

Draft for
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION BILL, 2021

A Bill to provide for the establishment of the National Council of Social Work Education to enhance quality and ensure standards in social work education, including its linkages with practice, knowledge, and ethical conduct; and to create national registers of accredited social work education institutions and programmes. Be it enacted by the Parliament in theYear of the Republic of India.

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Chapter I: PRELIMINARY

Section 1: The Act

- (a) This Act shall be called the National Council of Social Work Education Act (year).
It shall have its headquarters in New Delhi and its functions shall extend to the whole of India. It shall be supported by six Zonal Councils, one for each of the six zones of India: North, West, Central, East, Northeast, and South.
- (b) It shall come into force on such date as the Government of India may, by notification in the Official Gazette, establish.

Section 2: Definitions

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

- (a) ‘Accredited Social Work Education Institution and Programme’ means a Social Work Education Institution and Programme (as defined in (r) and (s) accredited by the Council.
- (b) ‘Chairperson’ means the Chairperson of the Council.
- (c) ‘Continuing social work education programmes’ are defined as training programmes that aim at reflecting and updating knowledge, values, and skills of professional social workers, after they obtain their degree/s in social work.
- (d) ‘Council’ means the National Council of Social Work Education, constituted under Chapter II, Section 3 of this Act.
- (e) ‘Field Practicum’ is a compulsory component of social work education programmes, which comprises experiential application of knowledge, values, and skills, learned in the classroom, through a field placement, supervised by a professional social worker (as defined in (n)).
- (f) ‘Member’ means all the Members of the Council and includes Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Honorary Members.
- (g) ‘National Register of Professional Social Workers’ means the National Register of professional social workers (as defined in (n) and developed and maintained by the Council.
- (h) ‘National Register of Social Work Education Institutions and Programmes’ means the National Register of social work education institutions and programmes (as defined in (r) and (s), developed and maintained by the Council.
- (i) ‘Paraprofessional Social Work Qualification’ comprises pre-Bachelor certificate or diploma in social work, obtained from an accredited social work education institution (as defined in (a)).
- (j) ‘Professional Social Work’ is an internationally recognised academic discipline and practice-based profession, based on knowledge, methods, and skills of working with people and systems. It is built on the foundation of values and ethics of human dignity, sensitivity to structural realities, and respect for diversities. It promotes social justice and

social development, guided by the Indian Constitution, and by India's commitment to the International Human Rights Law. Professional social work contributes to community and social development through rights-based universal provision for basic needs and adopts culture-sensitive, strengths-based, gender-sensitive, collaborative, and participatory approaches to facilitate empowerment and inclusion of the socially excluded groups, for achieving social justice. Professional social workers also carry out policy analysis and programme development, conduct capacity building programmes, initiate and manage civil society organisations, implement interventions at the micro, meso and macro levels, and carry out their monitoring and evaluation.

- (k) 'Professional Social Work Association' means a voluntary and registered association of i) 'Social Work Education Institutions ' (as per Definition (r), or ii) 'Professional Social Workers' (as defined in (n), or iii) 'Social Work Educators' (as defined in (t), at the state, national or international level, or iv) members of specialised fields of social work.
- (l) 'Professional Social Work Practitioner' means a 'Professional Social Worker' (as defined in (n) who practices social work, through many ways including grassroots engagement/ intervention, organisation management, practice-based research, and/or consultation for developing policies and programmes.
- (m) 'Professional Social Work Qualification' means a Bachelor's or a Master's degree in social work, obtained from an accredited social work education institution (as defined in (a).
- (n) 'Professional Social Worker' means a person who holds a 'Professional Social Work Qualification' (as defined in (m); and includes professional social work educators and professional social work practitioners.
- (o) 'Registered Professional Social Worker' means a professional social worker (as defined in (n), registered with the Council.
- (p) 'Rules' means Rules made under this Act.
- (q) 'Secretary' means the Secretary appointed under this Act as a non-member executive head of the staff.
- (r) 'Social Work Education Institution' comprises faculty, school, college, centre, or department, offering social work education programmes (as defined in (s), in universities, or colleges, recognised by the UGC.
- (s) 'Social Work Education Programmes' refer to the social work education programmes offered at the Bachelor's, Master's, and doctoral levels.
- (t) 'Social Work Educator' means a 'Professional Social Worker' (as defined in (m), who is employed by or retired from an accredited social work education institution (as defined in (a), for teaching, fieldwork supervision, field action project, research, research guidance, and/or any other academic activity.
- (u) 'Vice-Chairperson' means the Vice-Chairperson of the Council.
- (v) 'Zonal Council for Social Work Education' mean a Zonal Council set up by the National Council in each of the six zones of India, as per the classification of Government of India, to support the National Council functions at the zonal level. All Zonal Councils will include a Director, a Deputy Director, and members.

