Western orientation as a framework and tailor it to address indigenous issues.”

Based on the above, it can be generalised that much of the contents of the curriculum is borrowed/imported from Western approaches, theories and methods. However, there have been some attempts to indigenise the profession in order to make it fit in the Tanzanian content.

In order to get a holistic understanding of the nature of the training, views of educators and students regarding the source of reference and educational materials were sought. A summary of findings regarding this is given in figures 5.3 and 5.4.

**Figure 5.3: Sources of References - Educators’ Views**

![Bar Chart](chart.png)

A majority (88.9%) of the social work educators noted that they highly use reference materials produced outside Africa. In addition, more than half (55.6%) of them had an opinion that country-specific materials are used only “to a low extent.”
Findings equally suggest that the use of materials produced within Africa is also “low”. In a similar perspective, findings based on students’ views (as per Figure 5.4) also confirm that the use of locally published reference materials is extremely poor.

The trend suggests that the indigenisation process is likely to be affected by the lack of locally-produced materials. This proves that it is high time that social work educators of Tanzania reflect, explore and critically evaluate their curricula and, if possible, find out how they can reduce overreliance on Western theory and practice and create new theories and methods that are relevant and more applicable to the current African context.

**Figure 5.4: Students’ Views Regarding Main References Used**

It was only 3.1% of students who pointed out that local publications are used as reference materials. The majority (85.7%) asserted that they used textbooks from Europe and other developed countries as their reference materials. Thus, social work educators should be more engaged in research and
publications. This will help them to generate local literature, theories and methods.

**Suggestions for Improvement of Training**

In order to improve social work training, students had a number of observations. They committed that:

- Lecturers are overburdened. Thus, their workload needs to be reduced. One student noted that “the workload of lecturers should be reduced so that they can supervise students well. Lecturers have many duties to do, so they have little time to supervise students during fieldwork.” Therefore, the suggestion points to the need to reduce the load of other assignments from lecturers.

- Teaching and learning environment is not good thus affecting conducive learning. Hence, the need for its improvement is necessary.

- The number of students per class is too big, thus hindering comfortable and effective learning. One student noted: “We are too many in class.” Therefore, social work training institutions should ensure that there are manageable numbers of students per class in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

- The number of competent and professionally trained lecturers is insufficient. One student noted that “some lecturers are not competent and confident. Hence, more qualified lecturers should be employed.”

- Conflicts between the lecturers and management interferes with the learning process. Hence, it should be controlled.\(^5\)

- Public awareness and visibility of the profession is still low; thus calling for the need for more sensitisation regarding

---

\(^5\) It is important to mention here that during the data collection period the Institute of Social Work was in crisis situation that resulted into a strike by lectures and its temporary closure. This situation influenced some of the recommendations of students regarding how to improve the training.
the role of the profession in addressing community and clients’ problems.

- Professional ethics and standards are not protected. Hence, they should be controlled through a regulatory authority.

- Training is not evidence-based. One student recommended for the need of increased research in order to generate new and locally-based scientific knowledge to inform training.

- There is a lack of up-to-date social work references. On this, one student noted that “there are few social work books. Those available are not modern. They are from the 60s to 80s.” Therefore, there is a dire need for ensuring that students are availed with up-to-date reference materials.

- There is an over-reliance on foreign literature as one student noted that “more readings on Africa should also be produced and printed.”

- There is lack of adequate and qualitative teaching facilities such as speakers or projectors. In his recommendation for improvement of training, one student from ISW noted that “teaching and learning materials should be improved. For instance, our institute can increase the use of projectors, white boards, markers, microphones, screens, computers and books.”

- Internship/fieldwork periods are short and should be extended. It was stated by one of the respondents that “if possible, fieldwork period should be increased from 3 to 6 months.”

a) **Type of Training Programme Offered**

Views of students and social work educators regarding how they conceptualise the type of social work training programme were gathered. Figure 5.5 gives a summary.
Findings summarised above clearly suggest that both educators and students conceptualise the training programme to be a generalist one. The findings logically imply that students lack specialised skills to deal with complex problems that result from structural, natural, social and even economic changes occurring in societies.

b) Engagement in Research by Training Institutions

Views of educators regarding their involvement in research were sought. Findings regarding this are summarised in Figure 5.6.
Figure 5.6: Educators’ Views Regarding Their Engagement in Research

The majority (55.6%) of social work educators negated that their departments are conducting research with regard to social work and development issues. Similarly, the majority (77.8%) of them were of the view that they are engaged in research only “to a moderate extent” while 22.2% said they were not engaged at all.

On the contrary, findings from students indicated that all of them agreed that they were engaged in research as part of their studies. Areas of their research orientations are portrayed in Figure 5.7.
Findings suggest that students’ areas of research orientation are varied. However, the most dominant one is assessment of specific problems of vulnerable groups. Nearly half of them (48%) mentioned that. As it is demonstrated, community development issues are not of high priority. Moreover, research on policy development and planning emerged to be of marginal importance. This trend leads to the generalisation that the focus of social work research is on addressing clients’ immediate problems.

**Perceptions about the Adequacy of the Social Work Training**

The study sought to assess the adequacy of social work training in addressing diverse social issues. Views of social workers were gathered. A summary of the same is presented in Table 5.1.
Table 5.1: Views on the Role of Training in Addressing Diverse Social Issues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme description</th>
<th>Level of ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social work education and training has helped to address diverse social problems.</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty was adequately covered in social work/education.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training helped to relate to local communities and their conditions.</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training helped to appreciate and integrate gender issues.</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fifty per cent of the social work practitioners felt that the training helped them to address poverty issues. Meanwhile, 29% felt that poverty was “adequately” covered in the training curriculum, whereas 45% felt that the training helped them very much in relating to local communities and their conditions. Nearly a third (32%) of social work practitioners
were of the view that the training helped them to appreciate and integrate gender issues. These findings portray a clear deficiency of the social work training curriculum in adequately equipping trainees with skills to address poverty and gender-related issues. If cross-tabulated with findings regarding the type of training programme in Figure 5.5, it becomes clear that there is a need for training institutions to develop and teach modules that can prepare and enable social work trainees to address the diverse poverty, gender and social development issues.

**Perceptions of Educators about Social Work Curriculum**

Apart from practitioners’ views, the study also gathered views from social work educators on the adequacy of the social work curriculum. Firstly, their views on social development and how it is taught were gathered. Major findings regarding this are portrayed in Figure 5.8.

**Figure 5.8:** Educators’ Views Regarding Teaching of Social Development

Educators had different views regarding how social development is taught, namely 44.5% felt that it is taught as
a separate module; 33.3% noted that it was taught as a unit in a given subject; while 22.2% felt that it was taught as a cross-cutting issue throughout the curriculum.

Furthermore, views of social work educators regarding the relevance of social work curriculum and the perceived adequacy to social development were sought. Figure 5.9 shows a summary of their responses.

