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Professional Social Work in Ethiopia: Integration of Theory and Practice

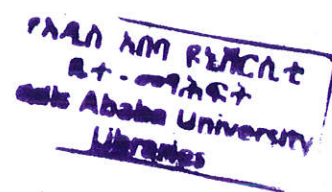
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June 2012



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Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies

Professional Social Work in Ethiopia: Integration of Theory and Practice

A thesis submitted to School of Social Work of Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of
the requirement for the degree of Masters in Social Work

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Abstract

A rationale to journey on the professional social work environment in Ethiopia to discover the existing practical experiences and challenges of integrating social work theories and practice necessitated this research undertaking in the year 2012 from the work experience of Masters of Social Work (MSW) graduates of the school of social work in Addis Ababa University. A qualitative research method was employed once willing participants were found after being asked via both e-mail and telephone. In depth interview was used as a data collection mechanism while open ended questions were sent to participants who preferred the e-mail communication to participate in the study and others were interviewed via phone. As the findings of this study indicate a professional social work practice has been started in the country despite numerous challenges and different issues infiltrating the profession and the endeavor of practitioners to integrate social work theory and practice. Accordingly, elements and indicators of scientific and rational instruction, evidence based practice and post modernists thinking of social work were seen among the participants. They urged for indigenization, both professionalization and de-professionalization with their tendency towards both direct practice and indirect practice, generalist practice and remedial practice with a comment to move to the developmental orientation for the future. The relatively unknown and unrecognized status of the profession in the country, difficult environment to practice, a non-indigenous education which made it difficult to contextualize the practice and lack of strong professional association were mentioned as challenges of integrating theory and practice among others. The recommendation of the participants centered on having strong networks of communication and association of professionals, promotion and advertisement of the profession and working towards standardizing the profession in the country.

Key terms;

Apprenticeship learning, Scientific and rational instruction, Practitioner science, Evidence based practice, Modernism, Post modernism, Enlightenment thinking, Romantic thinking, Indigenization, Universalization, Transferability, Non transferability, Professionalization, De-professionalization, Direct practice, Indirect practice, Generalist practice, specialist practice, Remedial practice and Developmental practice

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Acknowledgment

All the participants of this study deserve a special appreciation for the successful completion of this research due to their commitment and willingness to devote their precious time in interview and e-mail communication and contribute their own by their partaking. I am glad to announce my gratitude towards them and I wish them all the success and growth they aspire as professional social workers in Ethiopia.

I am also grateful to the school of social work, Addis Ababa University academic and non academic staff members for their valuable contribution as they helped me to get the addresses of the graduates and participants of the study with a special mention of Ato Ashenafi Hagos who was also inspirational from the beginning of interest in the topic. In addition, I would like to thank my friends and classmates for their assistance to contact participants of the study and for their input in our peer assistance discussions and dialogues.

My advisor, Wassie Kebede (PhD) has provided precious guides and instruction from the commencement and encouragement on the research theme to the end of the research project. His critical comments and evaluative suggestions made this endeavor bear a fruit. Thank you all.

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Introduction

In a country of more than three thousand years of history, civilizations, social changes, wars, famine and growing diversity of cultures, one may wonder how problems in the person-environment intricacies have been dealt with a professional intervention which is a “specialist and distinctly defined body of knowledge and set of skills, code of ethics, recognized practice expertise and restricted entry through qualification” (Compton & Galaway, 1984. p. 3).

However, such professional intervention is only one century old with the development of the profession of social work which is taught in many countries around the globe (Midgley, 2001. p. 4) including Ethiopia since 1959 (Arega Yimam, 1974). In its scrupulous development over the years, the profession of social work has shown a remarkable growth in terms of integrated and comprehensive tendencies as an eclectic discipline towards developing meta-theories that explain the dynamics of people and their dealings with their environment (Larkin, 2006. p. 2).

Nevertheless, the integration of its knowledge base or theoretical foundations to the practice environment of application and execution tells the story of how its development as a profession was a painstaking process, though contentious, and how its current status is dubious on many grounds. It starts with its professional status in the first place due to the critics forwarded against the work of social workers based on different criteria for a profession. Writers like Flexner (1915) and Abbot (1995) questioned the professional status of social work because they observed lack of originality of knowledge and skill from social workers who were considered by these people as those who link different experts and professionals whenever they are needed (Johnson, 1999). Scholars such as Richmond (1917 & 1922), Reynolds (1934), Hollis (1964), Specht & Courtney (1994) worked hard on developing social work profession towards

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full professional status after they curiously listened to the allegations made by the former writers while their debate circled around the direct and indirect orientations of social work practice.

In the due course of its development, once again, people used to employ different definitions of social work, as per the existing consensus on debatable elements of its professional identity and major orientations like direct and indirect practice, specialist and generalist practice, remedial and developmental practice, while common to all these definitions was the genuine focus of social work on social service, social justice and dignity and worth of the person (Gibelman, 1999. pp. 303-306). The definitional dilemmas on social work are categorized under the changes in social work practice, professional issues of identity, education, practice models and credentialing, globalization and its effects (Bradgood, Holosko & Taylor, 2003. p. 400).

Gibelman (1999), on his assessment on the 21st century concerns of social work practice reported the following as the major characterizations of social work in the new millennium; mental health focus, private practice, devolution of the role of the government, female domination in the profession, clinical and direct practice emphasis, increasing specialization, low political activism and client advocacy, employment of sophisticated practice measurement and evaluation tools, more part time engagement, and more explicit code of ethics among others (pp. 304-306). However, such characterizations were viewed differently by others who contended that all the characteristics explain the western social work experience which is universalized to the other parts of the world as a domination of western and purely Euro-American knowledge and practice skills without contextualizing it to the indigenous experiences and cultures of people of the non-western part of the world (Hudson & Nurius, 1994; Saul, 1997; Tsang and Yan, 2001; Yan and Tsui, 2007 & Fulcher, 2003).

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In addition, the western social work literature continued the original debates on professional status and the newly codified debates on the trends of professionalization and de-professionalization (Dewe, Otto & Schnurr, 2006). The concern on global exchanges between social workers and internationalization also continued to touch different aspects of social work theory and practice integration (Midgley, 2001. p. 22) in terms of its commitment to the remedy of problems, development, and relevance to the non-west, indigenization; “contextualization of issues related to a variety of cultural based systems like the social, political and economy to shape local social work practice”, universalism; “the development of shared social work values that are more global in nature than specific contextually or culturally” and imperialism; “the spread of westernized social work-related paradigms that dominate indigenous practices and perspectives (Beecher, Reeves, Eggertsen & Furuto, 2010. p. 206).

In Africa, social work was introduced with the colonial penetration of Europeans and the introduction of social services with missionaries, substituting the traditional stage of family and societal responsibility of help and caring while it was later developed with the expansion of social work education under the major shadow of western curriculum and prospects (Shawky, 1973). Continuing debates followed on the relevance of social work to Africa, while few preferred social development instead of social work by arguing that the western designed and shaped lessons were either too theoretical or not contextual to fit local realities in Africa (Andargachew Tesfaye, 1973; Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2010; Laird, 2003; Mupedziswa, 2001 & Mmaliti, 2008).

In Ethiopia, the introduction of professional social work has a non colonial history since it was introduced through formal education of social work in 1959 (Arega Yimam, 1974) with

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the bachelor program in the then Haile Sellassie I University in Addis Ababa until it was closed and replaced by Applied Sociology later in 1974 due to political reasons. It was reopened in 2004 in Addis Ababa University to provide masters level education and started PhD in 2006 and Bachelor in social work in 2008 (School of Social Work, Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) curriculum, 2008. p. 3).

The graduates of the Masters of Social Work from Addis Ababa University who are, to date, the professional social workers in the country who took fully accredited training and education, next to the former students of social work who graduated some 38 years ago, are referred as professional social workers in this study. Currently the graduates of MSW program from Addis Ababa University are working in different agencies like international NGO's (nongovernmental organizations), federal and district government offices and Addis Ababa University while 25% of them have left the country (Bunkers & Webb, 2011. p. 10).

The integration of social work theory and practice is found between the social work theories which inform social work practice while the practice in turn informs the theories in action (Nash, O'Donoghue & Munford, 2005. p. 15). Given the fledging and struggling nature of the profession, whose theory and practice are shrouded in mystery and controversy, studies have cast doubts on the very possibility of the straight forward application of abstract knowledge to everyday problems (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa, 1996. p. 2 & Fargion, 2006. p. 1). In addition, practitioners often experience difficulties in comprehending the superfluity of approaches to the ways in which practice can be theorized and they feel that they must be committed to one type of perspective misguidedly; positivist, and constructivist or de-constructivist (Fook, 2002. p. 3). However, this does not seem to provide the flexibility needed for working in changing

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circumstances (p. 3). Therefore, the dynamics of social work theory and practice integration can be seen in light of the challenges faced by practitioners in terms of the different transitions in comprehending and thinking social work itself, debates and dilemmas on social work theory and practice integration and its differing orientations.

The study on professional social work in Ethiopia and the integration of theories and practices is a concern of research and investigation to be addressed more in the future since it is not well explored yet. This research undertaking was conducted on the assumption that its results would be significant in terms of exploring different entangling issues in the professional social work practice in Ethiopian context and provide a relevant feedback from the field to the education system and curriculums used in the country. In doing so, the work experience of MSW graduates of Addis Ababa University was assessed using e-mail survey, phone interview and face to face in-depth interviews.

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Statement of the Problem

According to Bunkers and Webb (2011), “there is low coverage of formal profession of social work practice in Ethiopia given the nascent development of university-based social work” (p. 17) for there are very few formally trained social workers. This is not ludicrous at all given the needs of 78.9 million population of the country, and approximately 2.3 % prevalence of HIV/AIDS who are among those who need the helping character of social workers (Bunkers and Webb. p. 13). The scanty accounts of social work practice and research in Ethiopia left many questions unanswered concerning the practical experiences, challenges and dynamics of social work theory and practice integration in the country.

This necessitated conducting a study on the general compatibility between the social work theories taught in the class and the practical experience of practitioners after graduation. This was seen in light of the conceptual framework developed which included the common elements of theory-practice integration from the literature like the transitions in social work theories in action, dilemmas of practitioners and orientations of the integration. Hence, this research tried to answer questions related to these elements. The major transitions seen in the development of the social work theories in action are a transition from apprenticeship learning to scientific and rational instruction, from a scientific practitioner approach to evidence-based practice and a transition from modernism to postmodernism ways of action and thought with a similar sort of transition from enlightenment thinking to romantic thinking of social work. Therefore, what kinds of transitions would have taken place in the Ethiopian context is one of the questions addressed by this study.

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The social work scholars debate on the replication of social work theories in different contexts and while the first group argues for the universal application of the theories, the other group advocates the contextualization and indigenization of the social work knowledge and practice. This is also manifested in the discourse over the transferability and non transferability of social work practice and training experience between different countries and the other point of controversy is the preference over professionally radical and laissez-faire approach to be taken by practitioners. Such contradictory stances can put practitioners in a dilemma easily and the assessment of Bunkers and Webb (2011) also showed that there is lack of consistent curricula in different social work trainings in Ethiopia and they found that the specific areas to be covered are determined by institutions offering the trainings and the donors which replicates the practical difficulty of indigenization in the country. As a result, what positions are held by Ethiopian practitioners in this regard and what are their rationales is also one of the outcomes of this research.

The orientations of practitioners in terms of tending towards a direct or indirect practice, specialist or generalist practice, remedial or developmental practice was also explored since it may need a consideration given the presence of 6.2 million people in need of food assistance, 39% of the population in absolute poverty, and a national per capita income of 255.4 US\$ (Bunkers & Webb, 2011). Finally, grasping the ideas of the practitioners concerning the prevailing challenges of the practice environment and their feedbacks is among the factors that necessitated conducting this study. In the form of commencing inquisition and finding the links between social work theories and practice in Ethiopia, the assessment was conducted on the

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work experiences of graduates of school of social work at Addis Ababa University with the major objective of filling the knowledge gap concerning the Ethiopian experience.

Research Questions

The following questions are answered after the completion of this research.

What kind of transition has been observed in the theory and practice integration of social work by Ethiopian social workers?

What positions are held by Ethiopian social workers concerning the debatable issues in social work theory and practice integration like indigenization, universalization, professionalization, de-professionalization, transferability and non transferability?

What are the orientations of Ethiopian social work practitioners between direct or indirect, generalist or specialist, remedial or developmental practice?

What are the major challenges faced by social workers in Ethiopia while they practice?

What are the opinions and feedbacks of practitioners about the solutions and ways of developing the profession in the country?

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Literature Review

Professional Social Work Yesterday and Today: Intermittent Debates

Integrating theory and practice had never been a straight forward chore in professional social work practice ever since the inception of the profession given the earliest queries and qualms about the existence of a social work theory and knowledge. Abraham Flexner (2001) is known for initiating an incessant debate on the professional status of social work by his famous thesis "Is Social Work a Profession?" He was highly predisposed by his own characterization of a profession at the time; "free, resourceful and unhampered intelligence applied to problems and seeking to understand and master them" (p. 154). Hence he shorn of social work a professional status avowing that "the task of a social worker is mediation by invoking different professionals, breathing a new spirit in to them and binding them together in order to deal with a given situation from a new point of view" (p. 161).

His definition and criteria for a profession challenged the then definition of social work by the New York School of Philanthropy which reads "any form of persistent and deliberate effort to improve living or working conditions in the community or to relieve, diminish or prevent distress, whether due to weakness of character or the pressure of external circumstances" (Flexner, 1915. p. 160). This definition was sufficient to consider social work as a profession only in the three criteria of Flexner, "intellectual, not mechanical and not routine" (p. 160), by which he acknowledged the intellectual qualities needed from a social worker like "fine powers of analysis, breadth and flexibility of sympathy, sound judgment, skills of utilizing every available resource and facility in devising new combinations" (p. 160). However, what social

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work lacked according to Flexner was 'originality' since the social worker according to him is single-minded to call upon "a specialized agency, best equipped to handle the problem, after deciding on the particular nature and context of the problem instead of working out the problem and put through its solution like other unmistakable professions to mention engineers, teachers and doctors" (p. 160). In line with the allegation of Flexner, in 1995 Andrew Abbott supposed "what the vast majority of social workers actually do is connecting together services provided largely by other professions and institutions" (Johnson, 1999. p. 324).

In 1917, Mary Richmond made the immediate and earliest response to Flexner's accusation in her book 'Social Diagnosis' by which she conceptualized social case work and tried to show how social work could become a profession further by her next writing 'What is Social case Work?' in 1922. While introducing case work, Richmond (1922) emphasized on one growing central element in it, 'personality', which she thought is broader than 'individuality' or "the physical heredity and innate qualities transmitted and the unalterable" (p. 92), for it includes all what is "native and individual to a person and all that comes to him by the way of education, experience and human intercourse" (p. 92) since she defined it as "the whole that includes all the portion of our social heritage and our environment of everyday life" (p. 92). Therefore, her definition of social case work gyrates around the development of personality "through consciously effected processes and adjustments between men and the social environment, individual by individual" (p. 98). She asserted that this development of personality can be achieved through strengthened and better adjusted social relations (p. 99).