Chapter II: CONSTITUTION AND COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

Section 3: Establishment of the Council

- (a) Constitution of the Council:

- 1) With effect from such date as the Government of India may notify, there shall be constituted for the purpose of this Act, a Council to be called the National Council of Social Work Education.
 - 2) The Council shall be a body corporate, by the aforesaid name having perpetual succession, and a common seal, with competence, subject to the provisions of this Act, to acquire, hire, hold and dispose of property, both moveable and immovable for the purpose of carrying out the functions of the Council.
 - 3) The Council shall comprise a full-time Chairperson, a full-time Vice-Chairperson, and Honorary Members comprising two professional social workers from each of the six zones of the country, one from professional social work associations, and ex-officio government representatives.
 - 4) The Government of India shall, by notification in the official Gazette, make rules to carry out the functions of the Council.
- (b) First Search Committees and Selection of the First Council Members:
- 1) For the First Search Committee, the Ministry of Education, Government of India shall invite nominations from professional social work associations and institutions of social work education run by colleges and universities accredited by NAAC with A or B+ grade. The Ministry shall then constitute the First Search Committee for the formation of the Council, chaired by a Head or Former Head of a social work education institution, not below the rank of Professor, from a NAAC-accredited college or university with A or B+ grade. The First Search Committee shall comprise two additional eminent professional social workers, including at least one senior professional social work practitioner, and a nominee of the Ministry of Education. The Search Committee members shall have at least 20 years of experience and a gender balance.
 - 2) The First Search Committee shall invite nominations for the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and the honorary members of the Council, from professional social work associations and institutions of social work education from colleges and universities accredited by NAAC with A or B+ grade. The First Search Committee shall make selection of the members, based on gender balance, a balance of educators and practitioners, and zonal representation. They will send the list to the Ministry of Education, for appointment to the Council.
- (c) Subsequent Search Committees and Selection of the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:
- 1) Three months prior to completion of the term of the first Council and thereafter, the Ministry of Education shall invite nominations for the subsequent Search Committees from the outgoing members of the Council, professional social work associations, and accredited institutions of social work education. The new Search Committee shall select the new Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson and recommend to the Ministry of Education for appointment.
- (d) Criteria for Selection and Appointment of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson:
- 1) The Chairperson shall be an eminent social work educator, qualified with a doctoral degree in social work, working or retired as a Professor, not above the age of 65, with a minimum of 20 years' experience. He/she should have made significant contribution to social work education, knowledge development, social policy and/or social work practice, and should have had administrative experience as Head of a department, college, university, programme of social work.
 - 2) The Vice-Chairperson shall be an eminent professional social work practitioner, not above the age of 65, who shall have field-based work experience for at least 20 years, demonstrated innovations in practice, influenced social policies and

- programmes, carried out capacity building programmes, conducted research and/or has publications related to her/ his practice area and should have had administrative experience as head of the organisation.
- 3) The office of the Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson shall be occupied by a person of either sex but either of the office shall be held by a woman.
- (e) Duties of the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson:
- 1) The Chairperson shall:
 - i. Act as the official head of the Council; and
 - ii. Serve as *ex officio* on all the Honorary Expert Panels .
 - 2) The Vice-Chairperson shall:
 - i. Carry out the responsibilities delegated by the Chairperson;
 - ii. Perform the duties of the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson;
 - iii. Act as the Convener of the Committee for Appeals and Grievance Redressal; and
 - iv. Serve as *ex officio* on select Honorary Expert Panels.
- (g) Selection and Appointment of Honorary Members:
The Council shall comprise the following honorary members:
- 1) From the second Council onwards, the Chairperson shall invite the elected Directors (social work educators) and Deputy Directors (social work practitioners) from each of the six Zonal Councils to be the 12 zonal honorary members of the Council.
 - 2) One representative from a national network of professional social work associations, or the national level professional social work associations on rotation.
 - 3) Four ex-officio members, not below the rank of Additional Secretary, to represent the Government of India Ministry of Education, NITI Aayog, the University Grants Commission, and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council.
 - 4) Not less than four ex-officio members, not below the rank of Additional Secretary, from among the cognate ministries of the Government of India such as Social Justice and Empowerment, Women and Child Development, Labour and Employment, Rural Development, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Youth Affairs and Sports, Home Affairs, Health and Family Welfare, Housing and Urban Affairs, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, and Corporate Affairs.

Section 4: Terms of Office of Members

- (a) Terms of Office:
- 1) All the members of the Council shall hold office in the appointed positions only for one term of five years, or until he/she attains the age of seventy years, unless he/she becomes disqualified for continuing as such under the rules that shall be framed under this Bill.
 - 2) The ex-officio Members of the Council shall hold office for a term of five years or until they attain the age of seventy years, or until they hold office if ex-officio.
- (b) Reappointment:
- 1) No member shall be reappointed for a second term for the same position.
 - 2) A person who has held office as an Honorary Member shall be eligible for reappointment as Chairperson, or Vice-Chairperson, for only one additional term, based on the criteria laid down.
 - 3) A person who has held office as Vice-Chairperson shall be eligible for reappointment as Chairperson if the age limit permits, based on the criteria laid down.
- (c) Filling of Vacancy:

- 1) A vacancy in the Council, due to illness, death, or disqualification, shall be filled in accordance with the criteria relevant for the respective position. The person so appointed shall be a member only for the remainder of the term, for which the member in whose place he/she was appointed would have held that office.

Section 5: Disqualifications

Under this Act, a Member of the Council shall be disqualified to continue as a member if she/ he:

- (a) Is or has been convicted for any criminal offence under any law.
- (b) Is, or becomes, of unsound mind, or is declared incompetent by a court.
- (c) If a professional social worker, has not been registered or has been deregistered as a professional social worker.
- (d) Is absent without reasonable excuse, for two/ three consecutive meetings of the Council.
- (e) An ex-officio member has been transferred/ removed/ dismissed from the service of the respective Ministry.