**Figure 5.9:** Relevancy of the Curriculum to Development Needs and MDGs

![Pie chart showing 66.7% Yes and 33.3% No]

The majority (66.7%) of the educators affirmed that the social work curriculum is relevant in meeting social development needs of the country and the achievement of the MDGs. Despite these promising results, practice suggests that the level of contribution of social work to MDGs is still underestimated.

As counter-information to the above, social work educators were further asked to specify the MDGs that receive priority in their training programme. Figure 5.10 presents a summary of their responses.
It became evident that a significant number (44.5 %) of educators were not sure about the MDG that receives more priority in the curriculum; while 11 % indicated categorically that none of the MDGs receive the priority. If combined, these two categories of responses suggest that educators are not well informed about the goals and hence not very sure about the one that receives priority. The same also suggests that the curriculum is not explicitly designed to address issues related to the realisation of MDGs. Therefore, this gap ought to be considered by the training institutions while reviewing their curriculum so as to make it responsive to the global emerging issues.

Educators’ views regarding the area of curriculum review and its sensitivity to diverse needs of female and male clients were gathered. Findings are as summarised in Figure 5.11.
Findings confirm that social work institutions included in the study review their curriculums on a regular basis. The majority (66.7%) of educators agreed that the curriculum is sensitive to the diverse needs of female and male clients. Nevertheless, educators were equally requested to give their opinions regarding how adequate their curriculum prepares students to address issues related to the realisation of MDGs including promotion of human rights. Findings suggest that the majority of social workers agreed that the curriculum prepares graduates to address issues related to the realisation of MDGs as it is shown in Table 5.2.
Table 5.2: Educators’ Views on Adequacy of the Social Work Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of competencies</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our graduates have adequate skills and competences in integrating social and economic development goals.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our social work curriculum adequately prepares graduates to contribute to the achievement of the UN MDGs alongside other professionals.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One of the key roles our graduates can play effectively is the protection and promotion of individual and social rights.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of competencies</td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our graduates are adequately equipped with knowledge and skills of integrating gender issues at all levels of practice.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 11.1</td>
<td>2 22.2</td>
<td>5 55.6</td>
<td>1 11.1</td>
<td>9 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The theories and models that we teach in the current social work curriculum enable our graduates to work in diverse cultural settings and engage in culturally relevant practices.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2 22.2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6 66.7</td>
<td>1 11.1</td>
<td>9 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our graduates are adequately equipped with knowledge and skills to handle the challenges and needs of rural areas.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>7 77.8</td>
<td>1 11.1</td>
<td>9 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings summarised in Table 5.2 indicate that the majority of educators agreed that their graduates (i) have skills and competencies in integrating social and economic development goals (77.8 %); (ii) can play effective roles in the protection and promotion of individual and social rights (66.7 %); (iii) are adequately equipped with knowledge and skills of integrating gender issues at all levels of practice (55.6 %); (iv) can work in diverse cultural settings and engage in culturally relevant practice (66.7 %); and (iv) are adequately equipped with knowledge and skills to handle the challenges and needs of rural areas (77.8 %).

Findings further indicate that more than a half (55.6 %) of educators agreed that their institution is involved in academic discourses and collaboration with other schools for the mutual exchange of staff, students and literature.

Referring to findings in the same table, peculiar findings emerged with regard to educators’ views on how the curriculum prepared graduates to contribute to the achievement of the
UN MDGs alongside other professionals with 44.4% “not sure” if it does while the same number agreed that it does. Thus, there is a clear indication that educators lack a common understanding and agreement if the training adequately and sufficiently prepares graduates to contribute towards the realisation of MDGs. This is an obvious gap that training institutions ought to fill if they intend to target towards meeting the internationally agreed-upon goals and targets for poverty reduction and social development.

The study also endeavoured to establish whether social work educators felt that there is a link between social work training and practice. In principal, all of them agreed that the link exists. However, they differed on the adequacy of the skills acquired by the graduates. It was noted that social work graduates do not acquire adequate skills in specialised fields. This was confirmed in earlier discussions that social work training adopts a generalist approach. One educator confirmed the assertion by saying that:

*We offer general social work without specialisation. Hence, social workers working in specialised fields like psychiatric departments miss the orientation to this specific area.*

**Experiences and Perceptions of Students on the Curriculum**

Learners’ views are of key importance in understanding the adequacy of the curriculum in addressing various issues. Thus, student’s views regarding how they assessed the curriculum were gathered. Therefore, researchers were interested in understanding how students evaluated their future practice levels. Figure 5.12 presents their responses.
Findings indicate that students felt that the training prepared them to work at different levels including macro/national (37.8%), community/meso (34.7%), individual/family (13.3%) and other levels not mentioned here (14.3%). These findings suggest that the majority of the students indicated that they were adequately prepared to work at both national and community levels.

Apart from understanding the practice levels, the study also sought to gather opinions of students regarding the adequacy of the curriculum in preparing them to handle issues related to: gender, protection and promotion of individual and social rights; addressing clients’ needs; development and poverty reduction. Table 5.3 gives a summary of major findings.
Reflections on Social Work Education and Training

Table 5.3: Students’ Views Regarding the Adequacy of the Curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of competencies</th>
<th>Levels of ranking</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One of the key issues that was effectively integrated in the curriculum was the protection and promotion of individual and social rights.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 2.0</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>1 1.0</td>
<td>98 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender issues were integrated in my social work curriculum.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>5 5.1</td>
<td>3 3.1</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45.9</td>
<td>1 1.0</td>
<td>98 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have been adequately equipped with knowledge and skills of integrating gender issues at all levels of practice.</td>
<td></td>
<td>- -</td>
<td>4 4.1</td>
<td>7 7.1</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>37 37.8</td>
<td>98 100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the theories and models that I learnt in social work are relevant in addressing local problems and needs in my country.</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 1.0</td>
<td>2 2.0</td>
<td>10 10.2</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>56 57.1</td>
<td>1 1.0 98 100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description of competencies</th>
<th>Levels of ranking</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Not sure</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>No answer</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The social work education/training has made me more culturally aware and I can effectively work in diverse cultural settings.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>36.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the curriculum content leaned towards remedial/therapeutic/individual social work methods and models.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>58.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the curriculum content leaned towards developmental issues such as poverty reduction.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>49.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of competencies</td>
<td>Levels of ranking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way in which fieldwork was organised during the course of my training helped me to gain a deeper understanding of development needs in my community.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The way in which fieldwork was organised during the course of my training helped me to gain knowledge and skills on how to address individual problems of my clients.</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings suggest that 51% of students strongly agreed that social work curriculum effectively integrated aspects of protection and promotion of individual rights. Meanwhile, 45.9% of them “agreed” that gender issues were covered; and 51% of them agreed that they were equipped with skills to address gender issues. Of all respondents in this category, 57% “strongly agreed” that most of the theories they learnt
are relevant in addressing local problems. Nearly the same number (58 %) “strongly agreed” that the training has made them culturally aware and able to work in diverse cultural settings.