In responding to the critics on how this can be done professionally and social work claim a professional status, Richmond (1922) argued that certain processes and skills (p. 101) are there

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which cannot be possessed by untrained person, however intelligent, that help to combine conscious sets of actions (p. 102). These skills and special attributes of a social worker are, therefore, 'insights' and 'acts' (p. 103). Through 'insights' the case worker can best understand the individuality of the person and his social environment and all the way through the person's personality will be revealed (p. 103) and that is to be developed by 'acts' in which the direct action of 'mind up on mind' helps to strengthen personal relations with the person (p. 107) and the indirect action will be used to engage in a comprehensive, many sided approach through the social environment where the social worker tries to get the client best fitted agency, service or specialty (pp. 110-111). She contended that the whole diagnostic process (especially the combination of the two insights; individuality and social environment) "do not involve techniques from other specialties" (p. 103) and for her social work is not devoid of its originality since "there is something more than a casual combination to bring light in case work and that is the novelty of the new combinations effected" (p. 103).

According to Johnson (1999), the knowledge of client needs, the social and the physical environment and resources can be gained through insight using direct and indirect intervention which led to the expansion of Flexner's analysis to portray social work as a profession basing itself on a wide range of knowledge and action in the presence of a need for indirect work which for Flexner is what makes social work less profession (p. 325). Since the 1920s there was a growing interest on direct practice to augment the professional status of social work "borrowing theories of human development and personality from Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis for the next 40 years and this paved the way for the introduction of psychoanalytic phenomenon like transference and unconscious processes" (p. 325). For example, Hollis (1964), incorporated ego-

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psychology in to social work to introduce the assumption that the major beliefs implicated in indirect work definitely are alike to direct treatment since environmental work also occur with people via psychological means (p. 326). However, earlier in 1934, Reynolds questioned the 'case work' of Richmond arguing that social workers should meet clients halfway to intervene together with clients and if necessary, on their behalf, which cannot be against self determination since clients life may be made impossible at bad times and mentioned factors that are igniting the interest in indirect work like uncertainty and effectiveness of talking therapies, a growing interest in family work and de-institutionalization of people with mental illness in to the community.

Specht and Courtney (1994) believe that social work has deserted its task to help the unfortunate and the exploited and build community by working to the perfectibility of the person instead of the perfectibility of the society. Even it was reported by social work practitioners themselves that they had more work load in indirect work and their clients revealed their preference and value to it (Johnson, 1999. p. 327). Johnson mentioned two other factors which further strengthened interest in indirect work; "theoretical developments seen in social work like the general systems theory and the ecological perspectives stressed on the interconnectedness of social systems and the importance of the social environment for social work intervention" (p. 329) and "the growth of radical social work even extended the interest on indirect practice which incorporated the feminist and cultural sensitive perspectives to fight for more equitable allocation of resources using policy influence and politically extreme tactics if needed so"(p. 329).

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Gibelman (1999) deemed that social work is an evolving and dynamic profession (p. 303) fleeting through different transitions and different definitions which are ephemeral due to its dubious elements. He cited the report of the 1959 curriculum study on social work education; "there was lack of a single, widely recognized or generally accepted statement on the aims and purposes of social work due to the challenges and questions like lack of clear identity, consistent definition and distinct knowledge base" (p. 299). Since then social work has got its broadest scope with differing degrees of influence on the personal and societal needs and selective and collective good or justice as per the political climate (p. 301). Its scope can be ranged from the types of problems, settings of work, levels of practice, and interventions used to populations served (p. 301). It can also be conceptualized by fields of practice, practice settings, agency types, services provided and types of problems presented (p. 301).

Professional Social Work in Africa

After assessing the political, social and economic trends and the impact on social welfare in Africa, Shawky (1973) argues that social work in Africa was introduced and passed through several stages as many other parts of the world (p. 44). The traditional stage is the first one and it witnessed the responsibility of the family for all services of social and economic to its members characterized by strong attachments, extended family networks and self sufficiency of families (pp. 44-45). The next stage was the European penetration stage in which educational, health and welfare services were started by the Europeans introducing the European concept of social welfare to small urban centers with the help of missionaries and the wives of colonial civil servants who used to engage in useful tasks during their leisure times (p. 45).

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Later on, "African social workers were sent abroad for training and came back filled with western social welfare ideas" (Shawky, 1973. p. 45) then African social work took a distorted picture of both British and French social services while the French colonies emphasized the social security and medico-social services and the British colonies followed correctional services (p. 45). The independent stage signaled the interest of many countries in the subject establishing separate ministries and departments going in connection with colonial ties and later the pan-African movements facilitated inter-African cooperation and the formation of Association for Social Work Education in Africa (ASWEA) (p. 46).

According to Shawky, due to the economic and political changes in 1950's and 1960's several new social problems developed to attract the attention of social workers like obsolete educational system (p. 47), problems of health and nutrition, lack of national unity, problems of adjustment to new developments, neglect of rural communities and urbanization problems (pp. 48-51). The impacts of the political, social and economic trends on social work education have been witnessed by the influence of the static method of social work adopted from the west. He stated that "social welfare programmes designed to solve urban problems of highly industrialized countries were transplanted in to African societies without serious examination of local priority needs and local approaches to problems and with little attempt towards their adaptation" (p. 53). This has led African social workers to assume that "there is a certain set of legitimate and unchangeable field where social work method can be utilized and the dynamic role of the profession's method was overlooked"(p. 53). This growing orthodoxy continued in the usage of the terms like social welfare to refer to individualized attention to persons in need and their failure to remember the presence of millions of Africans who live in rural areas and semi-urban

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areas emphasizing on remedial services in contradiction to the exact need of the people for developmental and preventive services (p. 53).

Morcos (1976), tried to push the attention of social workers towards what he claimed are realities, both achievements and shortcomings, of social work in Africa and he presented them in four categories of facts or major themes (p. 19). The first fact is that "in Africa there is now a new conception recognized and classified everywhere, that of a social worker" (p. 19) which is "designed, taught and applied being unlimited to alleviating or preventing social evils but also participation in any development efforts" (p. 20). Secondly, "social workers are now trained in our countries and in our institutions in training schemes and curriculum designed and applied to cope with specific needs or tasks" (p. 20). Third, "social work education in our countries continues to follow imported models and a methodology conceived in a world which is not African" (p. 21) and lastly he urged social workers to increase interest on demographic and population growth related problems and family planning issues for he observed lack of general curiosity in such areas (p. 22).

Andargachew (1973), observed that "there had been slow but definite qualitative improvements and changes in social work education and the gradual upgrading of the level of training and the reorientation of curricular contents to meet local needs has been achieved, over the years" (p. 10). However, he continued that "because of lack of adequately developed and clearly established social welfare policy, the profession has not yet moved beyond the level of a token service and it has not yet identified itself with the overall national development programmes" (p. 21). His thesis included questions regarding the relevance of western influenced curriculum to Africa with the fact that social workers seemed to be disposed to take

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for granted the existing ones and the exchange of views to attempt to adapt the curriculum to their country's due to the absence of any other models and he suggested quality supervision, good fieldwork procedures and operational research as a means for adaptation (p. 11).

Andargachew was curious about "the general shortage of trained social workers at all levels, lack of adequate local literature and problems in determining curricular content due to lack of clarity and absence of social policies to frame the needs for priorities" (p. 17).

It was also indicated that "the training centers in Africa are either too theoretical and specialized or too narrow and restricted" (Andargachew. p. 31) and he called for the recognition of the fact that 70-90% of the total population of Africa was rural and he commended that "training of social workers should reflect the needs of these masses of rural people" (p. 31) having contents which are "integrated, broad based and development oriented" (p. 31). He also used the term 'new path' he cited from Mumenke to represent the idea that "the nature of the problems to be handled demands the training of social workers to be oriented towards groups of people or communities rather than individuals, preventive than treatment, environment manipulation than intra-psycho approach and social action and popular participation" (p. 32). In 1996, Rwomire and Raditlhokwa stated that "social work profession in Africa is in a state of crisis due to the ambiguities on its meaning, character and the role it plays in society" (p. 5) and the major reason behind this was that "it was not well understood as a field of study and practice, especially in Africa" (p. 5).

The continuing center of discourse and debate since then was the issue of indigenization of social work practice and its emancipation from the western dominated methods and theories. Authors like Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie (2010), Laird (2003), Mupedziswa (2001) and Mmatli

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(2008) urge for the indigenization of social work practice focusing on an interest of having a developmentally oriented education and practice given the past and contemporary needs and aspirations in the continent. Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie (2010) asserted that the relevance of social work can be founded when it is rooted on the local social environment (p. 137) and Laird (2003) argued that “the research methodologies being generated by western scholars have limited application for practitioners in developing countries” (p. 251).

Mupedziswa (2001), stressed on the argument that “for social work profession to be relevant in the continent, it must assume a developmental orientation which shall start at the level of contextualizing the education” (p. 285). Mmalti (2008), urges for the adoption of “political activism as an intervention strategy aimed at creating conducive environment in which other social work methods can be practiced” (p. 297) calling for the replacement of non political orientation introduced from the non African world. According to Shawky (1973), “social workers in Africa have a great task in front of them, to be faithful to their responsibility; they have to get the grips of real problems facing the masses and not to be satisfied with small problems facing the few so called misfits in the society” (p.53).

Professional Social Work in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, social work education dates back to the period of emperor Haile Sellassie I in the 1950's by the then School of Social Work at the Haile Sellassie I University until it was closed in the year 1974 due to ideological reasons and replaced by the discipline of Applied Sociology (School of Social Work; BSW curriculum, 2008. p. 3). A similar experience has been witnessed in China when “the communist government took over in 1949, because social work

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was considered incompatible with communist ideology and university programmes were not supported by the government” (Tsang and Yan, 2001. p. 433).

Seyoum (1970), documented case studies from Ethiopia which was included among the reports compiled from different African countries. In his case report, he talked about the rural and urban community development centers which were established as the result of the establishment of Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs with a view of stimulating local initiative to improve the physical and social infrastructure of local communities (p. 1). Another research report was done by Hirut (1972) on the “important role of supervision in social welfare organizations” which “dealt with the role of social work education and practice supervision as a means of coordinating efforts and research for better quality of work and as a staff development program in local welfare organizations” (p. 1). Hence, the work of the above two writers can be included among the first and earliest social work practice evidences and records in the country.

The Haile Sellassie I University; school of social work used to graduate students at the undergraduate level starting from 1959 until it was closed in 1974 (Yimam, 1974. p. 22). The four years university education was assisted by pre-service social welfare and community development with the purpose of “producing social welfare manpower for responsible participation in the development programmes in Ethiopia” (p. 22).

After 30 years, social work education in Ethiopia revived in 2004 when the first Masters of Social work (MSW) education was started in the newly opened school of social work at Addis Ababa University followed by the opening of the PhD program in 2006 and the Bachelor of

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Social Work (BSW) program in 2008 (School of Social Work; BSW curriculum, 2008. p. 3).

Like many other countries, traditional social work had long roots in Ethiopia in the main involvement of the family and the immediate mutual network of relationships in the form of kinship, neighborhood and religion in the absence of specialized social workers. However, as Rwomire and Raditlhokwa (1996) noted, with the advent of modernity, complex problems and structures demanded a professional intervention on the problems of people and communities (p. 2). That is why the goal of producing competent social work professionals to deal with poverty, oppression and social justice using theoretical knowledge of the international standard is anticipated by the MSW program of the Addis Ababa University, school of social work (School of Social Work; MSW curriculum, 2004. p. 20).

Bunkers and Webb (2011), made an assessment on the social welfare services in Ethiopia, its typology and costs and reported about the social work workforce in the justice sector, social work related trainings and their costs, people who are getting the trainings, their employers and the issues raised during the assessment. Even though, it is not the complete coverage of what professional social work practice looks like in the country, they tried to present the glimpse of social work practice in the criminal sector and the different social work trainings given in the country. They reported that the “Federal Supreme Court has set up a Court Advisory Body (CAB) consisting of more than 20 social workers to assist benches handling cases of children, i.e. adoption benches, family benches dealing with cases of custody and alimony etc” (p. 3).

There is also recruitment and training of social workers in the CAB, to develop “the necessary standards and guidelines for service delivery and setting up the formal structure for

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sustainable placement of the professionals within the court structure” (Bunkers and Webb, 2011. p. 3). The trainings given in the country include issues like “Child welfare, HIV/AIDS, psychosocial and spiritual support, Child welfare and protection, basic case management and family support, Child welfare and community based development, addressing poverty, Social work in the justice sector, ethics and values, etc” (p. 7). The people who are getting the trainings are “community volunteers with primary or secondary education, minimum of 10 grade education with no professional experience, working professionals with a minimum of 2 years work experience in social welfare related issues and a BA in a relevant discipline” (p. 8).

So far, the full fledged professional social work training has been provided by the School of Social Work Addis Ababa University (Bunkers and Webb, 2011. p.10). However, Bunkers and Webb included the number of people who took trainings in the last 3 years through different short term trainings and make the total around 654 including the paraprofessional training given for the average of 20 days and they observed that the trainings are urban biased with particular emphasis on Addis Ababa (p. 10). From the people who have graduated from Addis Ababa University (approximately 25% have left the country) and very few work in Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work while the others and who completed short term trainings are employed by International NGO’s, district government structures (Bunkers and Webb, 2011. p. 9).

Bunkers and Webb (2011), recommended that there is a need to separate social protection instrument delivery with social welfare services and (p.16) concluded that “there is low coverage of formal profession of social work since there are very limited numbers of formal social workers given the nascent development of university-based social work” (p. 17). They also

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observed that the different trainings given in the country are urban-centric or primarily focused on urban areas and particularly Addis Ababa (p. 17). Lack of consistent curricula is the other challenge since the specific areas covered are determined by the institution offering the course and the donor and “it is not clear if child-focused issues are being addressed in all of the trainings, specifically child development, child participation and children’s rights” (p. 17) while “the issue of alternative child care appears to be missing from almost all of the trainings” (p. 18). They also contended that; “there is a great opportunity to better link social welfare services to the current plethora of economic strengthening activities in the public and private sector, as there is a large pre-selection process of potential client families already existing and arguably social welfare service provision is good value, once we can define standards and cost efficiency” (Bunkers and Webb, 2011. p. 18).

Social Work Theory and Practice Integration

Historical Transitions in Social Work Theories in Action

From Apprenticeship Learning to Scientific and Rational Instruction. According to Nash et al. (2005), at the beginning of the 20th century, the development of social work was associated with the theoretical inputs from other disciplines like public health, sociology, economics and philosophy taking matters considered relevant such as health, management and social administration (p. 18). In the 1920’s the individual therapeutic aspects of social case work gained acceptance as the psychoanalytic and bio-psycho-social theories and their implication for case work became recognized (p. 19). However, from the 1960’s onwards humanist ideas were established with behavioral and psychological theories gaining ascendance in the 1970’s and the

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international re-emergence of child rights and community development movements put another pressure which finally signaled the first transition from apprenticeship learning to scientific and rational instruction (p. 19).