Section 6: Pay and Allowances

- (a) The Council shall implement the Government of India rules for the following:
 - 1) Salary and allowances for the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and the full-time staff including the Secretary, on par with other professional councils.
 - 2) Honorarium for attendance of Members at meetings of the Council and its expert panels and committees, and the conditions of reimbursement for travel allowance, and other exigencies.

Section 7: Meetings

- (a) The Council shall meet at least four times a year and shall observe the procedure with regard to the transaction of business at its meetings (including the quorum) as prescribed by the Rules.
- (c) The Chairperson, and in the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson, shall preside at the meetings of the Council.
- (d) The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson, if for any reason, are unable to attend the meeting of the Council, the members present at the meeting shall select a member from amongst themselves, to chair the meeting, as *Pro Temp* Chairperson.
- (e) All the decisions, which come up before any meeting of the Council, shall be decided by consensus or by a majority vote of the members present and eligible for voting.

Section 8: Full-Time Staff

Under this Act, the Council shall, subject to such Rules as shall be made in this behalf, appoint the following full-time paid staff, who shall be considered government employees and follow the rules applicable to government employees:

- (a) Secretary of the Council
 - 1) The Secretary shall be a professional social worker, with adequate experience in administrative/ organisational management.
 - 2) The Secretary shall hold office for a term of five years, with possibility of re-appointment on the decision of the Council.
 - 3) The Secretary shall be executive Head of the staff.
 - 4) The Secretary shall function in accordance with the Rules laid down by the Council and as delegated by the Chairperson from time to time.
 - 5) The Secretary shall, under the direction of the Chairperson:

- i. Be the legal entity to represent the Council in all legal matters like signing contracts, etc.
 - ii. Implement the decisions of the Council with respect to the policies, programmes and schemes.
 - iii. Take responsibility to carry out such duties as those relating to the procedures, minutes, and records of the meetings of the Council, as shall be prescribed by the Rules.
- (b) A minimum of five professional social workers, with expertise and experience as per requirements of the major professional functions to be carried out by the Council, qualified with a doctoral degree in social work, and minimally working at the Associate Professor's level.
 - (c) A librarian, an editorial assistant, and a desktop publishing operator to manage the Social Work Information Centre of the Council.
 - (d) Appropriate administrative staff.
 - (e) Other requisite staff as and when required.

Section 9: Establishment and Functions of Zonal Councils

- (a) Within four years of its establishment, the National Council shall appoint returning officers for each zone of India to conduct elections to constitute the first six Zonal Councils for Social Work Education.
- (b) For each Zonal Council, elections shall be held for a Director, a Deputy Director, and two members from each state and union territories (UTs) of the zone for a five-year term. These shall have equal numbers of educators and practitioners, and gender balance.
- (c) Registration with the National Council is the basic criterion for all the nominations to the Zonal Council as well as to be voters for the election.
- (d) The Director shall be a senior social work educator, with a doctoral degree from an accredited institution of social work education, working or retired as a Professor. The Deputy Director shall be a senior professional social work practitioner, with minimally a master's degree in social work and at least eight years of experience in the field.
- (e) The Office of the Zonal Council shall be in the institution where the Director/ Deputy Director is employed.
- (f) The Director and the Deputy Director of each Zonal Council shall represent the respective zone at the National Council as Honorary Members.
- (g) The Zonal Council shall support the following functions of the National Council in the region:
 - 1) Coordinate with the National Council for mapping and planning for the need for human resources for social work at different levels and in different fields and review it every five years.
 - 2) Conduct continuing education programmes for professional social workers in the region for updating their knowledge, attitudes and skills for social work education and practice.
 - 3) Promote social work knowledge development, dissemination, and retrieval to guide social work education and practice in the region. It may include development of zonal social service history, zonal literature on professional social work, and translation of select books of social work in zonal languages.
 - 4) Establish a Zonal Social Work Information Centre comprising books and journals on social work published in the region.
 - 5) Carry out policy analysis and contribute to policy formulation related to social justice and social development in the states of the respective zone.

- 6) Develop field action projects of social work practice in the zone with reference to innovative interventions, disaster intervention, development of need-based projects, advocacy, etc.
 - 7) Create awareness among and update the institutions of social work education in the zone, on the activities of the National Council.
 - 8) Advocate for accreditation of social work education programmes in the zone and registration of professional social workers.
 - 9) Develop partnerships with the cognate government, academic, civil society, and international organisations in the zone and advocate for recognition and visibility of social work profession in social justice and social development policies and programmes, in the zone.
 - 10) Carry out any other professional functions that the Zonal Councils deem appropriate for maintaining quality in social work education in the region, under the guidance of the National Council.
- (h) The Zonal Councils shall submit an annual plan and budget for the activities in the region for approval to the National Council in the previous year. The Zonal Councils can also raise funds for activities undertaken beyond those sponsored by the National Council through the state governments and non-government sources.