It has also been confirmed by 58.2 % of students that the curriculum leaned towards remedial and therapeutic methods; while 49 % contented that the curriculum had developmental contents. Impressively, 61.2 % of them felt that the way that fieldwork was organised helped them to learn more about developmental and individual needs of their communities. Despite the above findings, students had various opinions on how to improve the training. The importance of having a longer fieldwork period was emphasised. One student said:

Social work is not desk work so I think the training should focus on outreach and practical work. I mean that block and concurrent fieldwork should be given more time, so that students can have more time to know clients and participate in more activities.

An emphasis on entrepreneurship skills was put. One student noted:

Social work training does not include entrepreneurship courses. So, entrepreneurship skills should be taught in order to effectively reduce poverty.

Furthermore, voices were raised for a (better) relation and collaboration between social work and health. The field of public health was suggested to be added in the social work curriculum.

The utilisation of methods and approaches which originated from Europe, rather than focusing on programmes which incorporate the Tanzanian circumstances and environmental
conditions are considered as a shortcoming of the social work curriculum. In confirmation of this, a social work student emphasised:

   Social work training does not cover our own environment as a developing country since we still use references from the developed countries. The programme should consider the environment of Tanzania rather than using programmes originating from Europe.

**Areas for Improvement in the Social Work Curriculum**

The study endeavoured to gather views on social work educators, practitioners and students on how to improve the social work curriculum and hence make it more responsive to poverty, gender and social development issues. Different suggestions were given:

- New courses such as social welfare economics, rural social economic planning should be introduced.

- The need for adding more case studies/examples on how poverty can be reduced was identified. In support of this, one educator advised: “Add more examples or case studies on how poverty can be reduced. Students can design projects for that.”

- Social development should be integrated as a cross-cutting module in the curriculum.

- An independent module regarding MDGs and poverty reduction strategies should be introduced and integrated in the curriculum.

- There should be integration/cross-fertilisation of the Western-oriented approaches with locally-based ones.
There is need to teach gender as an independent and compulsory rather than optional module. One educator remarked “perhaps courses like social work and gender could be changed from being optional to being core.”

There should be more emphasis on community developmental approach.

In order to improve the social work curriculum and make it more responsive to the needs of the poor, the following major suggestions are deduced:

- A review of the curriculum to address multi-faceted needs is vital: “Skills on how to prepare and format research proposals accurately should be emphasised in social work training.”
- Improvement and modernisation of learning environments is required.
- Professional development opportunities for social workers should be ensured.

**Adequacy of Field Practice Education**

Fieldwork is a very important component of social work training. In that regard, this study was interested in assessing how and to what extent fieldwork is part of social work training. Views of students regarding this were sought. Figure 5.13 summarises the findings.
It was evident that fieldwork is a core component of social work training - with 99% of student respondents affirming that they did fieldwork at community/meso level. These findings correspond with those of social work educators and practitioners who also affirmed that fieldwork was mandatory for their completion of studies.

Despite the fact that the majority of respondents did fieldwork, they also highlighted some areas that need improvement. It was asserted that:

- There is poor collaboration between training institutions and field agencies.

- There is weak field supervision, where lecturers were allegedly spending little time in the field. One student noted that “during fieldwork, lecturers should make close follow up so that students can be well guided.”

- Heavy workload of lecturers limit their effective field supervision.

- There is no comprehensive plan for field placement which makes students concentrate in only certain accessible placements.

- There is limited financial support to enable students to do fieldwork in remote, hard-to-reach areas.
In relation to the above observations, the study also assessed the most students’ preferred areas of field placement. It was evident that the government offered most of students’ fieldwork opportunities – with 60.2% of students saying so. However, it was noted that most of fieldwork is done in urban settings as indicated by the majority (72.4%) of the students’ respondents. The situation brings us to the already identified need for social workers to work in rural areas in order to effectively address poverty issues. Figure 5.14 further illustrates the findings.

**Figure 5.14: Types of Students’ Fieldwork Agencies and Locality**

Based on the findings in Figure 5.14, it is evident that rural areas lack the attention of and support by social work practitioners and students. Thus, targets for the realisation of MDGs and poverty reduction are likely to remain on paper, if no measures are taken to ensure that social welfare services are decentralised to rural and remote areas.
Fieldwork Arrangement

The study also assessed how fieldwork is organised. Findings from interviews with educators revealed that there exists systematic fieldwork arrangements in the institutions studied. Almost all educators reported that fieldwork is a mandatory component of social work training. They further noted that while in the field, students must be supervised by a trained social worker to ensure that they appropriately relate theory to practice. It was reported that fieldwork arrangements depended on the level of social work training. For instance, the bachelor’s degree training has two field practices which include concurrent and block fieldwork. In confirmation of this, one educator noted:

We have two field programmes. That is, concurrent fieldwork done during the 2nd semester of second year of study and the block fieldwork done for 3 months at the end of the second year.

The study equally assessed if social work agencies offered internship opportunities and supervision to students. Findings indicate that most of the organisations did so (see Figure 5.15).

Figure 5.15: Internship Opportunities offered by Social Work Organisations
Slightly above three-quarters (77%) of organisations studied confirmed that they offered internship opportunities to students. Nearly a half of them (49%) agreed to be involved in field supervision.

Furthermore, the study also explored the main fields of focus for students at fieldwork placements. Findings indicate that most (39.8%) of students did fieldwork that focused on provision of remedial services to their clients. In addition, 33.7% pointed out that they did community organisation. Figure 5.16 summarises the findings.

**Figure 5.16: Students' Professional Areas of Focus in Fieldwork**

Based on findings summarised in Figure 5.16, one may be tempted to question that if the focus of students’ fieldwork is on remedial services, how well are they prepared to deal with poverty and social development issues? Moreover, in order to be able to understand future orientations, students were asked to state their future areas of professional focus. A summary of their views is given in Figure 5.17.
Students had diverse opinions regarding areas in which they would like to work in the future. A cumulative total of 55.1% of them indicated that they would like to work in areas of community organisation and social service administration. On the other hand, 16.3% indicated an interest to work in the area of social research and policy advocacy and planning; while 10.2% indicated the interest to work in clinical/individual casework.

**Areas of Fieldwork Improvement in Training Institutions**

Students’ voices were raised with regard to issues which they thought training institutions should consider in order to improve fieldwork. These can be summarised as follows:

- There should be proper fieldwork preparation and a guideline or manual that sets a roadmap for students’ fieldwork path.
- A scheduled supervision should be institutionalised.
- Institutions should create a database of potential supervisors to guide students.
- Communication between supervisors and field agencies should be strengthened and improved. For instance,
meetings with supervisors should take place on a regular basis. A social work counsellor from PASADA said: “There should be increased cooperation between agency supervisor and institute supervisor.”

- Fieldwork should be decentralised to rural areas.
- There should be increased field supervisors both qualitatively and quantitatively. More social work educators should be trained in supervisory skills.
- There should be adequate literature to support and facilitate fieldwork.