From Practitioner science to Evidence Based Practice. In giving response to effectiveness in practice, the 1980's was characterized by the task centered, problem solving and system's theory eminence in social work curriculum and replacement of traditional social work by client centered social work and empowerment theories (Nash et al, 2005. p. 19). This attempt to improve the scientific status of social work was followed by the transition from the scientific practitioner approach to evidence based practice which became the corner stone of professionalism in social work practice and in which "social service organizations as well as individual social workers are increasingly expected to follow certain practices and programs labeled to have empirically proved as efficient and successful" (Dewe, et al, 2006. p. 1) and efforts were made to promote 'best practice' and accountability of social services and increase the value of research in social work (p. 2).

From Modernism to Post modernism. The other transition in theory and practice integration of social work has been observed from modernism to postmodernism influences of thinking and action. With the introduction of strengths based, narrative therapy and solution focused practice approaches which promote partnership and collaboration and active participation in social work practice, a post modern thinking got an entry in to social work substituting the former modernism which gives emphasis to the knowledge and expertise of the social worker who deductively applies assessment and diagnosis and intervention or treatment while working with clients (Nash et al, 2005. p. 21). Under the dominance of modernism there is a central belief in unalterable

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truth, objective knowledge, certainty of generalizations and deductive application of theories to practice with hypothesis formation and testing (p. 21). However, in the postmodern thinking, many truths and perspectives exist while contextualization of knowledge, creation and interpretation of meaning, inductive theorizing from what develops from the practice are its peculiar features and this is a paradigm shift to a scenario by which a social work theory develops from within social work practice in its reflexive interaction with the theory (p. 21). This transitional debate is also seen in the orientation of social work towards positivist and constructivist traditions at different times.

From Enlightenment Thinking to Romantic Thinking. In a similar line of argument another transition has been observed in styles of thinking social work. Fargion (2006), made an examination of the practice accounts of social workers in Italy based on Mannheim's seminal essay on romantic and enlightenment styles of thought (p. 255). The enlightenment thinking which is mostly associated with modernism, considers social work practice as purely organized by abstract rules separating idea and action with frequent referrals to specialists and detrimental role of practice evaluation while the romantic style of thinking goes in the opposite direction emphasizing the ongoing evaluation of theories from practice and inseparability of thought and action with less dependence on specialists and a more suspicious outlook towards objectivity of knowledge which makes it comparable with postmodernism (pp. 255 & 269).

Dilemmas and Perplexities on Social Work Theory and Practice Integration

As it was indicated in the foregoing discussion, there are unresolved issues in relation to social work theory and practice integration and they still remained to be centers of ambiguity and

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ponders in the mind of practitioners and writers take different sides of influence in this regard and the following issues represent some of them. The first one is whether a social work practice can be universal where its theories and methods are applicable universally or is there a need to develop indigenous context based theories and methods. The next one is can a best social work theory or knowledge and practice be transferred from one country's or society's setting to another or not and the last concern is about whether social work shall stick to its professionalism with strict scientific methods and procedures or withdraw its professional status for a more responsive and reachable services to its client population.

Universalization or Indigenization. The definition provided by IASSW (International Association of Schools of Social Work) and IFSW (International Federation of Social Workers) for social work practice made it clear that "the holistic focus of social work is universal but the priorities of social work practice will vary from country to country and from time to time depending on the culture, historical and socio-economic conditions" (2006. p. 6). Despite the presence of such a statement which can lead to common understanding that social work can be both universal and different, there is a strong debate among writers around the world by taking either of the sides and this has led for a cognitive dilemma on the mind of social work practitioners concerning universalization and indigenization of social work.

People who viewed it from an African perspective like Rankopo and Osei- Hwedie (2011), Gray (1998), Midgley (1981 & 2008) and Osei-Hwedie (1996), contend that African social work should be free of foreign character by understanding the local environment through which indigenous ways of helping feature and start a relevant practice from the community which is termed as 'indigenous' or 'culturally relevant social work education and practice'. For

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Gray (2008), social work is essentially a modernist invention with a history of silencing marginal voices and imparting in to diverse cultural contexts, philosophies, theories and ideologies primarily from Europe and North America with colonial connotation.

The importation of social work education from the developed world to the developing world is a 'professional imperialism' for Midgley (1981) who argued that it is an imposition on third world countries. It was found by Roan (1980), that western theories created sources of conflict and confusion among students in Taiwan who tried to fit their social work activities into western theories. In china, the issue was raised by Jinchao (1995) and was made vivid that it was the aim of social work in the Chinese culture to achieve a state of harmony and integration, instead of providing opportunities for one's development and actualization, as emphasized in the west. For Nagpaul (1993), there is no basic work text book in India that takes in to account indigenous elements of social, economic and political life. It is the assertion of Mohan (1993), that the practice and development of social work in India is inappropriate to address diversity, unification and empowerment urging for indigenization. In contrast, Ejaz (1991) pointed out that social work education in India is not westernized based on the feeling of half of the social workers interviewed who had believed that they had contextualized their practice with what they have learned.

Nanavathy (1993) has tried to mention factors that were blocks for the indigenization of the profession in Asian countries that left them vulnerable to western influence and the truncated use of local knowledge with weak endeavors at indigenization by professionals themselves. Kulkarni (1993), pointed out that the models of social work in developing countries have been imported including the adoption of urban models by predominantly rural developing countries

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and professionals' value orientation of self determination and self reliance was influenced by liberal values that do not seem suitable for other countries and the efforts towards indigenization have been particularly slow from his observation in Asia.

Kee (2004), argues that "the quest for appropriate social work practice for non western countries and non Anglo-Saxon communities in the west has in more recent years shifted from an indigenization or culturally sensitive practice approach to that of an authentication or culturally appropriate approach" (p. 336) which is coined by Egyptian writers to refer to 'going back to one's roots seeking direction' (p. 336). He mentioned that proponents of culturally appropriate practice urge developing practice models from the core values, beliefs and approaches of indigenous helping practices or indigenous cultures" (p. 336). However, his particular doubt is about the western research methodology which was left unquestioned arguing that other writers and proponents of the culturally appropriate practice should have challenged it (p. 337). For him the western ways of knowing and research methods has problematic epistemological foundation since "it is rooted in a way of knowing based on scientific paradigm which perceives knowledge as coming from objective reality, originating from outside of the self" (p. 338) without recognizing the culture boundedness of ways of knowing (p. 338) and he mentioned the problems of "linguistic and cultural equivalence, communication processes and styles in different cultures and the way we conduct our relationship with people" (p. 339) as problems related to the application of western research methodology in non western social work research (p. 339).

Fulcher (2003) in his writing, 'The working definition of social work doesn't work in China and Malaysia', mentions some 'taken for granted' assumptions in western definition of

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social work and urges that it is time for western scholars to review their definition (p. 377). He particularly questioned the stance of Payne on this issue that “had there been a different influence from the non western countries, their ideas and views might have increasingly influenced the social work literature” (pp. 378- 379). For Fulcher, this statement ignores the ways in which, global publishing media are dominated by Euro-American interests” (p. 379).

Tsang and Yan (2001), in their writing ‘Chinese corpus: western application’ asserted that for Chinese social work scholars indigenization is not viewed as only a “professional concern with the relevance and socio-cultural appropriateness of imported social work knowledge and practice” (p. 435). It is also a political position that asserts the intellectual and professional autonomy of Chinese social work academicians and practitioners (p. 435). The “‘Chinese corpus’, a body or structure of social institutions, cultural traditions and values (p. 435) should lead the ‘application’ or technology imported from the west which shall be (p. 435) an additive element to be assimilated to the corpus and serve it” (p. 436). They stated that there are commonalities between challenges of social workers in china and the west like “unemployment, poverty, housing etc (p. 435), however, they exist in china with unheard of magnitudes for example 16 million unemployed workers with their own unique social, cultural and historical context to be understood” (p. 435) and they ask how the western experience can be directly applicable except for helpful and effective strategies to be looked for” (p. 435).

According to Yan and Tsui (2007), “in china social work scholars deliberately use western knowledge to distinguish their teachings from the policies of the government because the Chinese socialist ideologies and principles must be respected and followed while the scientific and professional skills refer to the western knowledge” (p. 643). However, in relation

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to indigenization they argue that even what is called 'western knowledge' is difficult to define and doubt the presence of universal set of knowledge (p. 643). They also mention the debates and divisions in the western social work literature concerning the professional and scientific nature of social work (p. 643).

Yunong and Xiong (2008) and Baron (1999), magnified the impossibility and to some extent the non-desirability of indigenization arguing that it has not been informed by empirical evidence. The argument from this side adheres that proponents of indigenization blindly stacked to local culture and questioned western social work values in the presence of a probability by which people may refer the western values and principles and they believe that indigenization can make social work static and unresponsive to rising issues since there is no exaggerated difference between indigenous and foreign cultures. For them social work is not promoting professional imperialism since it respects personal and cultural diversity. Baron (1999), argues that the ideas about social work education and practice are the same whether they are universalized or localized since they are only the recycled western ideas having similar goals and objectives of practice both in developing and developed countries.

Payne, 1997 (cited in Fulcher, 2003) tried to accept the influence of the western knowledge on the non west in an attempt to recognize some facts like "societies may held values and cultural traditions that are incompatible with western social work theory, some societies face different problems and issues that are not readily explained by social work theory" (p. 378) and "some western social work and developmental theory have been used over the years to maintain structural disadvantage in some communities through cultural assimilation or colonization of ideas and social traditions" (p. 378). However, he contended that these factors are not fully

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convincing for the reasons he noted like “countries these days are ethically and culturally pluralist, cultural imperialism and colonial history are not monolithic and all powerful, evidence shows that useful mutual exchanges have been achieved and everyone benefits from social development initiatives”(p. 378) and “there was international infrastructure of social welfare organizations that embrace an eclectic range of approaches, including social development models relevant to developing countries” (p. 378) and he continued with his pressure for the universal application of social work knowledge.

Transferability or Non Transferability. Nagy and Falk (2000), argue that “lack of clear terminology and the breadth of possible subject matter increase the difficulties of incorporating international and cross cultural content in the social work curriculum” (p. 55). This is facilitated by the fact that “there still is no consensus on what international social work encompasses” (Beecher, et al 2010. p. 204). Proponents of indigenization of social work argue that European, North American or any other foreign models of intervention are not transferable to every individual country (Rankopo and Osei-Hwedie, 2011. p. 1). Spolander, Sansfacon, Brown and Engelbrecht (2011), made a comparison of social work education in Canada, England and South Africa giving emphasis to migratory movements of educated social work practitioners across the world with globalization and found that in the context of global migratory trends, formulating equivalent standards for education and qualification for social workers is clearly a compelling job and they advocated for the “conceptualization of a transnational social work to lay the ground work for transnational criteria, standards and processes to facilitate the migration of social work professionals who will continue to be on the move for professional, personal and political reasons” (p. 14).

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The views of social work students “on international field education experiences are almost exclusively limited to non-indigenous students going abroad, rather than international students returning to their home country for their practice placement” (Beecher, et al 2010. p. 206). According to a study conducted by Ives, Aitken, Loft & Phillips (2007), students identified the need to learn from indigenous instructors because it gives more ‘credibility to the delivery of content’. According to Pawar, Hanna & Sheridan (2004), Australian students who were placed in India noted that western perspective emphasized individual worth and self determination, which often clashed with the indigenous belief that the community is more important than the individual. From the assessment made by Beecher, et al (2010) on international students views about transferability, some students recognized indigenous practices, strongly valued multiculturalism and regretted not having-agency specific knowledge and skills, while for some social work knowledge and skill seemed to be universal, others were western influenced (p. 1).

Professionalization or De-professionalization. A number of factors contributed for the development of professionalism in social work. Since Abraham Flexner’s dismissal of social work’s professional status in 1915, social workers worked on proving their professional status despite the still going on trends of de-professionalization (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 644). Unlike the universalization-indigenization debate, this one is not going between western and non western scholars rather it is one of the pressing issues of social work literature in the west and “debates on the professional and scientific nature of social work remain unresolved even among US social work scholars” (p. 644). In addition “many practitioners with no social work training claim the title of social worker and social work professional bodies have been pushing for

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legislation to protect the 'social worker' title to prevent clients from non-professional and questionable services provided by the untrained personnel" (pp. 644-645).

The development of professionalism has something to do with the "transformation of the welfare state, the managerialization of services and evidence-based practice" (Dewe, et al. 2006. p. 1). With the withdrawal of the welfare state from social protection responsibilities, the workfare policies, qualifications for assistance and services, client-professional relationship and conditional entitlements to services were introduced to the social work practice which acted as the core of professionalism in social work (p. 1). Furthermore, the managerialization of services with the introduction of contracts and market instruments and privatization, economic parameters and cost-benefit criteria of decision making and quality insurance and performance measurement were considered as efforts of increasing the 'professional autonomy' of social work and its scientific status (p. 1). Besides, the growth of evidence based practice led people to assume that social work is on the right track of professionalism (p. 1-2). However, people who had been cautious about these trends asked:

If unequally distributed power dominates client professional relationship and the client's best interest is no more a criterion of success to intervention, can social work still be called a profession? How do social service workers cope with being expected to act as executors of sanctions instead of empowerment? Are there opportunities for advocacy in a context of coercion and sanctions? How can they be used? Is there no chance of limiting legitimate courses of action in social work practice if we use the evidence based knowledge? Are they leading to professional autonomy? Will they improve the public recognition of social work as a profession? etc (Dewe, et al. 2006. p. 1-2).

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Therefore, Dewe and his colleagues ask, "Is there is a paradigm shift in social work professionalism and what the aspects of its future are?" (p. 2). In the mean time, they recognized that "there are tendencies of de-professionalization in many welfare states and in many areas of social services" (p. 2) due to the growing doubts on professionalization and the supervision of social workers by non-social workers and replacement of qualified professionals by paraprofessional workers (p. 2) with the "erosion of opportunities to professional discretions which is frequently reported by professional social workers" (p. 2). Such types of trends had been observed in china where most social work programmes were taught by other social science scholars like sociologists who have never practiced or taken a course in social work but it was due to shortage of social work professionals (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 642).

In an effort to reverse trends of de-professionalization, advocates of professionalism tried to invoke governments for legislations; however, social work scholars themselves questioned this assumption (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 645). They asserted and feared that "legislation to restrict the use of social work title may lead to a further isolation of the social work profession by excluding a group of practitioners who may not have social work training but who provide essential and valuable service" (p. 645) to the community mostly "in areas like social activism, where the profession is losing its historical ground" (p. 645).

According to Karger and Hernandez (2004), the chase of professionalism has led to social work's leaving of its function in 'public discourse activism' and rational life and it is trailing its contact with its origins in social change. In addition, its existence as an expression of willingness to serve the 'undeserving poor' (Wenocur & Reisch, 1989), 'its central assignment of control of dependency in society' (Popple, 1995), its 'nature of being a combination of social science and

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activism' (Epstein, 1999) which is practiced under the cover of kindness (Margolin, 1997) and the fact that mass of professional social workers are restricted under the management of state polices in public organizations whilst the non educated belong to non-profit and non-government organizations (Trolander, 1987) makes narrowing social work practice to the strictly professional domain an immature act, according to the advocates of de-professionalization.