Section 10: Expert Panels

Under this Act, the Council shall constitute Expert Panels, for its major professional functions as follows:

- (a) Expert Panels shall be appointed for a term of five years. Each panel shall minimally consist of five members and a maximum of seven members. No member shall be reappointed for a second term.
- (b) The Council shall appoint a Convener for each Expert Panel. The Panel shall comprise registered Professional Social Workers (educators and practitioners), known for their expertise and experience in the respective field, based on gender balance, zonal representation, and representation from socially excluded communities. Experts from other fields may also be invited as special invitees as and when considered necessary.
- (c) Each Expert Panel shall invite suggestions on the plan of work as well as the draft report from the accredited social work education institutions and registered professional social workers. Each Expert Panel shall also hold consultations with relevant partners from those listed in section 22. The Panels shall then submit their reports to the Council for discussion and approval.
- (d) The Council shall constitute the following Honorary Expert Panels:
 - 1) Expert Panel for Minimum Standards of Social Work Education Institutions
 - 2) Expert Panel for Curricular Framework across Levels of Social Work Programmes
 - 3) Expert Panel for Standards of Online, Open and Distance Modes for Social Work Education
 - 4) Expert Panel for Continuing Education for Professional Social Workers
 - 5) Expert Panel for Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers
 - 6) Expert Panel for Social Work Research, Knowledge Development, Dissemination, Retrieval, and Utilisation
 - 7) Expert Panel for Human Resource Planning for Social Work
 - 8) Expert Panel for Analysis and Advocacy for Social Policies, Laws and related Programmes
 - 9) Expert Panel for Development of Field Action Projects
 - 10) Expert Panel for Specialised Fields of Professional Social Work
 - 11) Expert Panel on Linkage of the Council with the New Education Policy

- 12) Any other Expert Panel that the Council may decide to constitute to carry out its professional functions.

Chapter III: PROFESSIONAL FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

Section 11: Professional Functions and Powers

Under this Act, the Council shall carry out the following professional functions:

- (a) Develop a perspective plan for quality enhancement in professional social work and accordingly prepare five-year and annual plans and review them.
- (b) Appoint, determine the composition and tasks, monitor, and review the functioning of the Expert Panels.
- (c) Formulate minimum standards for social work education institutions that offer social work education programmes; and review and revise them at least every five years (as per Section 12.).
- (d) Develop a sequential continuum of curriculum framework, with multiple entry and exit possibilities, across the levels of social work education programmes, and review it every five years (as per Section 13).
- (e) Formulate minimum standards for online, open and distance modes of social work education.
- (f) Carry out accreditation and registration of social work education institutions and programmes, every five years, and maintain a National Register of the accredited Social Work Education Institutions and Programmes (as per Section 14).
- (g) Develop and implement a Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers (educators and practitioners) and review it every five years (as per Section 15).
- (h) Register professional social workers who have obtained social work qualifications from accredited social work education institutions and maintain a National Register of recognised Professional Social Workers (as per Section 16).
- (i) Make recommendations to the UGC for specification of degrees in social work for purposes of section 22(3) of the UGC Act, 1956.
- (j) Set up the procedure for reciprocal recognition and equivalence of professional social work qualifications with social work education programmes in other countries.
- (k) Certify with equivalency certificate and register professional social workers who studied abroad (non-Indian Universities) and would like to practice in India.
- (l) Plan for the need for human resources for social work at different levels and in different fields in India and review it every five years (as per Section 17).
- (m) Facilitate dialogues, knowledge development, and curriculum planning for specialised fields of social work within social work education (as per Section 18).
- (n) Sponsor or carry out continuing education programmes, for professional social workers for updating their knowledge, attitudes and skills for social work education and practice (as per Section 19).
- (o) Promote social work research, knowledge development, dissemination, retrieval and utilisation for indigenisation of social work education and practice relevant in India's diverse socioeconomic, zonal, and cultural contexts (as per Section 20).
- (p) Establish a Social Work Information Centre comprising books and journals on social work published in India and the documents published by the Council (as per Section 21)
- (q) Carry out policy analysis and contribute to formulation of social policies, laws, and programmes for social justice and social development.

- (r) Develop field action projects of social work practice with reference to innovative interventions, disaster intervention, development of need-based projects, advocacy, etc.
- (s) Institute awards based on clear criteria as incentives to recognise the academic and professional achievements of educators.
- (t) Advocate for recognition and visibility of social work profession in social justice and social development policies and programmes, and safeguard the sanctity and interests of social work as a profession.
- (u) Carry out any other professional functions that the Council deems appropriate for maintaining quality in social work education.

Section 12: Development of Minimum Standards of Social Work Education Institutions

Under this Act, the Council shall develop minimum standards of social work education institutions that shall be reviewed and revised at least every five years. These standards shall be developed for the following:

- (a) Management, vision, and governance of social work institutions
- (b) Physical infrastructure and resources
- (c) Process of curriculum development, board of studies, and implementation
- (d) Field practicum arrangements with state and civil society organisations
- (e) Student matters such as admission, support services, development programmes, career counselling and job placement, and alumni database and alumni network or associations
- (f) Social work extension through consultancy, continuing education and field action projects
- (g) Recruitment, workload, training, appraisal, and promotion of social work educators
- (h) Faculty research and publications
- (i) Adequate and relevant libraries with book and journal collection on social work

Section 13: Formulation of Curriculum Framework for Social Work Education Programmes

Under this Act, the Council shall formulate a curriculum framework for social work education programmes as follows:

- (a) The Council shall develop a sequential continuum of curriculum framework based on graduate attributes and learning outcomes, for Pre-Bachelor certificate and diploma, Bachelor's, Bachelor's Honors, and Master's programmes, and integrated five-year programme with provision for multiple-entry and multiple-exit possibilities. The Council shall also develop a curriculum framework for the post-Master's certificate and diploma programmes, and Doctoral Degree Programmes in social work. These frameworks shall be reviewed and revised every five years, in the context of the changing social realities.
- (b) At each level, the curriculum framework shall comprise aims and learning outcomes, common core social work courses, elective courses comprising interdisciplinary social sciences, development studies, and elective social work courses/ specialisations/ concentrations, field practicum, skill labs, social work research projects, credit arrangements of the course, co-curricular seminars, range of relevant methods of teaching-learning and evaluation, and recommended reading.
- (c) The curriculum framework shall be flexible to include emerging areas of work and be adapted to meet the differential requirements in the region, state, and local contexts.