**Indigenisation of Social Work Education and Training**

There has been a growing debate on indigenisation of social work on the African continent. Being key stakeholders, social work educators were asked to give their views regarding how they contribute to that process. A summary of their views is given in Figure 5.18.

**Figure 5.18: Educator’s Contribution to the Indigenisation Process**

![Figure 5.18: Educator’s Contribution to the Indigenisation Process](image)

The majority (55.6 %) of social work educators said that they did not contribute to the indigenisation process; while 44.4 % said they did. In addition to this, the study sought
to gather opinions of social work educators regarding the idea of indigenisation of the profession in Africa. Basically, all respondents had a positive opinion regarding the process. However, some of them cited a number of challenges associated with the process including, among others; multiple cultures, limited resources, limited/lack of local publications and insufficient number of professionally trained social workers. The majority of respondents confirmed that the process is good “because in Africa we have our own approaches and methods of dealing with some problems but they are not promoted”. Others supported the idea by saying that it will reflect the African realities of social work in the 21st century. One of the educators observed and cautioned “indigenisation is good but in Africa we have a lot of limitations based on lack of resources.”

Another educator noted:

I have a very positive opinion about indigenisation, but we have insufficient professionally trained social workers in Africa. They are also not well funded, so it will take time to create the change.

**Level of Contribution to the Process of Indigenisation**

The study further explored the extent to which social work educators contribute to the indigenisation process. Findings revealed that more than a half reported not to greatly contribute to the process. Some said that they had no chance of participating in the process due to the lack of a forum. For instance, an educator observed: “I am yet to greatly contribute into that process due to lack of a forum to do so.”

However, two respondents admitted that they were contributing to the process. They did so through social work seminars, informal discussions with colleagues and teaching.
In support of this, a social work educator remarked: “Yes, I contribute through my teaching/training sessions, social work workshops, seminars, and informal discussions with colleagues.”

This was supported by another educator who observed:

Yes, my contribution is through training. When I am teaching I usually emphasise the importance of observing one’s culture, tradition and norms (avoiding adoption and application of harmful practices).

With reference to the above, it is evident that the majority of social work educators are not adequately contributing towards the process of indigenisation of social work in Africa yet. This confirms a high dependency on the Western approaches and less adoption of local models.

The over-reliance on Western-oriented approaches and lack of indigenous approaches was also evident from findings gathered from interviews with employers, where the majority of respondents pointed out that there were no plans to initiate indigenous practices in their organisations.

**Culturally Sensitive Approach – Learning from the People Concerned**

The study intended to understand the extent to which social work practitioners are prepared and hence capable of dealing with culturally sensitive issues. Hence, they were asked to share their opinions regarding the importance of cultural knowledge. Some practitioners stated that the knowledge of cultural diversity is vital. They said that it is important to have such knowledge in order to have a culturally sensitive practice.

The study also sought to explore whether social work training prepares practitioners to appropriately address
culturally sensitive issues. Views of social work practitioners, educators and students regarding this were gathered. Findings indicate that the majority of social work educators and students were of the opinion that the curriculum prepared students to handle culturally sensitive issues and work in diverse cultural settings. On the other hand, the majority of social work practitioners (59%) rated their ability to handle culturally sensitive issues as “moderate”. Only a quarter (25%) felt they had a very high ability to handle the same. Figure 5.19 shows the findings.

**Figure 5.19:** Social Workers’ Views on Their Ability to Handle Cultural Issues

Further to the above findings, the study sought to establish the extent to which social work models were compatible with cultural values and traditions. Figure 5.20 indicates that the majority (55%) of social work practitioners felt that there is compatibility between cultural values and social work practice modules. However, 36% felt that there is less compatibility between the two.
A conclusion that can be deduced from these findings is that the curriculum does not adequately prepare practitioners to handle culturally sensitive issues professionally.

Again, based on the personal opinions of the principle researcher, this weakness could be partly attributed to over-reliance on the traditional, individualistic methods and a generalist approach. A generalist approach hinders students from having specific culturally sensitive skills while the individualistic one narrows their focus and scope into personal rather than sociocultural issues surrounding clients’ problems.

**Summary**

In this chapter, an analysis of findings with regard to the adequacy of the training in addressing poverty, social development, gender, the realisation of MDGs and indigenisation has been done. Findings indicate that there is a high level of appreciation of the relevance of the profession in addressing the above-mentioned issues. The majority (66.7 %) of educators had a feeling that social work training is adequate and relevant in addressing social development issues. Slightly more than a half (51 %) of students affirmed
that the curriculum prepared them to address gender issues; while 57% of them agreed that the training was relevant and prepared them to address local problems.

Findings further indicate that there are mixed opinions regarding the contribution of the profession to the realisation of MDGs. A substantial number (44.4%) of educators were not sure if graduates are adequately prepared to contribute to the achievement of MDGs. It was also found out that the majority of respondents do not contribute to the indigenisation process. Major limitations are the lack of a forum to do so and limited local literature to inform the process.

With regard to adherence to global standards, the study confirms that there is no general consensus regarding the extent to which the curriculum adheres to such standards. It has been confirmed that the curriculum adopts Western approaches and models, including relying on references generated from outside of Africa.

Therefore, there exists an obvious need to review the curriculum in order to make it more responsive to poverty, gender and social development issues. There is also a need for social work educators to be more engaged in policy and research in order to elevate their level of contribution to the indigenisation process. Social work training and practice should also explicitly contribute towards the achievement of the MDGs. Besides, a culturally sensitive approach of social work is a key issue that ought to be incorporated in training and practice.
CHAPTER SIX

Views from the Ground - Perspectives of Social Work Clients

Introduction

This chapter presents findings on views and perceptions of clients regarding problems and challenges they face, strategies they adopt to solve them, the adequacy of services they receive from social workers and what they think should be done by social workers so as to improve their lives. This chapter draws its findings from qualitative data gathered from the clients. The research tool was designed to capture the salient characteristics and perceptions eminent among the social work clients that would otherwise not be quantified, that is, verbatim responses. Hence, qualitative data gathered through Focus Group Discussions and interviews with two clients is used to provide a descriptive analysis of the situation.

Clients’ Problems, Challenges and Their Coping Strategies

Problems and Challenges

Clients were asked to identify the main problems they face in life. Basic need poverty (inadequate services like food, clothing, medical care and shelter) emerged the number one problem. It was the first mentioned problem in all FGDs and
individual interviews. In support, a client from Mtwara, who was on HIV/AIDS medication, noted:

I live with HIV/AIDS. I expected to be getting assistance from the social welfare department but the main challenge is that I do not get any significant financial and material assistance from them. The only assistance offered is counselling.

Domestic violence and oppression of women by men was the second problem. Majority of clients included in the study, who happened to be women, pointed that different forms of mistreatments that they experience from men affect them. The most common mistreatment mentioned was family desertion by men: For instance, a female client respondent from Lindi reported being deserted after giving birth to a child with multiple disabilities:

I have a child who is mentally and physically challenged who needs my total support. Therefore, I cannot engage myself in economic productive activities, yet the father of the child ran away due to the condition of the child.