This debate is associated somewhat with the recognition of social work's professional status since the other point of disagreement between these two sides is epistemological debate on the nature of knowledge. This takes us to the original debate on the professional status of social work which is surprisingly continuing until today. Advocates of 'scientific social work' who urge for professionalism led by, Mary Richmond who imported the scientific model from the medical profession to defend Flexner's claim also led to the Charity Organization Societies movement which advocated the importance of a scientific knowledge base naming the movement, 'scientific charity' (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 647).

On the other side, Jane Addams led the Settlement House movement, with the influence of Chicago University pragmatists, preferred a scientific enquiry with a strong democratic participation and challenged the notions of Richmond by taking humanistic participatory approach (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 648). As a result, proponents of the participatory and interpretive paradigm cast doubts on the technical-rational scientific nature of the social work profession and questioned the validity of interpretation based solely on an expert's scientific knowledge (p. 648). While the heuristic and tacit knowledge making of de-professionalists was considered more useful and informative for daily practice and the theories of professionalists were seen as objectified models that lack the necessary humanistic dimension (p. 648).

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Yan and Tsui (2007), arrived to a conclusion that “there should be an open dialogue among interested parties, untrained or trained practitioners who can offer a wide range for the consolidation of the profession and the epistemological debate also illustrates that knowledge is acquired in various ways and practice wisdom is certainly critical” (p. 648). Then they recommended the application of a holistic approach for social work practice in China by stopping exclusion of non professionals and by working with existing practitioners to articulate and conceptualize their knowledge and practice (p. 650).

Orientations of Social Work Theory and Practice Integration

Social work practice can have different orientations depending up on the working context, the nature of the client population, philosophy of curriculum and state policies and ruling principles. It can be towards a direct or client centered practice. It can also be indirect or environment centered practice. It may take a generalist or not specific problem or specific client population centered orientation. It can also be or specialist or specific problem and specific client population centered. A remedial or curative orientation is the other one and developmental or preventive practice is the last one while theory and practice integration is visible in all cases. Sometimes such orientations may attract debates and a difference between writers and practitioners as it was seen on the different ponders of the west and non west practice discourse.

Direct or Indirect Practice. The development of social work profession is highly attached with differential emphasis given for the importance of direct and indirect practice. Indirect practice as defined by Grinnel and Kyte (1975) includes concrete assistance or provision of practical and tangible help by the existing resources and opportunities and socio-psycho-

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biological intervention or the modification of the attitude or behavior of significant others within the client's social environment. Direct practice as defined by Richmond (1922) is the process and outcome of intervention through the relationship between the client and the social worker.

The original emphasis of social work on indirect practice forced Flexner to question the professional status of social work in 1915 and he argued that there is no need of expert knowledge to link clients with resources by identifying it as a major aspect of indirect practice. This led for the development of direct practice based on the work done by Richmond who conceptualized social case work in the subsequent years in which social diagnosis and psychological skills were introduced in social work practice. This attempt to raise the professional status of social work led for a change in emphasis on direct practice and later, other contributors like Reynolds (1934) made a critical assessment on the situation and the integration of both direct and indirect practice got ascendance in the 1980's with the prominence of social systems theory and the ecological orientation and the growth of radical social work in the extreme side urging the use of political tactics for intervention. Radical social work purely advocates indirect practice including the notion of culture sensitive and feminist perspectives for better allocation of power and resources in a society which makes indirect practice more than linking clients and resources and elevate itself to be emancipator and eliminator of oppression (Johnson, 1999. p. 327).

Even today, though people agree that social work can be both direct and indirect practice, still a question arises concerning the appropriate preference. Mmaltli (2008), studying political activism as a social work strategy in Africa argues that social work is not contributing significantly in Africa since the majority of clients in Africa are affected by structural and

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political problems like poverty, unemployment, inequality, illiteracy, homelessness, child streetism, ill health, abuse of human rights and civil rights while social workers are not sufficiently involved in such indirect practices (p. 2). It was also an attempt to urge social workers in Africa to adopt political activism as an intervention strategy to create conducive practice environment from a deep contention that dominant direct social work methods like case work are becoming ineffective (p. 2). He also asserted that the “existing structural problems are the result of political processes and the identifying and defining process of problems is also political” (p. 2).

According to Chu, Tsui and Yan (2009), “as the principle of social justice is fundamental to the practice of social work, it is pursued by challenging societal barriers, inequalities and injustices requiring social workers to engage in social and political actions to improve social policy and eliminate inequalities” (p. 287). However, “this quest should be undertaken hand in hand with quest for individual wellbeing, societal harmony and mutual respect” (p. 288). They are also curious about the threatening of the political base of social work in to west due to the growing focus of professionalization (p. 294) and argue that social work can respond to social justice in two ways by following ecological model, systems theory and functional schools to engage in active research and influence policy makers through their findings (direct practice) or/and working in ‘structural social work’ mobilizing clients and use the role of social critic as part of their duties (p. 293).

Generalist or Specialist Practice. Specialization as defined by Rapstad (cited in Blom, 2004) is a far reaching of labor and it is possible to mention several kinds of divisions in social work like field (hospitals, schools etc), setting (field social work, residential work), age

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(children, families, adult services), methods (task centered approach, cognitive therapy) and function or task (assessment vs intervention, service vs treatment) in which it is expected to develop specific skills in certain areas (p. 3). Generalist practice dictates social workers to deal with all sorts of problems and cases acquiring a broad range of knowledge and skill that is capable of solving problems (p. 3).

Blom (2004), argue that specialization is an increasing trend in many countries while many argue that generalist practitioners are preferred who can be educators and resource mobilizers instead of specialized therapists (p. 3). Naisbitt (cited in Blom, 2004) suggest that in this era adaptive generalists are needed instead of potentially superseded specialists in this period of information society (p. 412). The habilitation model of integrated practice suggested by Parsons, Hernandez and Jorgensen (2001) advocates the use of specialists for its practice strategy of differential role taking and generalist practice for teaching problem solving models, networking, team building, mutual aid and self help (p. 420). It also recognizes the important role of education by generalists who conceptualized the holistic nature of habilitation through competence building, normalization and empowerment (p. 419).

Remedial or Developmental Practice. Viewed from another perspective social work practice can be a remedial or developmental. The remedial type is exemplified by the 'medical model' which centers on curing the sick instead of investigating the cause or the major contributing factors for the problem which is need or deficiency oriented, with the expert role and contribution of the social worker using established tools, instruments and complex professional language (Parsons et al, 2001. p. 419). It can be termed as the 'rehabilitation approach' in which there is a "blaming the victim attitude, personalization of the problems,

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abnormal or normal dichotomous thinking, a relationship of dysfunctional client and a healer social worker” (p. 419).

The developmental type follows the ‘habilitation approach’ to promote competency, normalization and empowerment in which the problem is externalized to the environment, a central belief in client competence and potential, abnormal-normal continuum instead of dichotomy, cooperative problem solving between co-equal client and social worker (Parsons et al, 2001. p. 419). According to Mupedizjwa (2001), it is the contention of scholars since the 1970’s and the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa (ASSWA) that “African social work must proceed from remedial social work, foreign by nature and approach to a more dynamic and more widespread preventive and rehabilitative action which identifies itself with African culture in particular and with socio-economic policies of Africa in general” (p. 2). This is a quest for a developmentally oriented social work practice and education. However, a number of unresolved and unclear issues remained in relation to how to make this a reality (p. 3).

Traditionally, social work has been a remedial for treatment of the deviant and the socially disadvantaged elements of the society; however, the massive nature of problems in Africa demands a macro level development orientation of the majority of the population who can be considered as the social work client population instead of a high cost and very low yield individual level interventions (Andargachew, 1973). The debates on making preferences between remedial and developmental practice are originated in the earliest movements of settlement house by Addams which stressed the improvement of the community for its members rejecting the goal of charity organization societies of changing individuals through therapeutic skills and clinical social work for individual treatment (Yan and Tsui, 2007. p. 646). There has been

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unprecedented support for therapeutic services in the US society for individual treatment; however, a resistance to the therapeutic services grew on the part of scholars who urged for social reform (p. 646).

Chu, Tsui and Yan (2009), presented how the therapeutic focus of social work in the US still limited its focus to the poor and disadvantaged while it would include the 'middle class' and how it moved the profession far away from its original mission (p. 294). Midgley (2001), reported the dominance of remedial orientation within the profession of social work and widespread use of psychological behavioral and treatment theories (p. 28). He also stated that in industrial countries, social work has become heavily involved in psychotherapy, abandoning its mission to serve the poor and oppressed "while in developing countries, social workers are primarily engaged in remedial practice with interventions focusing on material needs of clients" (p. 28). While only few engage in psychotherapy, professional social work is heavily dependent on western text books that emphasize the acquisition of psychotherapeutic skills, therefore, it is a mismatch between professional education they receive and the tasks they are required to perform (p. 28). The remedial orientation has been criticized for its inability to suit to the "pressing problems of poverty in the global south" (p. 28) which "enhanced the awareness of the need for social work to play a more significant role in development" (p. 29) and commitment towards developmental orientation is growing everywhere.

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Conceptual Framework

In order to understand the integration of social work theory and practice it is helpful to learn from research conducted and available literature on the different dynamic assumptions and contradictory positions in the development of the profession. The following are, therefore, the relatively simplified but not mutually exclusive categories to articulate the general and abstract concept of 'theory and practice integration' in to more vivid and observable conceptualization. This can be started by reviewing the historical transitions in the development of the profession itself. Social work has shown a transition from apprenticeship learning to scientific and rational instruction in the 20th century with the addition of new inputs on previous contributions made by sociology, public health, economics and philosophy from the psychoanalytic and bio-psycho-social theories of case work and later on the child rights and community development movements (Nash, et al, 2005. pp. 18-19). The other transition was from a scientific practitioner approach to evidence-based practice in an effort to develop the professional status of social work when the task centered and problem solving approaches and system's theory eminence in social work got ascendance to the empirical tests of best practices and efficient models to be shared (Nash, et al, 2005. p. 19 & Dewe et al, 2006. p. 1).

A transition from modernism to postmodernism ways of action and thought was the third one (Nash, et al, 2005. p. 21). The introduction of strength-based, narrative therapy and solution focused practice approaches promoting partnership and collaboration in social work practice with construction of meanings are the consequences of postmodern thinking substituting the former fixity on objective knowledge and reality, domination of the expert professional on the needy client and certainty of generalizations of modernism (p. 21). Fargion, (2006), explained a

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similar sort of transition from enlightenment thinking to romantic thinking of social work after conducting an assessment on social work practitioners in Italy (pp. 255-269).

Scholars like Gray (1998) and Midgely (1981 & 2008) urge for the emancipation of African social work from foreign characters to feature indigenous and culturally relevant social work practice while Midgely (2001) assumes that it is a professional imperialism for it is an imposition on the third world countries. The west and non-west comparison made by Roan (1980), also revealed that western theories created a source of conflict among students in Taiwan while they try to fit their social work activities with western theories and Jinchao (1995) reported that the aim of social work in the Chinese culture is different from the west since the former promotes integration and harmony and the later promotes individual development and actualization. Nagpaul (1993), asserted that in India also there is no major text book which takes into account the indigenous elements of the people's life. Other scholars like Nanavathy (1993) & Kulkarni (1993), Kee (2004), Fulcher (2003), Tsang and Yan (2001), Yan and Tsui (2007) argued in parallel with the proponents of indigenization mentioned earlier.

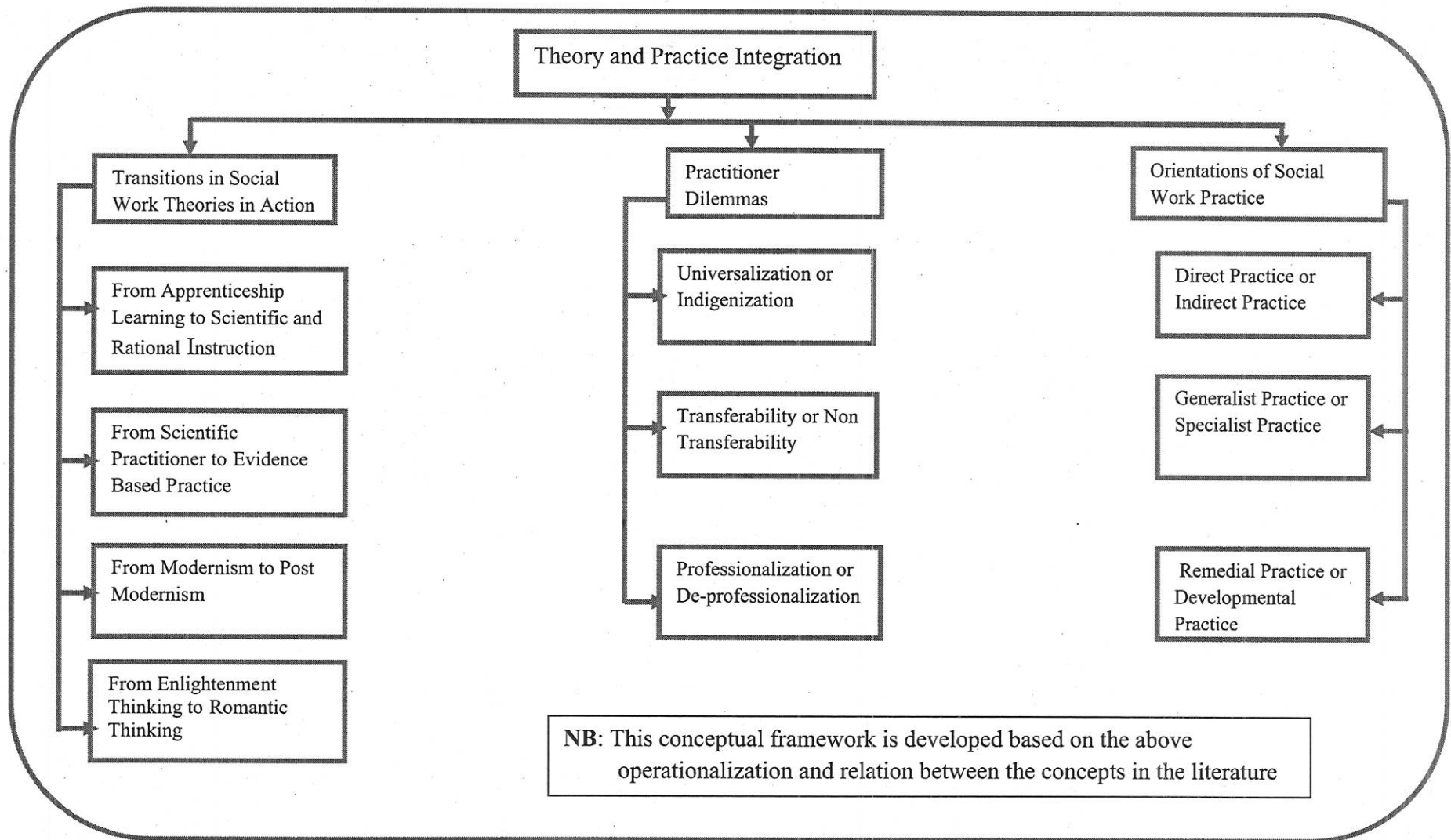
However, Yunong & Xiong (2008), Baron (1999) and Payne (1997) argue differently in the side of universalization on the assumption that indigenization is both impossible and undesirable and universalization of social work is practicable. Such contradictory stances can put practitioners in a dilemma easily and the assessment of Bunkers and Webb (2011) also shows that there is lack of consistent curricula in different social work trainings in Ethiopia and they found that the specific areas to be covered are determined by institutions offering the trainings and the donors which replicates the practical difficulty of indigenization in the country. A study conducted on the transferability of social work education and practice from one country's setting

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to another from the experience of Australian students who were placed on a field practice in India showed that the western emphasized principles of individual worth and self determination clashed with the local people's belief in the centrality of the community (Beecher, et al, 2010. p. 206).