- (d) This function shall include clarifying the aims and structure of social work offered as an elective course for other disciplines and in the Union Public Service Commission examinations.
- (e) The Council shall explore social work offered as a subject at the higher secondary level and joint degrees of social work with cognate disciplines such as law, health studies and development studies, based on the needs of the field.

Section 14: Accreditation of Social Work Education Institutions and Programmes

Under this Act, the Council shall develop a procedure for accreditation of social work education institutions and programmes as follows:

- (a) Set up accreditation committees comprising two social work educators and one professional social work practitioner, only one of whom will be from within the respective state of the programme. All shall be selected from the registered social workers.
- (b) Lay down a procedure for self-study, validation of the self-study by the accreditation committee through an on-site visit, and recognition and registration of social work education institutions and programmes, based on the minimum standards, every five years.
- (c) Develop the procedure for approval of new social work education institutions and programmes.
- (d) Set transparent criteria for recognition and registration, provisional recognition, withdrawal of recognition and deregistration, and reregistration of the social work education institutions and programmes, as per the rules.
- (e) Certify and maintain a National Register of accredited social work education institutions and programmes.
- (f) Lay out a procedure to facilitate improvement of standards of the concerned social work education institution/ programme which does not meet the minimum standards as formulated by the Council.
- (g) Acknowledge and disseminate innovations carried out in respective social work education institutions and programmes.

Section 15: Development of Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers

- (a) Under this Act, the Council shall develop a Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers, comprising the following:
 - 1) Values, principles, and pledge;
 - 2) Ethical standards to guide the conduct of professional social workers with reference to responsibilities in areas such as the profession, service users/ individuals and people they work with, practice and field practicum settings, co-workers and employing organisations, social work education, students, research, etc.
- (b) Promote awareness on how professional social workers can use the Code of Ethics in different situations and how to resolve ethical dilemmas.
- (c) Develop a procedure for adjudication of ethics-related complaints from service users, employers, co-workers, or students, filed against professional social workers registered with the Council, assessment of whether they have engaged in unethical conduct, and carry out deregistration, or disciplinary rulings or sanctions based on it.

Section 16: Registration of Professional Social Workers

Under this Act, registration of professional social workers with the Council is voluntary but required for participation in the Council's activities.

- (a) The Council shall develop online as well as manual procedures for registration of professional social workers in India and their renewal every ten years, as well as for de-registration, and reregistration:
- (b) All those who graduate from accredited social work education institutions/ programmes with the prescribed professional social work qualifications may apply to qualify for registration.
- (c) The Council shall maintain a National Register of recognised and registered professional social workers from accredited social work education institutions.
- (d) The Council shall lay down procedures for registration of professional social workers with social work qualifications from outside of India, who would like to work in India.
- (e) For renewal of the registration of social work educators, after 10 years, they will have to follow the UGC norms for attending orientation/ refresher courses.
- (f) Acknowledge and disseminate innovations carried out by professional social workers in education and in practice.
- (g) The Council shall develop transparent criteria and procedures to deregister and reregister professional social workers on any violation of the Code of Ethics and falsification of the required qualifications.
- (h) The Council shall order that any professional social worker shall be deregistered from the National Register based on the criteria laid down. This shall be done after giving the person a reasonable opportunity of being heard.

Section 17: Human Resource Planning for Professional Social Work

Under this Act, the Council shall undertake planning for social work human resources comprising the following:

- (a) Map the need for social work education institutions and programmes in India.
- (b) Map the need for professional social work practitioners, at different levels and in different fields of practice in all the states and UTs of India.
- (c) Develop role profiles and job descriptions for positions to be filled only by those having professional social work qualifications and a separate list of role profiles for those positions where social work could be one of the qualifications required.
- (d) Identify existing and/or projected social work positions in public and private sectors and lay down essential and preferential recruitment qualifications for the same.
- (e) Advocate with appropriate bodies for ensuring that the positions identified for social workers be filled only by those having professional social work qualifications, as well as those that can be filled by those having professional social work qualifications, among others.
- (f) Based on the human resource planning, make recommendations for social work education institutions and programmes, social work curriculum planning and continuing education programmes for professional social workers.

Section 18: Specialised Fields of Professional Social Work

Under this Act:

- (a) The Council shall facilitate dialogues, knowledge development, and curriculum planning for social work specialisations or concentrations that are specific fields of social work within social work education, offered at the master's level or post-master's level.
- (b) Examples of social work specialisations or concentrations based on target groups are child-centred social work, women-centred social work, social work with the disabled, gerontological social work, Dalit social work, tribal social work, etc. Examples of social work specialisations based on systems are family social work, community social work,

school social work, medical/ health social work, psychiatric social work, correctional social work, environmental social work, industrial social work, etc.