HIV/AIDS and other problems associated with it including stigmatisation also affected clients.

In relation to these problems and challenges, clients were asked whether they participate in the decision-making processes at the local community level. Findings established that majority of the clients did not effectively participate in decision-making. This indicates that there is a relationship between poverty and level of participation in decision-making at community level. The poorer one is, the less the chances to participate in the decision-making processes. A client from Mtwara stated: “I have no means to participate in such decisions because I have no business and I am not respected in the community.”
Another FGD participant from Kinondoni Municipality noted:

There are still no equal opportunities for participation in decision-making because the marginalised groups in the community are not so much involved in the decision-making processes.

Another person, an FGD participant also from Kinondoni Municipality, added: “Participation is not enough. Ideas from poor indigenous citizens are not yet taken into consideration in this country.”

The above findings give an indication that there is low involvement of the marginalised groups in the decision-making process. Further studies on this aspect are recommended in order to establish the level of involvement of the poor in decision making. The recommendation is based on the logical assumption that to come up with appropriate poverty reduction policies, plans and strategies one should involve and seek views and opinions of the poor.

**Strategies for Handling the Challenges**

In relation to the above problems and challenges, clients were further asked to mention strategies they apply in handling the challenges they face. Findings indicate that there are a variety of measures applied. These include searching for work/job or any other income-generating activity to bridge the income gap. Where violence is the problem, respondents opted to report to the government authorities. On the issue of neglect by their husbands, female clients indicated that they reported them to social welfare departments. In support of this, a female client from Lindi observed:

When I had this child the father ran away from me. Hence, I reported the matter to the Social Welfare Department and
they called the man to the office so that he could be asked to support the child but he denied being the father.

It is important to point that, though clients indicated to report the problem of husband negligence to the Social Welfare Department, the situation is not the same to the majority of Tanzanian women due to the reality that social welfare services in Tanzania are yet to be decentralised to the rural grass-roots level where the majority of Tanzanians live. The strategy is therefore applicable in the studied areas.

Other strategies that are applied in addressing the challenges especially those associated with gender oppression included engaging the family members (elders in particular), religious and community leaders.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that clients involved in the study applied different strategies in addressing their life challenges. They either designed individual strategies or sought external help from the government or relatives and other community members.

**Additional Support Needed by Clients**

In order to understand the main areas for intervention by social workers particularly in addressing poverty and achieving the MDGs, clients were asked to state the kind of support they needed. Findings indicate that the majority needed funds in terms of capital to start income-generating activities so as to be economically independent.

However, other kinds of support needed depended on specific problems and challenges experienced by individual clients. For instance, a lady who had a child with multiple disabilities, said she required a wheelchair to facilitate the movement of the child leaving her free to engage in economic activities.
Desired Changes by Social Work Clients

What is “Good Life?” - Views from Clients

The researchers and authors of this work were aware that good life is a relative term. Different communities and individuals may have different definitions of the term. However, there is a likelihood for people in similar life situations and/or problems to have common assumptions of what good life means. Thus, in order to establish the kind of change desired by clients and hence inform social workers on key areas of intervention, clients were asked to explain what good life meant to them. They gave several answers, the outstanding ones being:

Good life is achieved when one can meet the basic necessities of life such as food, shelter, clothing, medication, security, education and being loved.

An examination of clients’ views indicated that good life was generally conceptualised as a state of life that can be attained when one is able to meet all the basic necessities of life and overcome risks associated with lack of these needs. This indicates that income poverty is still a problem that if solved, clients can be able to live a good life.

Desired Changes

Apart from establishing the meaning of “good life” from clients’ perspectives, the study provided an opportunity to obtain additional views regarding changes that clients would desire in order to improve their lives. A number of views were raised. A majority of them suggested that they would wish to have a “poverty-free society.” Others said that they would like to see behavioural changes especially a decrease in polygamous marriages and extra-marital relationships.
Another proposed change was directed to the general community where community members would be urged to lessen beliefs in witchcraft and reliance on traditional healers. An additional desired change was to see more attention being put to addressing the unemployment problem especially for women. Empowerment of women also prominently emerged as a desired change. Other clients also pointed to the need for the promotion and protection of children’s rights and women’s rights to property ownership as well as gender equality.

Clients also desired to see political changes whereby politicians would help community members to address their pertinent problems. In support of this, an FGD participant from Iringa Municipal Social Welfare Agency stated that “political leaders should be close enough to citizens so as to understand their needs.”

**Perception and Experience of Social Work by Clients**

**Perception of Social Work by Clients**

Views of the clients regarding their perception on social work and the services it provides were sought. The purpose was to understand how they conceptualise the profession and its ability in addressing their problems and life challenges. To that effect, clients were asked to give their definition of the term “social work” and explain what they thought were the functions of social work practitioners.

Findings suggest that clients understood social workers as professionals who discuss their problems and help in finding solutions. They are also brokers who link clients with services. Others suggested that social work is about providing help to the needy and marginalised groups. In addition, others looked
at social work in terms of a physical place. They said that it is a place where they can go to present their problems and get solutions. A client compared social workers to judges when she said:

Social workers are like judges to our problems, they know the solution. They are supposed to listen to us and advise us accordingly.

Others defined social work as a profession that advocates for the voiceless, marginalised and helpless groups in finding solutions to their problems. Therefore, it can be concluded that clients showed a general understanding of who social workers are and what the profession is about.

In a further description of the qualities of a social worker, it was indicated that social workers needed to have additional abilities to address clients’ poverty. This entails the need for social workers to have entrepreneurial skills or network with other professionals with such skills.

**Client’s Perceptions Regarding Social Work Services**

Findings indicate that all clients involved in the study had been beneficiaries of the services provided by social workers. However, the nature of services differed according to problems they experienced. Counselling was the dominant service they received.

In order to understand the contribution of the profession on clients’ life, participants were asked to specify how the services helped in solving their problems. Some participants explained that despite the fact that they received social work services, clients’ problems were not fully solved. Others said their problems were somehow solved. They reported that social workers help in linking clients to other related service providers. In this line, an FGD participant from Kinondoni
Social Welfare Agency noted that “social workers link clients with services.”

The above findings confirm the fact that social workers provide remedial individualised services to clients. In order to establish gaps in services provided, clients were asked to explain what they thought they missed from social workers. Most of the clients indicated that although they received the above-mentioned services, they still missed something. They reported that they were only given non-material services but not helped to start income-generating activities that would help them to be independent economically. A client from Mtwara pointed out: “I missed support to start a small business because no one in the community is willing to help me.”

As noted above, social work services provided to clients were only remedial in nature. This was confirmed by clients’ views when they were asked to state if they felt that social workers are able to influence their well-being and satisfaction in life. The general picture that emerged was that social workers are competent and able to help them solve their immediate problems such as family conflict and misunderstandings but not addressing poverty and its associated challenges.