The ongoing pressing on professionalism and de-professionalization is also another debate among scholars for the development of the profession and benefit and empowerment of clients respectively (Dewe, et al, 2006). While the proponents of professionalism urge for the protection of scientific procedures and standards in social work practice and the engagement of only trained social workers in the process, the advocates of de-professionalization ask for relatively more participatory and democratic collaboration of relationship between co-equal practitioners and clients with a wise incorporation of all resourceful people in social work practice, though untrained, including Para-professionals (Dewe, et al, 2006 & Trolander, 1987). The social work theory-practice integration has major orientations towards either direct or indirect practice, specialist or generalist practice and remedial or developmental practice (Rwomire & Raditlhokwa, 1996. p. 7-8).

Figure 1; Conceptual Framework



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Figure; 2 Definition of Terms and Concepts

Concepts	Sub concepts and their dimensions		Definitions / Empirical indicators
Transitions in social work theories in action	From Apprenticeship Learning to Scientific and Rational Instruction	Apprenticeship Learning	The use of theories which are developed by other disciplines for a social work practice
		Scientific and Rational Instruction	The use of therapeutic skills and knowledge and psychoanalytic theories in social work.
	From Practitioner Science to Evidence Based Practice	Practitioner Science	A social work practice solely dependent on the expert theoretical knowledge of the social worker.
		Evidence Based Practice	The use of client centered, empowerment oriented and task centered practice and systems theory and research supported best practice/solution modeling in social work practice.
	From Modernism to Post modernism	Modernism	A rigid use and development of theories, rules, understanding and interpretation in social work practice.
		Post modernism	Flexibility in developing and using theories and solutions to problems in the relationship between the client and the social worker.
	From Enlightenment Thinking to Romantic Thinking	Enlightenment Thinking	Viewing social work practice as stacked to established rules, theories, models, specializations and evaluation.
		Romantic Thinking	A view of social work practice as based on ongoing evaluation of theories from practice with inseparability of thought and action and less dependence on specialists and a more suspicious outlook towards objectivity of knowledge.
	Indigenization or Universalization	Indigenization	The contextualization of social work theories and practice models to local situations with the incorporation of local knowledge and wisdom in practice.
		Universalization	The application of previously established theories and models in social work practice without modifying to the situation of the particular community in context.
	Transferability	Transferability	A condition in which social work knowledge and skill acquired in one country can

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Dilemmas of practitioners	Or Non Transferability		be useful for a practice in another country.
		Non transferability	A situation in which social work knowledge and skill acquired in one country cannot be relevant for a practice in another country.
	Professionalization or De-professionalization	Professionalization	Urging for the protection of scientific procedures and standards in social work practice and the engagement of only trained social workers in the process.
		De-professionalization	Asking for relatively more participatory and democratic collaboration of relationship between co-equal practitioners and clients with a wise incorporation of all resourceful people in social work practice, even though untrained, including para-professionals.
Orientations of the integration	Direct practice or Indirect practice	Direct Practice	A social work practice limited to the relationship between a client and a social worker.
		Indirect Practice	The use of available resource, materials, social networks, advocacy and relevant others in a social work intervention.
	Generalist Practice or Specialist Practice	Generalist Practice	A social work practice which utilizes a broad spectrum of knowledge and skill to be applied in multiple work and practice settings.
		Specialist Practice	A social work practice targeted at using specific skills to be applied in certain specific work and practice settings.
	Remedial Practice or Developmental Practice	Remedial Practice	A social work practice limited up to solving the current problem of the client using inputs mainly from the social worker.
		Developmental Practice	A social work practice which goes beyond solving the current problem towards competency, acknowledging and utilizing the strengths of the client.

NB: This definition is made based on the literature reviewed.

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Limitation of the study

A phone interview and e-mail communication have been utilized to collect data which denied the researcher to get an access to observe facial expressions and environment observation which might have added some insight in to their conditions and working experiences.

Objectives

The general objective of this research is to explore the social work theory and practice integration from the experience of Ethiopian social workers. In doing so, the following specific objectives are targeted.

To discover the transitions in social work theory and practice integration from apprenticeship learning to scientific and rational instruction, from a scientific practitioner approach to evidence-based practice and from modernism to postmodernism in the Ethiopian context.

To discern the practitioner dilemmas and perplexities among Ethiopian social workers concerning different professional issues of indigenization, universalization, transferability, non transferability, professionalization and de-professionalization by collecting data from Ethiopian social workers living in Ethiopia and abroad.

To distinguish the orientations of Ethiopian social work practitioners between direct or indirect, generalist or specialist, remedial or developmental practice.

To explore practical challenges faced by social work practitioners so far, and to get their opinion and feedback about the needed interventions.

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Method

The Study Design

In order to get in touch with the participants of the study and make sure their availability and willingness to participate in the study a preliminary survey was conducted via e-mail. The preliminary survey questionnaire included questions concerning the respondents' living area, MSW graduation status, further education status, employment status, working areas and experience, client environment, part time engagement areas, roles, positions and responsibilities and their willingness to be part of the study and it was sent to 110 MSW graduates of Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work. This was done basically to have a prior insight on the social work practice environment of the graduates and prepare related and contextual questions for the practitioners next to its relevance to decide on method and budget issues.

Unfortunately, after a two month period of waiting and continuous reminder to the respondents through e-mail, only 11 of them appear to respond to the preliminary survey questionnaire while 2 of them were not willing to be part of the study at all. This helped the researcher to decide the design of the research to be definitely a qualitative design. However, this demanded more effort to get willing respondents for in depth interviews after conducting a phone interview and there was a better response in the phone interview and finally it was possible to conduct a qualitative study and the opinion of respondents living abroad and those who were unavailable for face to face in-depth interview was collected via e. mail.

Method of Data Collection

Interview was the major method of data collection while semi-structured questions were sent to few respondents to gather a qualitative data for the purpose of grasping the practitioners'

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opinions and stories of experience in their different engagements of work. Accordingly, e. mail communication was used to collect data from 6 informants and 5 informants were interviewed by phone and in-depth interview was employed to interview 2 participants in person.

The Study Procedure

The data collection was started after the list of 22 willing respondents to participate in the study was identified following a request made by e-mail and by phone. Subsequently, open ended questions were prepared and sent to those who preferred e. mail communication, and a phone call was made to those who preferred and appointments were arranged for interviews both via phone and in person. Finally, 13 people participated in the study after the rest were unable to make it, though, 16 people involved in the first stage of communication to answer the preliminary survey questions. Therefore, the data collected from the final 13 participants was analyzed and reported after the end of data collection. A sociology graduate, a graduate of Indra Ghandi university distance master of social work program and a Para social worker were included among the study participants after the researcher found that the inclusion of their opinion is vital based on the issues raised by the previously asked participants.

Method of Data Analysis

Considered as a dynamic and ingenious process, qualitative analysis involves three steps; data reduction, data display and drawing conclusions (Marvasti, 2004. p. 88). Reducing the data is useful to minimize the whole data as per the conceptual framework and research questions (p. 89) and displaying the data is an effort exerted to create "a recognizable conceptual scheme" (p. 90) out of a bunch of raw data by at least "highlighting important passages or themes as representations of particular concepts" (p. 90) while drawing conclusion "involves making

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meaningful statements about how a data illustrates a topic of interest” (p. 90). These three procedures were followed to analyze the data collected since a large amount of data was transcribed, reduced, categorized and interpreted based on the previously established conceptual framework and objectives and research questions set.

Content analysis was employed as an approach of data analysis since it was preferred for it is advantageous to “distill a large amount of material into a short description of some of its features and its convenience to simplify and reduce large amounts of data into organized segments using few common themes” (Bauer, 2000. p. 132). Therefore, the contents of the major themes dictated by the conceptual framework were presented and analyzed in terms social work theories in action, dilemmas of practitioners, orientations of social work practice-theory integration, challenges of practice and practitioners’ feedback.

Ethical Considerations

The issue of informed consent was considered while making a first contact with respondents since it was given adequate attention and every data collection relationship was formed based on willingness of respondents. Respondents were asked for their willingness to participate in the research through e-mail and phone interview by sending and reading the consent form respectively. To avoid potential harm, the confidentiality of information of clients like the name of participants, the name of their organization and addresses, peculiar characteristics that reveal their identity and the organizations’ and agencies’ identifiers were protected in the whole process to prevent a negative outcome if revealed. To this end, participants are given numerical names and their ideas are presented without modification and change.

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Findings and Discussion

The Participants of the Study and Their Working Conditions

As an attempt to explore the professional social work environment, this research undertaking tried to include 22 social workers as participants of the study who took the initiative to participate in the study by showing their willingness to answer questions via e-mail and in-depth interview. Finally 16 people participated in different stages of data collection from responding preliminary survey questions up to participating in post interview discussion and 13 of them have participated in the main data collection since seven of them participated in interview and six of them answered questions through e-mail.

Therefore, this chapter is the report based on data collected from these 13 informants. 10 of them are MSW graduates from Addis Ababa University, 3 of whom are working abroad included to be informants concerning transferability of social work theories and skills, one is a graduate of MSW from the Indra Ghandi University Distance Education, another one is a sociology graduate working in a position of a social worker and still another one is a Para-social worker. The Indra Ghandi graduate, the sociology graduate and the Para social worker were included in the study for the purpose of inclusiveness to get the perspective from each side and crosscheck different opinions and ideas raised during the data collection.

In order to see what and how they are working they have been asked about their positions and major responsibilities. One of the informants from abroad is working as a case manager with major responsibilities of “providing direct management services including identifying and coordinating community resources for homeless clients on addiction recovery and providing a

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variety of individual and/or group supportive services that address both short-term and long-term client needs” (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012). The other informant from abroad is engaged in “case management on temporary assistance dealing with domestic violence, drug/alcohol, mental health issues, pregnant and parenting teens, crisis intervention” (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012). The last informant from abroad is a “project coordinator and research assistant working on teaching, orphan and vulnerable children and monitoring and evaluation of Para-social worker training and curriculum development” (Informant thirteen, e-mail communication, January 5, 2011).

Among the participants from Ethiopia, one is a Children Program Manager working on OVC (Orphan and Vulnerable Children) (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012), the other is a Program officer “coordinating and monitoring the proper implementation of various refugee protection and assistance programs undertaken by various implementing partners or Humanitarian organizations” (Informant three; e-mail communication, April 21, 2012). The next informant is an executive director engaged in mobilizing resources, raising funds, supervising the overall activities of an organization working on highly vulnerable children (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012). One participant is working on HIV/AIDS in an organization which gives home-based care for the patients (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012) and the other is a research assistant on issues of mental health (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012).

Director of Diaspora information and research is the position of the next informant who is “responsible for dissemination of information and conducting research on migration” (Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012). The other is a project officer and leader of

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community development section of an NGO working on community development, primary health care and physical upgrading (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). One Para-social worker is included in the study who works in an NGO working on children, elderly and housing (Informant twelve; Interview, April 10, 2012). A graduate of an Indian University is working as a junior counselor II with the major role of hotline counseling and information provision (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). A sociology graduate taking a position of social worker has worked on adoption of children as a facilitator (Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012)

The Social Work Theories in Action

Based on the major transitions seen in the development of social work theories, it is possible to identify the main social work theories in action today in the context of the practice by the participants of the study. This can be seen in light of transitions from apprenticeship to scientific instruction, from practitioner science to evidence-based practice, from modernism to post modernism and from enlightenment to romantic thinking.

Apprenticeship Learning Vs Scientific and Rational Instruction

Defined as the use of theories which are developed by other disciplines like; sociology, public health, economics and philosophy for a social work practice, apprenticeship learning is where social work started a professional journey towards developing theories of its kind and eclectic use of those theories. However, “the immediate transition was the inclusion of psychoanalytic and bio-psycho-social theories to be used in casework, right theories and community development” (Nash, et al, 2005. p. 18-19). As beginning practitioners of social work

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in Ethiopia the participants of the study were asked about the dominant theories in their practice while their answer stipulates that the influence of theories from other disciplines is limited to certain contexts and they are using the theories of social work like systems theory, bio-psycho-social theory and the ecological perspective at large.

A social worker working with orphan and vulnerable children explained that he found ecological view as more explanatory of the situations in which the children are fighting by mentioning the fact that he had to work on their nearest environment to make things better like improving the service delivery systems, giving training to the staffs who work with the children, working on the better self understanding of the children since he found out that there is no system to protect the children from low self-esteem after they know their real identity (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). In addition, he reported that he was highly influenced by what he has learned in the class and was forced to bring change in the work environment by introducing the basics of good social work environment, developing working guidelines, helping his colleagues avoid the employee mentality and substitute it by a helper mentality which leads to thinking at least these kids could be one's own brothers and sisters, siblings or cousins, and considering to work as a permanent and stable staff for the sake of the kids.

Another social worker said the strength perspective is utilized to mobilize community resources in his organization and the community based approaches are used to involve stakeholders and run the projects by the community (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012). A social worker who is engaged in counseling clients said that they are applying the client centered approach of counseling which basis itself on the humanistic perspective of Karl Rogers. According to the informant, in this approach the client is the center of solutions and

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it has no therapeutic nature rather deep exploration of problems and alternative solutions with the client (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012).

According to another participant, there is a real connection with what the practice actually demands and what is advocated in the class arguing that the essential values of social work like fairness, justice and equality are all what it needs if one is to empower a given community since being appreciative of their culture, value and asset plays the great role for success (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). Another social worker who tried to explain it from her own experience on mental illness and community resource mapping said she was impressed by the ecological perspective and found it to be practical after she participated in assessments on mental illness related problems and saw how the person-in-environment view is holistic enough to explain problems and her participation in community resource mapping gave her a new insight in to the community's assets which she believed was her contribution as a social worker to change the previous need based assessments (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012).