- (c) The Council shall identify elective courses from these specialisations or concentrations for curriculum planning.
- (d) The Council shall encourage formation of Special Interest Groups of social work educators and practitioners that shall be provided space for discussion which can be fed back to the Expert Panel on Social Work Specialisations.

Section 19: Continuing Education and Capacity Building Programmes

Under this Act, the Council shall undertake sponsoring or conducting continuing social work education programmes for professional social workers, aimed at updating of the knowledge, values and skills relevant to social work education and practice, comprising the following:

- (a) Plan curriculum for Continuing Education Programmes for social work educators and practitioners on:
 - 1) Development of self-awareness and social work values, approaches and ethics
 - 2) Methodology of social work curriculum development
 - 3) Methodology of teaching-learning for social work education, including the online technologies
 - 4) Methodology of fieldwork guidance and field action projects
 - 5) Methodology of management of institutions of social work education
 - 6) Methodology of social work knowledge development and dissemination
 - 7) Methodology of social work practice at micro, meso and macro levels
 - 8) Methodology of management of civil society organisations
 - 9) Theories, policies, and integrated practice in specialised fields of social work, based on professional and local needs.
- (b) Conduct capacity building and competency development programmes for the social sector in the government and civil society organisations.
- (c) Encourage use of the facilitation and participatory methods and workshop mode instead of the classroom teaching method for the Continuing Education Programmes.
- (d) Facilitate use of the mobile as well as the online, open and distance modes for the Continuing Education Programmes, besides the campus mode.

Section 20: Social Work Research, Knowledge Development, Dissemination, Retrieval, and Utilisation

Under this Act, the Council shall undertake the promotion of social work research, knowledge development, dissemination, retrieval, and utilization. Some examples are:

- (a) Promote documentation of the history of indigenous methods and values of social services in the diverse socioeconomic, cultural, and regional contexts that can be fed into social work knowledge.
- (b) Promote interdisciplinary knowledge development for social work education and practice. This can be done by a critical analysis and synthesis of international and Indian literature on historical and professional social work, applied social sciences, development studies, etc.
- (c) Promote practice-based research, documentation of practice, development of case studies, and policy analysis in the Indian context.
- (d) Develop textbooks and e-content for social work teaching and learning.
- (e) Promote dissemination of social work literature through publication of peer-reviewed journals and books in English, Hindi, and state languages.

- (f) Develop and maintain a database of social work education, practice, literature, and professional associations in India.
- (g) Promote retrieval of social work literature through a Professional Social Work Information Centre and libraries in social work institutions.
- (h) Encourage utilisation of updated social work knowledge in course syllabi.

Section 21: Professional Social Work Information Centre

Under this Act, the Council shall develop a Professional Social Work Information Centre for dissemination of information on professional social work. It shall:

- (a) Collect and archive books and journals on social work published in India in all the Indian languages and articles published on social work in India in international books and journals.
- (b) Maintain, publish, and disseminate the following and related Council documents and news through a website and print media in English, Hindi, and state languages, as necessary:
 - 1) Rules related to the Bill
 - 2) Standards for Social Work Education Institutions and Programmes
 - 3) Curriculum Framework for different levels of Programmes of Social Work Education
 - 4) National Register of Accredited Social Work Education Institutions and Programmes and the list of those which are Derecognised and Deregistered
 - 5) Code of Ethics for Professional Social Workers
 - 6) Procedure for Registration of Professional Social Workers
 - 7) National Register of Registered Professional Social Workers and a list of those who are Deregistered
 - 8) Annual Reports and Annual Statement of Accounts
 - 9) Announcements of significant events such as training programmes, seminars, etc. planned by the Council
 - 10) Any other relevant data /documents considered important by the Council

Section 22: Collaborations and Partnerships

Under this Act, the Council shall collaborate as needed in a partnership mode with the following cognate government, academic, civil society, and international organisations at the centre as well as at the state and the urban, rural, and tribal local self-government levels, for strengthening social work education and practice:

- (a) The NITI Aayog, the University Grants Commission, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Union Public Service Commission, etc.
- (b) The Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Scheduled Castes, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, National Commission for Backward Classes, National Commission for Protection of Child Rights, National Commission for Women, Labour Commission, etc.
- (c) Cognate ministries of Government of India such as Ministries of Education, Social Justice and Empowerment, Women and Child Development, Labour and Employment, Rural Development, Tribal Affairs, Minority Affairs, Youth Affairs and Sports, Police and the Judicial Systems, Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Panchayati Raj, Health and Family Welfare, Housing and Urban Affairs, Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Corporate Affairs, at Centre, State and Zilla Parishad levels.
- (d) National Institute of Social Defence, National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development, Indian Council for Social Welfare, the Central Social Welfare

- Board, Indian Council of Child Welfare, National Disaster Management Authority, Central Mental Health Authority, National Rural Livelihood Mission, etc.
- (e) Allied disciplines of Social Sciences, Public Health and Mental Health, Criminology, Development Studies, Human Development, Women's Studies, Family Studies, Dalit Studies, Tribal Studies, Labour Studies, Disability Studies, etc. and development studies centres in India and in other countries.
 - (f) Civil Society Organisations such as Voluntary/ Non-Government Organisations, Action Groups, Social Movements, Cooperatives, and Collectives.
 - (g) The cognate UN systems such as Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labor Organization, World Health Organization, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Women, United Nations Develop Program, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, etc.
 - (h) Cognate councils in India such as Rehabilitation Council of India.
 - (i) Councils of Professional Social Work Education in other countries.
 - (j) Regional, national, and international Professional Social Work Associations.