One explanation that was given for the failure of social workers to influence the well-being of their clients is that they are sometimes overwhelmed by the number of clients as well as unfavourable conditions of work. In support of this, FGD participants from Kinondoni said:

Social workers are able to influence clients’ well-being and satisfaction with life if they work in favourable conditions such as having reliable transport and manageable social worker–client ratio.
Summary

Findings portray a clear gap between clients’ expectations and actual services provided by social workers. The majority of clients need to be financially empowered so as to be able to start income-generating activities. To the contrary, they are helped to cope with their problems. Clients would wish to live in a poverty-free society but services received do not directly target on that. Thus, there is a need to enhance the capacity of the profession so that it can adequately contribute to poverty reduction.
CHAPTER SEVEN
Perceptions on Gender, Poverty and Social Development

Introduction
This chapter presents findings regarding respondents’ perceptions on gender and its link to social work. The ability of social workers in addressing gender issues is in focus. Views of respondents regarding how social work can contribute to the promotion of gender equality are presented.

Perceptions on Gender in the Social Work Context
Social workers are perceived to have significant roles in addressing gender issues. Based on views of policy makers, it was learnt that by virtue of its nature, social work practice has an obvious link to gender issues. The contention by several policy makers was that most of social work clients are women and children who are deprived of their rights. Thus, it is imperative that social workers be more engaged in addressing gender issues. In addition, policy makers felt that social workers have a role to play in socioeconomic empowerment, human rights education, mediation, sensitisation and advocacy. In addressing gender issues, social workers are argued to develop appropriate strategies and interventions such as feminist movements/activism and other gender equality efforts.
Furthermore, another observation was made by clients that social workers need to intensify their efforts in addressing gender issues. A study participant remarked:

I think the contribution of social workers is still low in this aspect. They only attend to (mediate) marriage conflict cases but not more is planned to address the causes of problems. This suggests that there exists a gap in what social workers do to address gender issues. Clients’ major requirement is economic empowerment.

**Gender Inequality and Poverty**

In an effort to address gender inequality, this study gathered views from social work practitioners and employers regarding the prevalence of poverty and gender inequality. As already explained in chapter three, it was confirmed that poverty is a major problem affecting clients. In order to establish whether there is still gender inequality in society, clients were asked to share their views, if they ever experienced discrimination on the basis of their sex. Findings suggest that the problem exists. As already explained in Chapter Six, gender-related problems occupy the second position on the list of problems that highly affect clients seeking help. Four dominant reasons of discrimination are deduced from the responses of the clients. They include; (i) Discrimination based on one being HIV infected, (ii) Discrimination due to giving birth to a child with disability (iii) Unequal power relations in the ownership of property and (iv) Lack of education.

HIV/AIDS discrimination and stigmatisation is a problem that still exists in Tanzania despite efforts done by the government to fight against it. Moreover, discrimination of
people with disability also exists. In explaining this, an FGD participant from Lindi bitterly explained:

Yes I experienced gender discrimination because of being a woman and by giving birth to a child with disability. I faced rejection, oppression and became deserted when I gave birth to a mentally retarded child. The father denied the child as being his.

Consequently, in the recent years Tanzania has experienced a number of cases of killings of people with albinism. This is a clear indication of unequal treatment and discrimination of this population group. Therefore, this is an area that requires increased attention and intervention by social workers.

Others experienced discrimination in terms of unequal power relations in the ownership of property. An FGD participant from Iringa Municipality noted that “there is discrimination of women in ownership of property at family level.”

Moreover, another premise of discrimination for women was lack of education. That means, some women experienced discrimination due to their low education levels. An FGD participant from Kinondoni Municipality commented:

There is still discrimination in terms of gender especially when a woman is less educated and does not have basic knowledge of her rights.

Social Workers have a role to play in addressing gender issues. However, based on clients’ views much is yet to be done in order to help clients appropriately to address challenges related to gender discrimination and oppression. This obviously entails the need for social workers to modify their approaches so as to be responsive to gender-related needs and challenges of their clients.
Gender Issues in Social Work Education and Training

As already discussed in chapter five, findings indicate that the social work training equipped trainees with skills to address gender issues. Findings also explain that gender is still taught as an optional course at the Institute of Social Work and an independent course in the Open University of Tanzania. This suggests a need for all the institutions to integrate gender as a cross-cutting course.

Awareness on Gender Issues

The study explored if social work employers are aware of the gender issues and the importance of promoting gender equality in order to successfully reduce poverty and promote social development. Findings from interviews with employers revealed that social workers are aware of gender issues and the importance of promoting gender equality. The dominant view was that by its nature, social work professional training prepares social workers to work against gender inequality through promoting and protecting the rights of the clients they serve. These include orphans and other vulnerable children, offenders, women, older people, to mention but a few.

It is worthwhile noting that some organisations promote gender mainstreaming within their programmes. In support of this, one employer in a Youth Education Organisation reported that, gender issues are directly incorporated in their organisation’s programme through gender policy.

The study also gathered views of respondents regarding what needs to be done by social workers in order to effectively contribute towards the promotion of gender equality. Qualitative findings from employers indicate that the following are strategies worth undertaking:
Social workers have to network and cooperate with other professionals and stakeholders such as the community and the media in order to consolidate efforts towards promotion of gender equality.

Social workers have to be involved in raising awareness of gender issues and mobilisation of resources for the realisation of gender equality. They were argued to initiate dialogue on gender issues and the importance of the promotion of the same. SAWAMA Chief Administrative Officer noted: “We need to have community dialogue and meetings with community members to explain and make them aware of gender issues.”

Social workers should do a lot of advocacy and lobbying against practices that place women, youth and children in undesirable subordinate positions as opposed to men.

Social workers should be more involved in the implementation of gender-related policies at different levels, namely, national, local and organisational. The following is a representative sentiment made in support of this view: “They should be part of the gender desk at the Local Government” (District Council Social Welfare Officer).

Incorporation of gender issues into the mainstream of social work curriculum was viewed as vital as it would lay a good foundation for social work graduates to better engage in the promotion of gender equality. In support of this view, the Director of children and youth organisation in Mtwara region noted: “Gender should be well reflected in the curriculum so that future social workers address something that they are knowledgeable of.”

Social workers should initiate plans and programmes geared towards women empowerment. This was premised on the economic position of the Tanzanian women. Thus, it was argued that it is crucial to empower women with
entrepreneurship skills to enable them initiate income-generating activities. In line with this, a Senior Social Worker at Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania noted:

Social workers need to lobby for financial partners who can ensure that women are considered in loan provision. This should go hand in hand with favourable terms and conditions on loans.

Views summarised above indicate that social workers have a wider spectrum of roles and activities to perform in order to effectively contribute to promotion of gender equality. The suggested roles also inform change in the social work curriculum to make it more responsive to gender issues.