A different view was raised by one social worker who reported that he is still influenced by what he was trained before he joined social work education and he believes that his training is near and useful to social work. He argues "I used to work as a social worker being a sociology graduate and I do not see any big difference since I developed the skills of listening and value of confidentiality but I learned that the social work assumptions are more nearer to the facts in the ground and explain the facts better compared to sociological theories or training modalities in sociology" (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). One social worker who is also working as a nurse has found nursing to be nearer and useful to social work except for its problem based

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nature, presence of significant expert role in it and little empowerment it results (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012).

The dominance of more social work theories and late psychological introductions, however, clears that the bigger picture is taken by scientific and rational instruction though not in its purest form. As an indication of scientific and rational practice, therapeutic engagements are mentioned by few informants. One of them said he uses play therapy and behavioral cognitive therapy for children and believes that he has been observing evidences of positive changes (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). The other participant reported, due to the presence of psychologists in his agency and wise utilization of available counseling approaches from existential, psychoanalysis, social learning and eclectic perspectives, he believes that the social work practice is not devoid of these late psychological introductions to social work (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). This may not be the case for the other participant who says empowerment is better and more influential in social work than therapy by narrating the story of one client she had helped which led her to assume that listening and empathy are more successful in social work for individuals and communities with needed interventions in a particular environment.

The rest social workers from Ethiopia replied that they are influenced by neither social work nor other theories. The question seemed easier for informants from abroad who are situated better to identify the leading theoretical views in their work as they said they are following systems theory and cognitive behavioral therapy for drug rehabilitation (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012) and client centered approach with no engagement in therapy despite using different theories including psychoanalytic theories for analysis (Informant eleven,

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e-mail communication, April 30, 2012). Generally, it seems difficult to take sides in the comparisons made between apprenticeship learning and scientific and rational instruction; however, this can be an indication of the infant nature of social work practice in terms of exerting greater theoretical and practical influence in the contexts of work environment.

Scientific Practitioner vs. Evidence-Based Practice

The other way to see the social work theories in action is their transition and relationship in terms of scientific practitioner defined as the social work practice which is solely dependent on the expert theoretical knowledge of the social worker and evidence-based practice which is defined as the use of client centered, empowerment oriented and task centered practice and systems theory and research supported best practice/solution modeling in social work practice (Nash, et al, 2005. p. 19, Dewe, 2006, p. 1). In this regard, the response of the informants shows that there are more tendencies of evidence based practice, though not totally, than acting like a scientific practitioner in their contexts since they are not totally dependent on their expert knowledge and they acknowledge client strengths.

One informant says, "first of all I do not need an expert knowledge, as long as the counseling process is concerned, I do not need to have an expertise knowledge and any different stage of understanding, I only need to listen and reflect since empathetic listening matters most in my work" (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). The other participant says "I focus on the strengths of my clients using asset based approach and tell them that they have an asset urging them to explore it and I ask them to bring talent and strength to me as an assignment during my counseling session" (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). He also said that he is using this approach to help his clients at times of feeling hopeless, or when

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they think that they are useless, to work on negative cognitive perception and replace it with positive one, by advising them to be the only experts for their life, limiting his role towards facilitation.

It is the opinion of another participant that his work is dependent on his efforts since his work is not directly connected to clients (Informant three; e-mail communication, April 21, 2012). The other participant said he sometimes depends on common sense knowledge if necessary and this can be the accumulation of knowledge from different sources and disciplines (Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012). Still another participant argues he uses his personal and interpersonal skills and experiences in addition to expert knowledge and believes that the practice environment is yet empowerment oriented and client centered urging for more effort in this regard (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012).

With a similar line of argument another participant reported that there is no enough understanding of client needs and interests and argued social workers shall be more responsive to their clients and retreat from imposing ideas and thoughts after she saw a big difference between the life changes of people who engaged in life changing and income generating activities based on their interest and imposition while the interested guys showed a remarkable progress and the others did not (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012).

As a good sign of the presence of evidence-based practice one participant reported that there is a tradition of modeling the practice after the best practices reported due to the presence of case and experience sharing about interesting, unique, difficult and successful cases among social workers in his agency via their peer discussion and supervision sessions (Informant five;

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phone interview, April 30, 2012). Based on the cases reported above by the informants it may be fair to assume that forms of evidence based practice are started and blind dependence on scientific knowledge is on the way of being compromised.

The informants from abroad also took their position in this regard and one of them said “our knowledge is not complete by itself and we need to learn from clients, from coworkers, from supervisors and from consultants when we need expert knowledge or exploration” (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012) and in line with evidence based practice he said “we use the best practice which has worked more in helping clients to avoid relapse and concur their addiction and since we are strictly adhering the NASW (National Association of Social Workers) Code of Ethics, clients best interest is the core of our practice but we have to confront clients to change their thinking pattern as that gets them to addiction while using assertiveness to empower clients as they are the only person to help their lifelong recovery process” (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

The other participant states, “I do rely both on my expert knowledge and experience. However, client’s experience and situation can also play pivotal role to think outside the box, as we are dealing with human behavior, which is dynamic in nature” (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012). The comparison between the social workers working in Ethiopia and abroad again manifests that there is better practicing environment again in terms of effecting evidence based practice. This can be seen in the response of the above informant;

The agency in which I am working provides temporary assistance for clients to support their effort towards self-sufficiency; the program is voluntary; there are policies that

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apply to all. However, the ultimate goal is to ensure self-sufficiency. And all clients work and are required and encourages to work towards that goal. In this regard, we can say it is client centred. Pertaining to empowerment, all attempts are made to empower clients by looking and encouraging them to use their skills and strength as well as connecting them to community resources. Any success story can be used as a learning tool (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012).

Modernism vs. Postmodernism

In a general manner of theoretical assumption, there is a view referred modernism in which there is a rigid use and development of theories, rules, understanding and interpretation in social work practice with fixity on objective knowledge and reality, and domination of the expert professional on the needy client and certainty of generalizations and its opposite, post-modernism, in which there is flexibility in developing and using theories and solutions to problems in the relationship between the client and the social worker due to the introduction of strength-based, narrative therapy and solution focused practice approaches promoting partnership and collaboration in social work practice with construction of meanings (Nash, et al, 2005. p. 21). A look at the social work theories in action can demonstrate the progresses and the relationships in this transition. Again except for special circumstances, the working environment of the informants shows that there is less fixity on objective knowledge with flexible and open construction of reality in the practice settings.

One informant said, he uses mainly two theories “but they may not be in strict sense of the theories but we add our own adoptive style to them and since the theories by themselves are not perfect, we try to integrate them with the local knowledge and fill the gaps in the

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implementation process, hence, local knowledge is still significant as the theories are”

(Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012). The other participant says, his organization explicitly follows an integrated holistic approach based on the assumption that since the social work theories are originated from the ground to explain facts, the multidimensional nature of the environmental facts demands the use of different theories holistically (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). This is supported by another informant who says, “It should be holistic and you cannot pickup a single theory to be directly applied, and most of the time it is done unknowingly and it is not planned, totally spontaneous, you find yourself applying many theories at once” (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). The other participant added, “It depends on cases of your client that drives you to use one theory or mixing different theories” (Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012). While the cases of the above informants seem to go in line with postmodernism, the following cases may not.

As reported by one of the participants, his organization explicitly follows the client centered approach based on the humanistic theory of Karl Rogers and he believes that the agency may have enough explanation for this but for him the theory is successful in his practice setting since he saw happy people who got a person to listen them, who appreciated the approach when they sent their feedback concerning the time they had with their counselor (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He further argues that it can be taken as the right social work service, to respect people’s dignity and self-determination and due to the central belief in the presence of decision in the client. He stated “believing that everyone knows about what is best for him, once from the country’s reality and from people’s educational status, and even in such circumstances clients many times are resistant to search solutions, therefore, in the presence of

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such conditions, you cannot give fixed solutions to everyone and the approach can be used alone". Ironically, the assumptions of the client centered approach go in line with post-modern views and the reciprocal fixity on one approach or way of understanding reality takes a modernist character.

Another social worker is particularly impressed about the bio-psycho-social model which she believes that it touches the most important aspects of human life which were left untouched due to differential emphasis by the former medical or disease model which ignored the important social and psychological aspects of the person (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012). She added that she has witnessed a lot changed in her mind after she learned social work and this model in particular to work in a very humane environment unlike before. Again the participants of this study from Ethiopia are more influenced by the postmodern thinking. The informants from abroad are also in this tradition. As the answer from one of the participants stipulates; "as a generalist social worker, I use holistic approach to help clients, there is no specific theory that is all inclusive" (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012). He argued that "it has to be applied flexibly as per the individual client, there is no magic bullet to hit all targets and that is why clients should be seen as individuals not as a case and we integrate different assumptions via periodic evaluation and discussing with the client and clinical groups" (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Enlightenment Thinking vs. Romantic Thinking

The next transition of social work theories in action can be seen in terms of enlightenment thinking which views social work practice as stacked to established rules,

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theories, models, specializations and evaluation considering social work practice as purely organized by abstract rules separating idea and action with frequent referrals to specialists and detrimental role of practice evaluation and romantic thinking which views social work practice as based on ongoing evaluation of theories from practice with inseparability of thought and action and less dependence on specialists and a more suspicious outlook towards objectivity of knowledge (Fargion, 2006. pp. 255-269). This analysis can be compared with the modernism and post modernism transition and the result of this study also reveals that in the absence of a strict scientific professional practice observed yet, the position of the social workers lies in the romantic thinking since for one or another reason there are no senior specialists to receive referrals and the theories are yet being tested in the ground for relevance instead of appearing sound enough to be used as rules and the contextualization debate also opens a question on objectivity of knowledge further.

This was revealed by the opinion of one informant who said what his agency has done so far as an agency was not enough to treat the clients and he was forced to give trainings to the staff members and work on additional networking and spiritual help for the clients to deal a problem resulted by partial and biased treatment of children by his colleagues (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). This can be another indication for the absence of a commonly agreed standard and working principle in the agency which still demands further work and search for explanatory knowledge instead of fixation on the already held non professional tradition on which the agency has stacked as its own rule and manner of operation.

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Dilemmas of Practitioners

Can we apply social work universally or is it context specific? Is the social work education and practice transferable or not? Is professionalism or de-professionalism the right track in developing the profession in Ethiopia? These were found to be centers of debate and dilemma among practitioners and their answers demonstrate the level of perplexity and incongruity. The ideas are presented in terms of the debates between indigenization and universalization, transferability and non transferability and professionalism and de-professionalism.

Indigenization vs. Universalization

The contextualization of social work theories and practice models to local situations with the incorporation of local knowledge and wisdom in practice is what is referred as indigenization and the application of previously established theories and models without modifying them to the situation of the particular community in context represents the trend of universalization. The discrepancy between the two presents itself as a challenge for practitioners since it puts them in a dilemma due to the presence of a chance of using both approaches in a given practice setting for the existence of both unique and quite common contexts and practice cases. However, theoretically, scholars take distinct side from the two and their debate seems to urge practitioners to do the same, although the practice environment is not demanding this (Rankopo & Osei-Hwedie, 2011 and Nimmagadda & Cowger, 1999). From the analysis made by the participants of this study too, it was not easy for them to argue similarly though they urged for contextualization as an assignment for the future.

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From the view point of one informant, there are contents of social work which can be universalized like the professional values and ethical principles of trust and confidentiality for their desirability and contribution for the success of a given intervention (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). He further argues that they are basic and not context biased unlike the theories which for him can be less influential with our culture since a single theory cannot explain all the facts here which makes eclectic approaches preferable that has to be developed in line with local realities. The other one says “the direct application of western theories in our community is like asking someone about what he/she didn’t lived. So it is better to take the constructive ones only cognizant of the practical situation in the community” (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012). It is the opinion of another participant that “some theories work and some do not, while there is a need for more sensitization work on the profession” (Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Another social worker contended, “Contextualization matters most and there is a real need to modify and contextualize the western modeled theories” (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). For him women and children’s rights are all western concepts and the way of handling the cases of women and children in the household may be culturally different in our case which can be exemplified by punishment of children and women’s role in the family. He suggested that standardization of social work in our context would help minimize problems and give direction to the details of our practice since now it is being done in a spontaneous and unplanned manner, and do not fit what the social workers learned in the school.

With a similar line of argument, the consideration of different elements in our social life and culture requires a modification of our theoretical assumptions, is what the other participant

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suggested based on the simple difference between the clients perception and understanding who are familiar to different realities and varied social problems too (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). "If we sacrifice whatever is needed to be, I believe that it is not difficult to contextualize and Ethiopianize the theories we have" says another informant by mentioning the relevance and applicability she saw in using the ecological perspective and bio-psycho social model (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012).

The other one mentions the hierarchical nature of our society by which elders, traditional healers, religious leaders and learned people are considered as advisors/teachers for others and they accurate others in religion and culture, in family and sibling relations, which is in his opinion posing a resistance to the social work approaches for western principles and values are not yet internalized and people expect decision from the practitioner depending on what they are told making the task difficult for the social worker to work on empowerment and succeed in client centered approaches (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). As it is viewed by another informant, the issue of contextualization is still in theory and not practical yet, while he doubts that it will be turned in to practice, since for him the problem starts in the absence of commonly shared definition of what social work is in the country (Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012).

As the informants indicated, what makes the task of contextualization difficult is the universalized nature of the education provided in the country. While the education provided by Addis Ababa University is under the western influence, the Indian university, Indra Ghandi, provides the education in the context of India. A graduate of the Indian university argues, "Yes, it is dominated by the eastern values, the problem is and the question should be which value is

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not dominant here” (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He continues, “Since we all learned the western models (in undergraduate classes) and ideas we feel as if they are our own, but there is no indigenous and contextualized philosophy and teaching strategy/system which will remain as the basic fault and failure”. However, it is his assumption that at least local teachers could have resolved the problem by raising and including local contexts in their teaching.

Finally, it makes sense to argue that there is a lot to go for indigenization of social work as reported by the informants that the practice environment demands this by taking into consideration the elements which can be applied in spite of circumstances. In addition, they recommended for further research, experience sharing and accumulating practice accounts to succeed in this endeavor after they pointed out that the major discrepancy is resulted because of the more individualized life style of the west implicated in the theories and the very communal nature of our society’s life.

Transferability vs. Non-Transferability

The other way to see the contextualization dilemma is to check whether a social work education in one country is applicable for a practice in another country, if one of them is the source of the education and the other is just the destination. This reciprocity indicates that the education is framed after contexts of the originating country and supports the argument for indigenization in the destination country. Social workers who graduated in Ethiopia and went to United States of America have been asked if they found what they learned here as useful and practicable in their work in the US and their answers ensured that as one of great contributors for the development of the profession, USA has theories and social work practice models which are

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fitting to its reality. One of them said “the theories, I learned in the class have direct relevance to the community I am serving now” (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012).

The other social worker added “since I am working in the US, I have no problem to exercise any of those theories in my practice setting” (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012). He further stated that he was trained to be a generalist social worker in Ethiopia and at first he found problems in the practice environment in US but through reading and group work he developed the clinical knowledge. This may lead one to assume that the education provided in Ethiopia is directly relevant for a practice in America which shall attract the attention of local scholars to work on this paradox and look for possible elucidation and resolution.