Chapter IV: ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE COUNCIL

Section 23: Administrative Functions and Powers

In order to carry out the above professional functions, the Council shall have the following administrative functions, subject to the provisions of this Act:

- (a) Appoint the full-time staff and conduct their annual performance review and recommend their promotion based on the prescribed criteria.
- (b) Prepare, approve, and review the annual and five-year budgets.
- (c) Commission periodically the organisational and financial decision-making audits of the Council.
- (d) Redress any grievance or appeals from social work education institutions and programmes or professional social workers.
- (e) Periodically review and recommend amendments in the Act or dissolution of the Council, if found necessary.

Section 24: Appeals and Grievance Redressal

Under this Act:

- (a) The Council shall set up an Appeals and Grievance Redressal mechanism to look at complaints from social work education institutions and programmes and professional social workers, who apply for accreditation or registration and are not satisfied with the response.
- (b) An Appeals and Grievance Redressal Committee shall be set up comprising five members from the Honorary Members appointed by the Chairperson for the purpose. This Committee shall be chaired by the Vice-Chairperson. Its term shall be of three years.

Section 25: Council Fund and Budget

Under this Act:

- (a) The Ministry of Education shall, after due appropriation made by the Parliament by law in this behalf, make to the Council grants for the office, capital and recurring revenue expenditure for establishment and functioning of the Council, based on the Rules. A fund called the NCSWE Fund shall be constitute for this purpose.
- (b) The Council shall also raise funds from the following sources.

- 1) Fees charged for tasks such as the following:
 1. Accreditation of social work education institutions and programmes, every five years;
 2. Registration of professional social workers, every ten years;
 3. Determining equivalence between programmes, at state, national and international levels;
 4. Continuing education programmes; and
 5. Sale of printed publications, etc.
- 2) The income of the Council shall also include all bequests, donations, etc. made to the Council.
- 3) The Council shall prepare, in such form and at such time each year as shall be prescribed, a budget in respect of the next financial year, showing the estimated receipts and expenditure, and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Education.

Section 26: Accounts and Audit

Under this Act:

- (a) The Council shall maintain appropriate accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts including the balance sheet in accordance with such general directions as may be issued and, in such form, as may be specified by the Ministry of Education in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India.
- (b) The accounts of the Council shall be audited annually by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India or any person appointed by him/her in this behalf and any expenditure incurred by him/her or any person so appointed in connection with such audit shall be payable by the Council to the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India, based on the Rules.
- (c) The Council shall prepare every year, in such form and within such time as may be prescribed by the Ministry of Education the annual report giving a true and full account of its activities during the previous year and copies thereof shall be forwarded to the Ministry of Education and that Government shall cause the same to be laid before each House of Parliament. The Council shall furnish to the Ministry of Education such reports, returns and other information as that Government may require from time to time.
- (d) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Income-tax Act, 1961, or any other law for the time being in force relating to tax on income, profit or gains, the Council shall not be liable to pay income-tax or any other tax in respect of its income, profits or gains derived.

Chapter V: OFFENCES AND PENALTIES

Section 27: Offences and Penalties for Institutions

- (a) It is a non-cognizable offence for a University/ College to:
 - 1) Allow a social work education institution that is not accredited by the Council and not entered in the National Register of Social Work Education Institution and Programmes to offer any social work education programme.
 - 2) Allow a social work education institution whose name has been removed/ deregistered from the National Register of social work education institution and programmes to continue to offer a social work education programme.

- 3) Offer a social work education programme without professionally qualified social work educators as heads/ principals/ deans.
 - 4) Recruit a non-social work educator for posts advertised for qualified social work educators.
- (b) If it comes to the attention of the Council that the above offences are committed, the Council shall issue a warning to the management of the respective university or college, in the first round.
- (c) If one year after the warning and support, the management of the institution that commits any of the offences listed above, shall be punished with a fine as per the Rules.
- (d) The sub-clause (c) of Section 27, shall be enforceable three years after the Council is established.

Section 28: Offences and Penalties for Individuals

- (a) It is a non-cognizable offence for a person, to pose as a Professional Social Worker, without the required qualifications. The individual who commits this offence, shall be penalised as per the Rules.

Chapter VI: MISCELLANEOUS

Section 29: Miscellaneous

- (a) In case of complaints against the Council, an independent inquiry committee comprising government and professional members (not members of the Council), to make investigations and give a report for further action, within a timeframe, based on the Rules.
- (b) No suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Government or any member of the Council or Secretary or any officer or other employee or any other person authorised by the Council to perform duties under this Act for any loss or damage caused or likely to be caused by anything which is done in good faith.

Annexure 1: Background, Rationale and Objects

Background

For more than a century now, social work is an internationally recognised practice-based profession where students are imparted training through a scientific body of knowledge, values and ethics, as well as methods and skills of working with people and systems. As an outcome, social work is being included as an academic discipline in colleges and universities spread over 145 countries. The Global Definition of Social Work jointly prepared by the International Federation of Social Work and the International Association of Schools of Social Work in 2014 states that “Social work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility, and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.”

