**Four Functions of Social Work**

According to Prof. P. D. Mishra social work operates to assist individuals in adjusting to the institutional framework of the society and attempts to modify the institutional framework itself in appropriate areas. He classified the functions of social work into the following 4 major categories:

**Curative Function**

The services provided under curative functions are–medical and health services, services relating to psychiatry, child guidance, child welfare services, and services for the handicapped or disabled in the form of protection and rehabilitation. These kinds of services aim to cure the physical, social, material, and psychological sickness of individuals in society.

**Correctional Function**

The correctional function of social work has three broad areas, such as:

a) Individual reform service which includes prison reform, probation, parole and other related services.

b) Services for improving social relationship which includes family welfare services, school social work, industrial social work etc.

c) Services for social reform that includes employment services, prevention of commercial sex work, beggary prohibition services and removal of untouchability etc.

**Preventive Function**

It includes life insurance services, public assistance, social legislation, adult education and prevention of diseases etc. This type of function basically deals with the services relating to the prevention of problems like insecurity, unlawfulness, ignorance, sickness etc. It is directed towards the elimination of those factors in the social environment or those deficiencies in the development of personality that prevents the individual from achieving a minimum desirable standard of socio-economic life.

**Developmental Function**

The developmental function includes the tasks of socio-economic development activities such as education, recreational services, urban and rural development programmes and programmes of integration etc which are primarily concerned with the development of individuals, families, groups and communities.

**The 12 Grand Challenges for Social Work**

**1. Close the health gap**

More than 60 million Americans are hindered by inadequate access to care and the higher illness rates that come with poverty, discrimination, and dangerous environments. To close the health gap, America needs strategists to develop new interventions, researchers to assess them, community practitioners to take these interventions into the field (and make sure they’re culturally attuned), and policy experts to advocate for structural change.

**2. Ensure healthy development for all youth**

Among young people, more than six million receive treatment each year for severe—and often preventable—mental, emotional, or behavioral problems. Expertise in psychopathology, psychopharmacology, child- and adolescent-centered social work, and more will be key to prevent behavioral problems before they emerge and ensure healthy development for all youth.

**3. Stop family violence**

Sadly, domestic violence remains a cause of injury and even death for too many Americans. Stopping family violence requires knowledge in areas such as abuse, trauma, and conflict mediation, as well as the inner dynamics and external experience of family systems.

If you seek to work with clients directly in the areas above, consider coursework in specific areas such as narrative therapy, motivational interviewing, and use of the creative arts in practice.

**4. End homelessness**

Nearly 1.5 million Americans experience homelessness each year. By expanding proven community programs, innovating new services and technologies, and advocating for affordable housing and basic income security, social workers can help end homelessness.

**5. Eradicate social isolation**

Social workers can also play an important role in eradicating social isolation, shown to be as dangerous to health as smoking. Think public education, industry outreach, and the development of new strategies for promoting social connections.

**6. Advance long and productive lives**

But how can social work advance long and productive lives for individuals amid greater longevity, workforce automation, and more? Here’s where policy experts and gerontology and aging specialists fit in, finding ways to improve health and well-being, connect people to purpose and financial security, and create a more vibrant society.

In all of these areas, a social worker’s understanding of human behavior and the social environment comes to the fore. Supplement this knowledge with education in how social policies are funded and how they affect the lives of people, organizations, and communities, as well as training in organization administration and supervision.

Meanwhile, climate change and urban development are transforming communities worldwide —threatening health, deepening inequities, and posing a profound risk to human well-being.

**7. Create positive social responses to a changing environment**

Through research, advocacy, and evidence-based practice, social workers can engage with local communities and develop strategies that create positive social responses to a changing environment.

**8. Harness technology for social good**

This includes harnessing technology for social good. Through the knowledge gained in practicums, research and community-based strategies, social workers can deliver valuable guidance on innovation. Picture yourself speeding up program development and impact, getting resources to more people in need, more effectively.

What’s useful for focusing your career in this direction? Skills in community- and coalition-building and knowledge of organizational change theory.

**9. Promote smart decarceration**

After 40 years of near-exponential growth, mass incarceration in America has become financially, socially, and politically unsustainable. You as a social worker can help promote smart decarceration by educating people on the subject, administering programs that address incarceration’s profound effects on people in poverty, racial minorities, and people with behavioral health disorders. And as a clinician-activist, you can advocate for a more effective and socially just approach to public safety.

**10. Achieve equal opportunity and justice**

This is just one area in which social workers can help marginalized groups achieve equal opportunity and justice. Research, advocacy, and evidence-based social work have the power to work on a broader scale as well—addressing racial and social injustices in education and employment, deconstructing stereotypes, and exposing unfair practices.

**11 & 12. Reduce extreme economic inequality and build financial capability for all**

Socioeconomics is a very important part of the social justice equation, especially with one in five children living in poverty and nearly half of all U.S. households considered financially insecure. Social worker professionals can help reduce extreme economic inequality and build financial capability for all, evaluating policy related to wages, tax benefits, homeownership, and education access and advocating for social policies that reduce economic hardship, encourage lifelong income generation, and address poverty’s debilitating effects.

**Population**

Vulnerable populations in social work include children, the elderly, the poor, minorities, and people with disabilities. Part of overcoming adversity is having the presence of mind and the resources available to transcend one's circumstances.