Professionalization vs. De-professionalization

The intense and pressing debate and discourse by the informants was concerning future trends of professionalization or urging for the protection of scientific procedures and standards in social work practice and the engagement of only trained social workers in the process and de-professionalization or asking for relatively more participatory and democratic collaboration of relationship between co-equal practitioners and clients with a wise incorporation of all resourceful people in social work practice, even though untrained, including Para-professionals. Theoretically, among the scholars, this debate reaches to the extent of sticking to professionalism with strict scientific methods and procedures or withdrawing professional status for a more responsive and reachable services to its client population (Yan & Tsui, 2007 and Dewe, 2006). However, the issue for the participants of this study is concerning what should be the right track to develop the profession in Ethiopia, producing more educated and licensed social workers or

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enabling and empowering Para social workers and other professionals who are working taking the position of a social worker.

“The one that should be blamed for the absence of protection for professional standard in the country is the government” says one informant after he mentioned that the concerned government ministries did nothing even to hire professional social workers for their bureaus and other governmental and nongovernmental organizations are employing other professionals for the position of a social worker (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). He commented that there should be standardized evaluation and examination procedure of having social work both as a profession and as a position. He also called for a big effort from institutions like Addis Ababa University’s School of Social Work and its graduates to promote the profession well. For him what they did so far in this regard is not glamorous. His arguments, therefore, put him in the side of argument for producing qualified professionals to develop the profession. Another social worker completely supports the idea of having many Para professionals to participate in the practice after getting enough trainings and skills (Informant three; e-mail communication, April 21, 2012). This is also supported by another informant who believes that social work is not standardized yet in the country (Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Taking an impartial stance, another participant says “engaging professional social workers is significant as they can integrate both the local and scientific knowledge to solve social problems and we need to maximize the number of professional social workers in the future but we have to deal with any problem with what we have at hand which includes both professional and Para-professional workers” (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012).

Explaining it further, he said “trainings should be appreciated for the time being because we are

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with a scarcity of trained social workers. Our stand might need to be changed when we reach at a stage where professionals are available in adequate amount”.

The other one tried to relate it with the global debate and the contesting nature of a profession by itself, by which some people say what makes it a profession for it has no its own scientific and theoretical source or foundation, since the theories, the applications and major philosophical grounds are taken or borrowed from other major disciplines (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He also mentioned the argument of others who say it is founded based on the natural tendency of every person for charity which took a professional character in the industrialized world. Then he presents his own stand that if social work is practiced to the level of sophistication elevated to include scientifically proven and sophisticated theoretical inputs from sociology, psychology, biology and policy analysis it can be respected as a profession and the problem, for him, in Ethiopia is that social work is practiced yet at the primary level for the major problem of the country are hunger, drought and mainly food shortage. According to him, to work in such areas like disability, HIV and related cases, it does not demand a complex solution and it is possible to work on giving training and empowering the Para-professionals, while on the other hand he urges for the licensing and registration of the graduated practitioners suggesting them to exert strong scientific influence to get the profession respected.

Another impartial position is taken by another participant who said “we have to work on both directions, because with academic quality, it is good to have licensing and registration, to protect the standard, but since our number is not adequate, we can work on producing good qualified Para-social workers too” (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012). Another

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participant supported the empowerment of paraprofessionals for the reason of the relatively unknown status of the profession in the country and he claims that “it is even rare to find vacant positions posted for the position of social workers for people mistakenly hire sociologists for this position and until we promote the profession enough, others can do the job as I myself is using my previous sociological knowledge to practice social work” (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012).

This idea is replicated by another informant who said “currently our profession is at infancy and sociologists had already taken our position making the task of promoting the profession and its job positions, via a strong association, more important” (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). However, she supported Para-professionals for they are also the ones who communicate with the society since many NGOs work with community volunteers and home to home visitors, and giving professional training to them would help internalize and advertise the profession to the community.

In answering to a question ‘can a sociologist be a social worker’, a sociology graduate who is working as a social worker said, “I think a sociologist can be a social worker for the fact that sociology is the nearest discipline and even better close and gives a wider societal insight to be used and applied for practice in social work” (Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He further stated that in this country there is no demand for qualified and advanced social workers from the work environment which, for him, over qualifies social work graduates and make them strange to the facts in the ground since jobs are now easy to be done by people even from unrelated professions for it is not at the stage which demands the specialized role of

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professional social workers. Then he presented who is a social worker in his working environment or how it is defined;

In my area of work, the shortest definition of social worker is one who brings abandoned children to our agency from rural areas after finding them with police, who is mostly uneducated except completing general education, needed to be active, or the one who took the position of social worker in adoption agencies, just like me, to facilitate the process and finish the paper works for the children to be adopted abroad, with follow up on their health and medical reports working with women and children affairs.

(Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012)

A Para-social worker asked about her experience said that she completed grade 10 and was assigned to work as an assistant elderly care or service coordinator with an additional role given to her later to coordinate food services to children and elderly in her agency (Informant twelve; Interview, April 10, 2012).

The practitioners from abroad also shared their opinion in support of involving every potential partner in the process by arguing that “it has to be comprehensive and open for the participation of all” (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012) and “without involving all stakeholders in the process of helping, empowering disadvantaged clients is less likely to be achieved. The holistic approach guides us to help our clients to tackle the presenting problem (s) from different angles that requires the involvement of different actors” (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012).

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The discourse made by the practitioners, the Para-professional and the sociologist shows that there is a clear gap on the nature and definition of the profession and the way it is conceptualized in the practice settings. While participants agreed on the wise utilization of available resources and stakeholders to participate in the social work practice for the promotion and development of the profession, strict and conservative positions either to romanticize or disregard the profession may end disastrous.

The Social Work Practice Orientations

The orientation of a given social work practice environment can be seen in terms of the practitioners' tendency towards a direct practice or an indirect practice, while a direct practice is a social work practice limited to the relationship between a client and a social worker and an indirect practice refers to the use of available resource, materials, social networks, advocacy and relevant others in a social work intervention (Johnson, 1999). The other tendency can be towards a generalist practice or a specialist practice, while a generalist practice is a social work practice which utilizes a broad spectrum of knowledge and skill to be applied in multiple work and practice settings and a specialist practice is a social work practice targeted at using specific skills to be applied in certain specific work and practice settings (Mmaltli, 2008 and Chu, Tsui & Yan, 2009).

The other orientation can be for a remedial practice or developmental practice. While a remedial practice is a social work practice limited up to solving the current problem of the client using inputs mainly from the social worker, a developmental practice is a social work practice which goes beyond solving the current problem towards competency acknowledging and

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utilizing the strengths of the client (Blom, 2004, & Parsons et al, 2001. p. 419). The purest form of these divisions, however, cannot be found in exclusive terms while they appear together in many circumstances and one can see the close interplay and correspondence between what is referred as direct, specialist and remedial practice and among indirect, generalist and developmental practice orientations.

Having a look at the areas or fields of practice of the participants of the study may be helpful in this regard, two of them are engaged on highly vulnerable children, one is working on the case of refugees and returnees, another one works in a community development project, community based HIV care is the field of another informant, one is engaged at mental health research, the other one is working on migration and Diaspora information and another one works on youth related problems (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012, Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012, Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012, Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012, Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012, Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012, Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012, Informant three; e-mail communication, April 21, 2012). Given the circumstances, the working situation and fields of practices of the informants abroad shows how their work is sophisticated and features different kinds of orientations in a planned and cohesive manner and the case of the social workers practicing in Ethiopia is by far different from this.

As one of the informants from USA reports, he “works with participants with domestic violence, drug/alcohol, mental health issues, pregnant and parenting teens, crisis intervention, completes various assessments, develops self-sufficiency plans, conducts home visits, refers participants to community services, motivates and facilitates participant towards employment

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and monitors participant's progress" (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012) with part time engagement in family cases and "depending on client's issue with other agencies (mental health, physical health, alcohol and drug treatment providers, school, child protective service agencies, parole and probation officers etc) are involved". The other participant is engaged in program design on orphan and vulnerable children partnership project, project monitoring and evaluation and Para-social worker training curriculum development, training and teaching for Para-social workers working with orphan and vulnerable children and their families with part-time works with children, youth, community and family (Informant thirteen, e-mail communication, January 5, 2011) .

The next one is more engaged in several duties, with a major responsibility of case manager, with a variety of individual and/or group supportive services that address both short-term and long-term client needs by interviewing and assessing clients for direct services, developing a case plan for the client including written short-term and long-term goals and tasks, making referrals as needed, re-evaluating goals with clients at regular intervals, providing individual and group counseling, serving as a member of the multidisciplinary clinical case team, collaborating with other disciplines including substance abuse, legal, medical, educational, vocational, mental health professionals and other service providers, making appropriate referrals for emotional, substance abuse, legal, medical, dental, educational recreational, vocational, employment and housing needs, creating and maintain case records, including, but not limited to legal documentation, assessments, case notes, case plans, service updates, court reports, medical reports, referrals, discharge summaries, recording visits and educational information, enhancing the client environment by creating a hospitable and customer-oriented facility, and completing

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reports and maintain statistical data on an on-going basis (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Direct Practice vs. Indirect Practice

Advocated by the proponents of professionalism in social work, direct practice is viewed as a practice setting by which the one to one relationship between the client and the social worker will end-up in a successful intervention following the stages of engagement, assessment, intervention and termination. While others prefer the involvement of external parties whenever they are needed and the role of the social worker will be facilitating the use of these external resources and parties in the practice. The participants of the study preferred to tend towards the combination of the two as per the demand of the presented cases. One of them explains "I do have a professional social work relationship with the children, what they need is acceptance, being listened, reading/knowing what they are interested in or in need of, being loved, and I take care to be a person they want in this regard" (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). In addition he also tried to form a charity club for those who are extremely poor and going to drop school by coordinating teachers and other staffs to have a committee and work with other organizations and hotels, factories, community based organizations (CBOs') and local networks, in the districts by raising funds to help the kids to finish school.

Those who are working on the area of refugees, returnees, migration and community development said that they are not directly connected to clients and their work is influencing the general environment of the populations by taking administrative positions (Informant three; e-mail, April 21, 2012, Informant ten; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012 and Informant six;

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Interview, May 2, 2012). The participant who is working on vulnerable children says “other stakeholders including the community committee and volunteers are engaged in the practice” (Informant four; e-mail, April 20, 2012) claiming that his agency also utilizes available resource, materials, social networks, advocacy and relevant others in their social work interventions. Working on counseling of the youth and adult population another social worker says there is a direct form of practice between him and his clients starting from the time of engagement up to termination (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012).

One of the participants who is working with HIV project reported that their organization provides both clinical and capacity building services for the patients while the clinical services are provided to them by volunteers and nurses on the medical aspect and she is mostly busy on creating linkages and networks of assistance of the beneficiaries (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). Being considered even from the view point of people who support the idea of potential partners in the process like Para-professionals it is fair to expect that the practice would have such feature by which the isolated one to one relationships of clients and social works do not attribute.

Generalist vs. Specialist Practice

Utilizing a broad spectrum of knowledge and skill to be applied in multiple work and practice settings constitutes a generalist practice while if people are acquainted with specific skills to be applied in certain specific work and practice settings, they may prefer to engage in a specialist practice. Except for special circumstances the social workers who participated in this study are generalist practitioners which may have a direct link with the education they received

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to be a generalist social worker. None of them have reported that they have specialized in any social work practice fields and their orientation in this regard may be influenced by previous education they had from other professions too.

One of them said she is still influenced by the nursing profession she has, pointing out that she did not continue advanced trainings to specialize in this profession (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). The other one added, "I always try to apply the knowledge bases of social work in my work environment. In my practice, I also try to explore the social work elements and use the basic skills where necessary. Putting the client at the center is always my way to reach at the solution. I always look first the strengths that my client has, which is a basic concept in social work practice" (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012) which again demonstrates a generalist orientation. There is a move towards specializing by the social worker from US who said that he is working on addiction rehabilitation which for him would be important to have more dependable knowledge and skills of therapy on substance use (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Remedial vs. Developmental Practice

With a vast majority of social work client population and a few social workers would it be feasible to work on remedying the problem of clients mainly on individual basis? Or is the participation and empowerment of the general public and the specific social work populations through developmental planning, advocacy and education that would help? The next debate takes us to the preference of practitioners between a remedial practice which is limited up to solving the current problem of the client using inputs mainly from the social worker and a developmental

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practice which goes beyond solving the current problem towards competency acknowledging and utilizing the strengths of the client. The participants of this study believe that it is not yet developmental in nature since the majority of the social work environment here is supported by either limited foreign donation or scarce government budget and the beneficiaries of different services are not moving towards leading a competent life except ensuring survival.

One of the participants explains “in my program there are about 560 beneficiaries, but externally there are kids who are dropping out of school, there are also street children and kids with emergency needs. We are working to help them live and stay on daily basis instead of empowering them to lead sustainable life. The one who is going to drop out of school is supported by the money we plead from sponsors but sometimes sick children may die before the support arrives” (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). He added, “We have no wisdom to utilize the resources and the networks we have, even our agency is based on foreign donation not depending on local resources for sustainability”. Another social worker commented we have to exploit both chances since both can be applicable depending on the nature of the projects at hand arguing that even a temporary relief can contribute to the resolution of the problem (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012).

The organization of another social worker is working based on need or deficiency oriented assessments in an effort to deal with the problems of the people using the resources of the agency assuming that the community they are working with is highly impoverished (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). However, another informant opposed this thinking based on the inspiration she got after conducting community resource mapping which changed

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her opinion about strengths and assets of a community which can be used to bring a great change in the life of people for the sustenance of life (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012).

After she saw the successes and failures of different attempts, another participant commented that in order to lead clients towards self sufficiency and competency, the activities they perform to achieve these goals should be based on their interest (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). The developmental orientation is supported from a social worker in US, the practicability and resource availability being the concerns. "It has to be geared towards helping clients stand on their feet and the ultimate result is to help the clients to help themselves" (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

The Challenges in Social Work Practice

The participants of this study revealed their opinion about the existing challenges for a social work practitioner in this country. The challenges start from the education up to getting working positions. Then it continues with practicing properly, integrating theory and practice and bringing the desired change. The first one talked about the general discouraging environment which can get social workers hopeless when they are trying something wholeheartedly (Informant two; phone interview, April 4, 2012). He believes that there is no one to support them and he mentioned that what some organizations need is just a report and falsified documents to be presented to donors instead of bringing desired life changes to the clients. The other participant mentioned the "difficulty to create understanding of the modern approaches in the minds of non-professional practitioners" (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012).

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The other problem highly stressed by the informants is the relatively unknown status of the profession. One of them argues “there is no enough understanding about what the social work profession is” (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He argued, with this yet developing societal structure, and given the lack of any imposing and sophisticated influence from the profession, social work is not given the proper respect. He stated that with the existing problems in the quality of the education provided, even the educated ones associate the profession only with the prospect of joining an NGO. He suggested that the respect to the profession shall start by the professionals themselves by having strong students’ and professionals’ associations. Then, they can expect the society to respect it. He also mentioned that the profession is not recognized even by the government at the ministry level with the influence of commonly held beliefs that associate with and define social workers as charity and emergency workers.