India has had a rich history of voluntary work, social reforms, and social movements, promoted by religious and philanthropic organisations as well as social reformers. However, the need for training of social workers was recognised in India by the Social Service League, in 1923. The first professional school of social work, namely the Sir

Dorabji Tata Graduate School of Social Work (now known as the Tata Institute of Social Sciences), was established in Mumbai in 1936. Today, in India, there are more than 500 social work education institutions located in different types of universities and colleges, in most of the states and union territories of the country. It is estimated that currently there are more than five lakh Professional Social Workers working in a wide range of fields. In the diverse welfare and development sector, professional social workers have made a niche for themselves with their knowledge and value-based skill training.

Though social work is underpinned by theories of social sciences and related disciplines, it is not a social science. Social work is a profession, that integrates social science theories in an interdisciplinary manner, does a critical analysis of them, integrates it with people's knowledge of their subjective realities, values and ethics, and practice wisdom. It synthesises them to develop scientific and professional methods and skills of social work intervention.

In addition to the roles taken up to support the government programmes, professional social workers in India mainly work along with civil society organisations. They aim at social justice and equality in solidarity with the socially excluded sections of the society. Thus, the role of social work profession in India reflects its awareness of the structural inequalities and the need to address them.

Rationale

The social work profession in India has made significant progress towards indigenising social work education in India's diverse socioeconomic, regional, and cultural contexts by way of curriculum development, development of literature, relevant practice skills, and value framework.

Following are the achievements of the profession since its establishment:

- The Association of Schools of Social Work in India and the Indian Association of Trained Social Workers have made significant contributions to enhance the quality of social work education and practice. At present, India has four national social work professional associations, two of which are specialisation-based, several state-level associations, and the India Network of Professional Social Workers Associations functioning in India. Many professional social workers have played and continue to play leadership roles in the international professional social work associations and contribute the Indian perspective in the international deliberations.
- The University Grants Commission (UGC) sponsored two reviews of social work education (in 1965 and 1980). Since the 1980 review report, social work education has focused on developmental social work, to meet the developmental needs of India. It also sponsored the preparation of model curricula in 1990 and 2001, Refresher Courses for Social Work Educators from 1989 to 2005; and a Learning Outcomes-based Curriculum Framework (LOCF) developed for Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), in 2019. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) sponsored development of standards for social work education in 2005.
- Social work educators have published three editions of the Encyclopedia of Social Work in India in 1968, 1987 and 2012 and are producing 15 social work journals, and a large number of books.
- Professional social workers develop and demonstrate innovative field practice, several of which have influenced national level social policies and programmes. For example,

Childline, the helpline service for children was started by professional social workers and is a national programme today. Professional social workers have also contributed to a range of policies and programmes as consultants to various bodies of the UN as well as multilateral and international organisations.

In spite of the significant achievements of social work profession in India, there are several concerns regarding the profession that need to be urgently addressed. There is no review report on social work education since 1980, and no model curriculum development on social work education since 2001. As a result, there are significant lacunae in the standards of curriculum, field practicum and research activities of social work education in India.

The social work profession urgently requires:

- A data base on social work education institutions and programmes, student enrollment, and a profile of graduates of these programmes and professional social workers practicing in different fields.
- A human resource plan based on the requirements for social work practitioners and therefore a need for institutions and programmes of social work education.
- Regular upgradation of common core and contextualised curriculum and libraries for social work education.
- Awareness about professional social work in the university system and the social work employment sector.
- Standardisation of norms for online and open and distance learning.

These concerns highlight the urgent need for a national statutory body to promote quality in social work education and practice.

Objects

The NCSWE aims at the following objects:

1. Formulate and update a curriculum framework in the context of changing socioeconomic realities in India, and minimum standards for social work education institutions and programmes, for self-regulation as well as accreditation .
2. Carry out accreditation of social work education institutions and programmes and maintain a national register of these institutions and programmes.
3. Register professional social workers who have obtained social work qualifications from accredited social work education institutions and maintain a national register of them.
4. Develop and update a code of ethics for promoting self-regulation and ensuring ethical conduct by professional social workers.
5. Develop and maintain a database of social work education, practice, and professional associations in India.
6. Identify jobs for professional social workers at different levels and in different fields in India and plan educational programmes according to the requirements of human resources for professional social work.
7. Promote recognition and visibility of the social work profession in social policy making, programmes, and interventions for social justice and social development.
8. Promote social work research, knowledge development, dissemination, and retrieval of literature for indigenisation of social work education and practice, relevant for India's diverse socioeconomic, regional and cultural contexts in India.

9. Promote continuing education programmes for professional social workers for updating their knowledge, attitudes and skills for social work education, practice, and knowledge development.
10. Carry out policy analysis, contribute to policy formulation, and conduct capacity building programmes related to social justice and social development.
11. Build a greater synergy between social work practitioners and social work educators in order to complement and integrate theory, research, and practice and to explore newer relevant areas of work.
12. Strengthen collaborations and networking with civil society organisations, government, corporate sector, and other stakeholders in achieving social justice and social development goals.

Annexure 2: List of Zones and States in India

Following are the zones of India with the states and union territories within each:

No.	Zone	States	Union Territories
1	North India	Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan	Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Delhi, Chandigarh
2	West India	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa	Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu
3	East India	West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, Odisha	
4	North-East India	Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura	
5	Central India	Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh	
6	South India	Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala, Tamil Nadu	Puducherry, Laskhadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Sources

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/States_and_union_territories_of_India
- Also check the zonal map of India: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/zonal-map.html>