**Integrating Gender Issues in Social Work Practice**

**Linkage between Social Work and Gender**

Based on findings of interviews with policy makers, an obvious link between social work and gender was established. That means, while solving client’s problems, social workers must wear a gender lens and ensure that gender equality is promoted and protected. In that regard, social workers were advised to do the following in order to effectively contribute towards promotion of gender equality among their clients:

- **Empowerment of women:** Some clients noted that social workers need to empower women so that they can be able to stand on their own. Confirming this, a client from Mtwara explained:

  Social workers should empower women. For instance, if people intend to discriminate against me they might respect me if they see I have a business or a good house. There will also be a big change that they will speak about good instead of bad things about me.
• **Advocacy on women rights and amendment of laws to promote gender equity:** In support of this, a client from Lindi expressed:

There are laws which favour men more than women. Therefore, even when we try to fight for our rights, laws favouring men dominate. Therefore, social workers should deal with laws that oppress women. If social workers deal with such laws, they will help to reduce the load of problems that women face.

• **Awareness creation on gender inequality and stigma:** Some clients noted that there is a need to raise awareness on the gender imbalances that exist in the Tanzanian society.

• **Linking clients to legal services:** In support of this effort, an FGD participant from Kinondoni Municipality noted:

Social workers should link clients to legal services so that they can get more professional advice on areas particularly those involving the rights of voiceless groups.

• **Provision of family counselling and education:** Clients argued that in order for social workers to promote gender equality, they should be engaged in the provision of family counselling and education against gender discrimination in different communities.

**Social Work and Poverty**

In addition to above observations, this study further sought to establish whether social workers are properly capable of handling challenges related to poverty. Study findings as summarised in Figure 7.1 indicate that an overwhelming majority of employers felt that social workers are capable of handling challenges related to poverty. However, we feel
that despite the contention by employers, a lot of strategies need to be devised in order to enhance the capacity of social workers in addressing poverty-related challenges. As already mentioned, additional skills, conducive work environment and networking with other professionals remain paramount.

**Figure 7.1:** Social Workers’ Ability to Handle Poverty Challenges - Employers’ Views

A majority (88.6%) of employers agreed that social workers are capable of handling challenges related to poverty; while 11.4% of them had an opinion that social workers were not capable of handling challenges related to poverty.

**Summary**

In a nutshell, this study establishes that social workers require sufficient knowledge in order to deal with gender-sensitive issues. Efforts need to be directed towards ensuring that there is more compatibility between social work models adopted and gender issues. As already highlighted, social workers have a lot to do if they are to make a positive contribution towards promoting gender equality. They have to change their approaches and methods of practice and make sure that they equally develop and implement gender sensitive plans and programmes in their places of work. And finally, although social workers may be capable of handling issues on the fight against poverty, they ought to devise effective strategies to carry this task ashore.
CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusion
Globally, social workers are committed to enhancing human well-being by providing individuals, groups, and communities with services that meet their needs (Dominelli, 2012, p. 63). They have also sought gender equality that values women’s activities (ibid, p. 63). Thus, by nature, social work profession has a critical role to play in assisting their clients and other members of the society to come out of poverty, reduce inequality and attain social and economic development. However, social work in developing countries has often ignored poverty or become involved in charity-based responses that do nothing to address the causes of poverty (Cox and Pawar, 2006, p. 209). Tanzania falls into this trap. Social work practitioners overly rely on individual case work, residual and therapeutic approaches to address immediate instead of long term needs including that of eradication of poverty. This study has confirmed that the contribution of social workers to poverty reduction, social development and to the achievement of the globally agreed upon MDGs is slight. Social work training is also yet to adapt the social development approach.

Thus, in order for the profession to cope with the demands and challenges posed by the changing socioeconomic environment and social workers to meaningfully perform to the expected and required levels transformation is required. This study appraised existing policies, assessed social work
practice and training and asserts that need for adoption of a social development approach – that transcends both residual and institutional approaches cannot be overstated. Other specific recommendations for professional improvement are presented in this chapter. Social work is envisioned to elevate its visibility and increase the level of contribution beyond the MDG era.

**Recommendations**

In order to enhance the contribution of the social work profession in poverty reduction and the realisation of the Millennium Development Goals in Tanzania, the following recommendations are made.

**To Government**

- It should have a will to develop and transform the profession.
- It should recognise, promote and protect the profession. A law and policy guiding the profession should be developed and adequate budget set for the social work related activities.
- It should establish a functional social work professional body to regulate the practice and enforce the code of ethics.
- It should strengthen the Social Welfare Department if possible transform it to an independent ministry instead of the long term practice of making it a section in the ministry.
- It should ensure that social workers are employed at the community grass root-level and in rural areas rather than being mostly urban-based. A corresponding conducive work environment should be created to motivate social workers to work in rural settings.
Conclusions and Recommendations

- It should set funds to support and ensure provision of continuous education to social workers in order to equip them with requisite and update knowledge and skills to address emerging socioeconomic problems in the community.

- It should forge for collaboration with key stakeholders to continuously strengthen the profession and extend its services to make them accessible to all.

- It should ensure that poverty reduction, gender and social development policies are implemented as planned, to overcome blames and complains raised against poor implementation of policies, particularly those targeting the poor and marginalised groups.

- It should facilitate the provision of soft loans and teaching of entrepreneurial skills to the non-skilled, poor, marginalised populations so as to raise their socioeconomic status.

- It should continue to challenge gender inequality and promote gender equality.

To Training Institutions

- The curriculum should be reviewed to integrate MDGs, gender and social development issues and approaches. Gender and social development should be mainstreamed as cross-cutting issues within the curriculum.

- The curriculum should also incorporate other courses envisaged to prepare learners to contribute towards attainment of MDGs targets and social development. Proposed courses include community development, entrepreneurship and rural sociology and development.

- Students should be adequately familiarised with the MDGs and how to link them with their practice. They should also be trained how to practically address poverty
issues in the community in order to uplift their client’s lives. This includes, for instance, equipping students with project proposal formulation skills.

- They should have adequate and competent social work trainers to equip students with appropriate social work knowledge and skills.
- They should actively engage in research to generate local literature and develop indigenous approaches and models to inform training and practice.
- They should identify and apply indigenous approaches in teaching in order to reduce overreliance on imported Western approaches and ensure that students are exposed to culturally relevant approaches.
- They should emphasise on application of community development methods and approaches and reduce overreliance on casework methods.
- They should place more emphasis on fieldwork practice to students and ensure improved field supervision by educators. Institutions should encourage students to conduct fieldwork practice in rural areas and/or link them with projects that directly implement poverty reduction programs/projects.
- They should establish strong cooperation with field work agencies to ensure that students are well guided and supported especially while dealing with complex and challenging problems.
- They should devise strategies to ensure that more students are enrolled in social work training programs in order to produce the required number of social workers.
- They should ensure increased training opportunities for social work practitioners by designing and implementing continuous educational programs. Such programs will
update social workers about how best to handle the newly emerging social and economic problems affecting clients.

- They should be actively involved in indigenisation debate and forums.

**To Social Work Agencies**

- They should review methods and approaches used in service delivery to ensure that they help clients reduce poverty, gender inequality and improve their standard of living. Thus, achieve social development.

- They should adopt holistic approaches in addressing clients’ problems. Approaches used should be pro-poor. They should also ensure use of local and multi-disciplinary approaches and methods.

- They should engage in research in order to ensure that their practice is informed by research. Research informed practice can help agencies to appropriately address problems that they are confronted with in their practice.

- They should ensure continuous training for social workers. This was stressed by one respondent who said, “social workers should be trained from time to time on how to address contemporary problems.”

- They should ensure that social work ethics are adhered to in order to uphold professionalism.

- They should collaborate and network with other social development partners in designing and implementing poverty reduction plans and programs for their clients.

- Monitoring and evaluation should be emphasised and incorporated in all social work-related projects in order to ensure proper management and sustainability of the projects.
• They should ensure that programs designed are participatory and transparent and geared towards benefiting all community members without marginalisation, favouritism or corruption.

Further Research

Findings indicate that the level of generation of local literature is low. The majority (88.9 %) of social work educators and 85.7 % of students involved in this study confirmed that they highly use reference materials produced outside Africa. The level of involvement in research by social work academic staff is also low. Distinctive culturally appropriate theories, models and approaches are yet to be identified to guide social work practice. Therefore, more research is needed in order to generate new and contextually appropriate approaches for solving the emerging and complex problems in Africa, and Tanzania, in particular. Social work training institutions need to evaluate the relevance and adequacy of their curriculums in responding to challenges posed by the socioeconomic, cultural, political, structural and environmental changes that continue to affect the lives of various population groups in different ways.
References


Index

actual population 88
advocacy work 63
agricultural development xx
anti-retroviral therapy (ART) 82
asset accumulation 12
awareness creation 48, 165
basic education 36
basic human needs 33
behavioural changes 153
behavioural modification 50
capital offences 43
charity-based responses 167
child protection 51
client population 10, 26, 32
community development 33, 41
community developmental approaches 99
community development skills 85
community
mobilisation 86
organisation 140
resources 82
services 5
work 43, 56, 57, 73, 110
contemporary social problems 53
cultural
diversity 144
knowledge 144
values xviii, 145
culturally sensitive issues
144, 145, 146
custodial punishment 43
descriptive analysis 149
developmental
challenges 111
social work 174
development needs 61, 123, 133
discordant couples 91
ey early marriages 91
economic
development goals 67, 68, 71, 72, 126, 128
empowerment 82, 86, 99, 160
stability 35
educational materials 113
employment creation 12, 36
entrepreneurial skills 42, 155, 169
environmental
changes 172
conservation 44
sustainability xviii, 31, 79, 80, 81
ethnic groups 89
extra-marital relationships 153
faith-based organisations
(FBOs) 50
family
conflicts 49
counselling 165
disintegration 43
female genital mutilation (FGM) 91
female probation 34
feminist movements/activism 159
focus group discussions 149
gender discrimination 161, 165
equality xiv, xvii, 14, 31, 39, 41, 79, 82, 101, 154, 159, 162-169
equity 9, 99, 165
imbalance 100, 165
inequalities 11, 14, 173
gender-related achievements 41
inequalities 66
needs 161
problems 94
gender-sensitive issues 166
global professional standards 112
good governance 37, 39
group work 61
health-associated problems 49
health-related policies 38
HIV/Aids prevalence 38
human capital formation 12
human development 36
human resources management 56, 57
human rights 50, 73
human well-being 167
income-generating activities 152, 156, 157, 164
income poverty xiv, 4, 13, 37, 45, 153, 174
indigenous populations 5
individual needs 134
individual rights 72, 133
intervention strategies 14, 87
“kilimo kwanza” (meaning “agriculture first”) 39, 40
labour force population 37
language barrier 92
life expectancy rate 3
life-skills education 48
Local Government Authorities (LGAs) 50
male chauvinism 49
marginalised populations 5, 45, 169
matrimonial misunderstandings 49
medical social workers 51
Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) xiv
most vulnerable children xix, xx, 35, 100, 173
non-governmental organisations (NGOs) 42
non-organisational factors 10
people with disability (PWD) 90
pervasive poverty 111
policy formulation 44, 85, 108
political realities 15
polygamous marriages 91, 153
poverty eradication 174
reduction initiatives 42
poverty-free society 33, 101, 153, 157
poverty-related problems xiv
primary education 36, 80, 82
primary health services 100
productive resources 11
professional ethics 96
psychosocial support 48, 83, 86
public awareness 74, 82, 88, 99, 103
finances 39
qualitative data xiii, 27, 77, 149
remedial/therapeutic services 130
reproductive health education 82
resource mobilisation 48, 85
rural populations 3, 37, 111
rural-urban differentials 8, 28
SACCOs (Savings and Credit Co-operatives) 40
self-employment programmes 37
sexual

categories 14
violence 49
skills-building groups 82
social action 61
capital 42
development issues xvi, 2, 69, 105, 110, 111, 122, 135, 140, 146, 147, 169
ills 14
justice 5, 13
planning 107, 108
problems 5, 26, 44, 53, 66, 97, 121
protection systems 4, 49
rights 126, 128, 130, 131
welfare xix, 7, 20, 23, 39, 40, 50, 58, 64, 73, 74, 87, 88, 151, 152, 154, 156, 163, 168, 173, 175
welfare administration 61
well-being 1, 4, 174
work xii-xviii, 1-49, 50-120, 147, 149, 154, 155, 156, 159, 160-174
work clients vii, 22, 149, 153
work curriculum 2, 6, 7, 83, 112, 122, 123, 126,
127, 131, 133-136, 163, 164
work education 121, 173
work educational system 53
work educators xviii, 18, 50, 57, 101, 102, 105, 107, 111, 112, 114, 115, 117, 119, 122, 123, 129, 135, 137, 142-145, 147, 172
work influence 43
work practitioners xvii, 18, 19, 21, 24, 31, 32-34, 35, 43, 49, 52, 54-56, 59, 63, 65, 66, 68-70, 72, 76, 77, 79, 80, 86, 92, 98, 102, 107, 108, 121, 138, 144, 145, 154, 160, 170
work profession v, 87
work-related laws 94
work-related projects 171
work services vii, 155
work training xv-xvii, 2, 6, 18, 22, 25, 30, 50, 54, 58, 59, 60, 67-69, 83, 84, 93, 94, 101, 107, 108, 110-113, 129, 130, 136, 137, 139, 144, 146, 162, 170
sociocultural issues 146
socio-economic development 35
empowerment 86, 159
sociopolitical v, 92
subsistence agriculture 3

Tanzania, Mainland 3, 11, 36
Tanzanian Association of Social Workers 7
Tanzanian Human Rights Commission 50
Tanzania, Zanzibar 3
traditional cultural beliefs 111
healers 89, 154
medicines 89
social work 53
universal primary education 80, 82
vocational skills 42
vulnerable children 49, 82, 89, 100, 162, 174
groups 92
populations 52
wife battering 49
women empowerment 163