Another social worker related it with the nature of education given for it is not localized and contextualized and he believes that it is confusing social workers in the practice environment (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). In addition, he stressed on the unfamiliarity of the country to the profession which he believes is manifested in the absence of proper vacancy positions in different government and nongovernmental organizations and he is worried about the probabilities by which people get wrong ideas about the profession thinking that anyone can do it and he is afraid that the profession would lose its attraction power and a difficulty remains a head of graduates to find jobs. For him the major responsible factor for such confusions is the absence of standardization and developed working guidelines.

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“Even finding a job is becoming very difficult” argues another informant who mentioned bureaucratic challenges and organizational policies in some organizations as possible traps for effective practice (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). She also found that convincing a non-social worker about better service provision and professional values, doing things in trying to fulfill the interest of donors due to foreign and former influence, lengthy financial procedures, and the unfamiliarity of people to the profession are the existing obstacles in her practice environment. Another social worker raised her fear that even the professionals may turn to other professions and positions as her observation of some evidences led her to assume (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012).

The other one urges for more critical reflection here, he asserts that the nature of problems social work has to address are very broad in our country and covering a wide range of problems demands a large number of professionals which is ideal for the country given the amount of time and cost it seeks to graduate professionals at large (Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012). The problem in this context according to him is aggravated by the high salary and benefit expected from the professionals who took a level of education which can be considered highly advanced in the context of the country, MSW. For him this is not going to solve these problems and he believes that large number of trained Para professionals may exert the greatest role in the development of the profession. In the absence of professionals who are committed enough to work at the bottom with the community, he asks, how it can be possible to expect the profession to be known and respected. He also mentioned the discrepancy between education and practice reality as a challenge for effectiveness after he witnessed a social worker who terminated his employment contract after 15 days due to just expectation crisis which he

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believes is crucial arguing that majority of students today are separating themselves from their community's problem and dream a problem free life and feel uneasy whenever they encounter challenging and difficult living and working conditions.

The informants from US mentioned problems that take a different shape than the problems here. One of them said, the challenges are "high case load, lack of clear agency protocol (policy) that emphasizes and encourages the integration of theory with practice while the simple explanation to this might be social workers constitute small part of the big picture" (Informant eleven, e-mail communication, April 30, 2012) and from the words of the other one; "the main challenge I had was the mismatch of my training on macro level and the practice on clinical setting (generalist social worker working on specific therapeutic environment) and one of my problem was to overcome my own bias in dealing with different culture but I have learned that from the clients themselves and my exposure in the social events" (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

Practitioners' Feedback from Practice

The feedback which can be taken from practitioners can have a paramount importance to deal with the challenges encountered and set a future platform to draw up on solutions and needed interventions. The participants of this study tried their own best to recommend for the future and their ideas highly stressed on the need for closeness and integrity among professionals through strong associations. The first one argued, "All the graduated professionals including me are planting a name for the future, and this would shape and influence the future of the profession, and helps to get it respected and standardized" (Informant two; phone interview,

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April 4, 2012). Then he commented on the need to work with unity and sharing experiences and knowledge. In order to do this he suggested, there must be a strong medium or an association that will lay down the means for case and report sharing, creating a network of communication and establishing the needed structure for licensing and registration of the professionals and standardization of the profession. The efforts generally demand a huge commitment and resilience from every graduate and student according to this participant.

It is the recommendation of another social worker that “the professional social workers are still expected to go down to the community instead of working in managerial positions and school of social work should work on more advocacy of the profession and its value” (Informant four; e-mail communication, April 20, 2012). He added after graduation social workers still need continuous trainings to update themselves with new approaches and social work materials should be developed to explore local experiences as per the existing perspectives and practical conditions.

The other one says “the first thing, as it is being done today, is spreading social work education in Addis Ababa University and other institutions” (Informant five; phone interview, April 30, 2012). He added, even if there are challenges and questions of quality it is possible to use the schools coming from abroad after employing proper evaluation and control and assigning enough teachers to make the profession more competitive as any profession. He believes that having strong networks and associations would help to avoid wrong views about the profession and people would stop considering it as a part time job and the government has to mainstream social work positions at federal, regional, city and sub city levels of bureaus. Diversifying the

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courses given to address many issues is his other suggestion after he commented for the inclusion of courses on HIV stigma and child abuse based on rigorous research.

After disclosing his surprise and frustration about the failed attempts made so far to form an association, one social worker commented that “there must be an association to work on the upcoming professional issues” (Informant six; Interview, May 2, 2012). For him, as an institution, the School of Social Work should deliver short term trainings; to revive and update practitioners since the graduates may have a doubt on what they are working is something unrelated. He urged this after he mentioned that he did not see anything like this though he worked for 5 years. Finally he put a statement about the commitment expected from social workers to adhere to the professional values completely and work for the development of the profession genuinely and accountably instead of running for money and personal success only.

One participant highly stressed on the promotion of the profession arguing that professionals themselves have to advocate our profession and urged Addis Ababa University, School of Social Work to take the lead (Informant seven; phone interview, April 22, 2012). Commenting on the necessity of the profession for the country, she said “especially in cities like Addis Ababa the professional help of social work is getting ever more needed since people are tending towards separated and individualist lives due to several factors attributed to family breakdown, population growth and urbanization which may not be the case for rural neighborhood in the country who do have relatively better communal integrity”.

Viewing it similarly with the others, one participant said “professional integrity can be enhanced if there is a strong association having an authority of licensing and a section to assure professional quality” (Informant eight; phone interview, April 19, 2012). She suggested that even

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if there is a good curriculum, the way the education is delivered should safeguard its quality while the teachers' commitment would bring a lot in this regard.

The other one prioritizes the intervention at the problems related to awareness as the fundamental one since that can facilitate the intercessions on other challenges encountered (Informant nine; phone interview, April 30, 2012). An informant from US also recommended that it is better to "facilitate experience sharing forum that would come with new knowledge to enhance the existing knowledge which is relevant to the social work practice in the ground" (Informant one; e-mail communication, April 16, 2012).

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Conclusion and Implication

Conclusion

Hauling a double responsibility of introducing relatively new profession and conducting a professional practice is what worries the mind of the participants of this study who found it hard to create a very good social work professional environment despite the challenges encountered and the progresses made so far. It is fair to say that professional social work practice has been started in the working places of these participants with good attempts to integrate theories with practice, though the road has a long way to go to reach further conclusions.

As the study indicates, there are chances by which the social work theories in action were influenced by other disciplines like sociology, nursing and psychology with the presence of theories of social work like systems theory, bio-psycho-social theory and the ecological perspective, strengths perspective, client centered approach, play therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, counseling approaches influenced by existentialist, psychoanalysis, social learning and eclectic theories. Taking the bigger picture into account, the scientific and rational instruction influenced their practice while it can be yet an indication for the beginning stage of the development of the profession and the need to work more to exert greater professional pressure.

In terms of engaging in evidence based practice there are some tendencies, though not entirely, since practitioners are not completely dependent on their expert knowledge and acknowledge client strengths arguing that they do not have to use expert knowledge instead of empathetic listening and using strength based approaches, keenness to work in line with clients interests, experience sharing of best practices were reported by informants. The postmodern

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thinking of considering the formulation of social work theory as an open construction of reality instead of fixity on objective or established knowledge is what got the attention of some informants while others tended to use the assumptions of selected theories alone. In a similar tone, due to the absence of senior specialists to receive referrals, strict scientific professional practice observed and the theories are yet being tested in the ground for relevance and with the presence of the contextualization debate, the romantic thinking of viewing social work practice as inseparable from thought was found dominant than enlightenment thinking.

Indigenization of social work was agreed by all as an assignment for future after they make statements about conducting further research, experience sharing and accumulating practice accounts. In the mean time, they reported that, there are some elements which do not need contextualization. It may not be as such very difficult to develop localized knowledge and experience useful for practice. There is incompatibility of approaches like client centered to some extent due to the hierarchical nature of the society, and there is uncontextualized education provided making the contextualization of practice challenging. Even though there are many elements found to be relevant for Ethiopian context, the education provided in Ethiopia is directly relevant for a practice in America which can be another reason to necessitate the collaboration of every stakeholder to consider the difference between the two countries and look for possible adjustments.

The professionalization and de-professionalization issue for the participants of the study should be given an attention in terms of choosing the right track to develop the profession in the country since some supported only professionals' engagement and the others argued for the presence of both professionals and Para-professionals. Mentioning the gap on the definition and

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understanding of the profession they reported that other graduates like sociologists are considered as social workers and working on the promotion of the profession is recommended as vital to develop the profession instead of taking radical positions in either of the sides.

The social work practice orientations in terms of the studied practice environments has different natures on the areas of vulnerable children, refugees and returnees, community development project, community-based HIV care, mental health research, migration and youth problems counseling while it is not sophisticated and planned enough compared with the practice experiences of graduates working abroad. Using the combination of both direct and indirect practices, the practice of the study participants did not feature one to one client social worker relations alone. The specialist form of practice is dominated by the generalist one which can be related to their training and all participants argued that there is a lot to go to put their social work practice in a developmental orientation for it is still under the influence of the remedial orientation.

The challenges of social work practice in the context of the studied practice settings by MSW graduates are;

- General discouraging work environment to get social workers hopeless for change,
- Absence of genuine interest from some organizations for real social work practice due to dependence on fictions reports and falsified mechanisms to convince donors,

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- Difficulty of easily convincing non professionals about professional matters,
- The relatively unknown and unpopular status of the profession in the country,
- The education offered with inferior quality,
- Absence of strong theoretical influence with sophisticated and practicable indigenous models,
- Uncontextualized education provided in the country leading for practitioners' dilemmas and confusions,
- Wrong perceptions of the public about the profession like viewing it as only a charity work,
- Lack of proper vacant positions,
- Difficulty of finding the right job by graduates,
- Absence of standardized practice guidelines and frameworks,
- Lack of recognition from the government or absence of mainstreaming of the profession in government organs by assuming that they are emergency workers,
- The broad and multidimensional nature of problems in the country,
- Inability of the country to graduate large number of professionals due to the presence of very few institutions providing the education,
- High salary and benefit demand from graduates,

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- Absence of committed professionals to work at the bottom with the community since they prefer administrative positions, and
- Discrepancy between theoretical knowledge from classrooms or expectation of the working environment and the reality on the ground.

The recommendations and feedbacks of the practitioners from their experience elucidate the following;

- Showing maximum professional quality and integrity from the professionals to plant a good name for the profession,
- A strong association to be a medium between the professionals for the purpose of sharing experiences, interesting, successful and unique cases,
- Introducing new knowledge and local or special circumstances,
- Laying grounds for the infrastructures needed to the standardization of the profession in terms of licensing and registration,
- Working at the bottom with the community instead of taking top administrative positions where connecting with the population is rare and indirect,
- Updating seminars and workshops with further specializing trainings for professionals and experience sharing forums and spreading the education across the country with the assurance of better quality to develop the profession as a

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competitive one with attention to diversify the courses as per the needs of the country with special mention of HIV stigma and children related issues.

- Creating linkages and effective networks between teaching institutions abroad and in the country to share resources and experiences,
- Mainstreaming of the profession across different positions and levels in governmental bureaus and nongovernmental organizations,
- Promotion and advocacy of the profession which starts by professionals themselves from giving the proper value towards spreading its values and tenacities,
- Good professional integrity by professionals between themselves, with their colleagues and developing best practices with good respect to their community and dignity of their clients and
- Interventions at the problems related to proper awareness about the profession in the part of the non-social worker community through different mechanisms of exerting a professional social work influence.

Since an attempt was made to compare the practice experience of practitioners in Ethiopia and abroad, the practice abroad was found to be more direct, remedial and specialist in terms of orientation; more scientific and rational, evidence based, postmodernist and romantic in thinking in terms of transitions than the practice in Ethiopia while the practitioners' dilemmas

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took a personalized shape and coincided in many aspects while the challenges faced are different in nature and their feedbacks corresponded in many cases.

Implications

On the bases of the data collected from the participants of this study, the researcher understands that there are many issues to be considered for the future with good and useful implications for social work education, theory and practice, research and policy. It may demand a short term or remedial interventions, a long term interventions for the development of the profession and radical approaches to be followed to change the existing infrastructure for the better future of the profession.

Implications for Social Work Theory and Practice

Realistic encounters can instruct a lot for possible changes both in theory and practice due to their role for influencing action and thought. Therefore, it was possible to learn that the practice has yet to go forth to exploit indigenous knowledge and experience and look for more compatible and practicable theories. In addition, it has to contribute to the development of better understanding and perception of the community about the profession instead of taking deep-seated positions towards professionalization or de-professionalization. Working on promoting a developmental practice is essential for the wide and multidimensional nature of problems in the country which may demand a different sort of theoretical backup explaining local developmental challenges and useful alternatives.

Continuing to fight difficult and daunting work environments is one task of a social worker to bring a desired change. Commitment to the protection of professional values and

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working on genuine data and report may be sacrificial but it is essential and key towards success both professionally and in a personal carrier. In working with non-professionals, one has to look for their educational status and area and level of expertise and their background realities to devise better mechanisms of communication and decide the level of training they need. Keeping tuned with theoretical knowledge and local situations at hand is vital to use it in applicable circumstances and show a professional power with a scientific knowledge and verified assumptions.

It is time to start developing practice guidelines and frameworks in separate practice settings by professionals which can be useful to Para-professionals, other successors and for developing a general guideline for all after the individual experiences are collected with a task for everyone to promote the profession utilizing every opportunity at hand. Social work practice shall target at the connection of client populations and community members at the real life settings for better understanding of each other and working together towards empowerment and development at all levels of micro, mezzo and macro levels.

The practice can continuously give feedback for the education in terms of minimizing the discrepancy between theoretical knowledge and expectation of the working environment with the encountered actuality. An association of social workers will be of a paramount significance to get professionals together for different common agendas. One participant mentioned that few attempts were made to get graduates together to talk about forming an association and did not succeed. Once a good network of communication is established among the initial members of the association it will be possible to add graduated professionals where ever they are.

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Implications for Policy

Clear organizational policies and job descriptions are mandatory in both governmental and nongovernmental offices in terms of clearing ambiguities on the roles and functions of social workers and other professionals. The position of social workers should be clearly identified in different government office levels and mainstreamed to open vacant positions for graduates with genuine hiring principles. Hiring other professionals for the position of a social worker based on closeness and without first posting the position for a social worker is unprofessional and it has to be challenged by all concerned bodies including the government. There should be a combined effort to facilitate job opportunities for new graduates and bring the profession towards popularity.

The chronic and vast nature of social problems in the country demand a broad and multi dimensional developmental response from policy makers and implementers, both at the macro and micro level. Evaluation and deep scrutiny on reports of different agencies for falsified and fictitious data can help a lot in ensuring true professional environment. Agencies can include good inductions and proper orientations for employees on their working conditions and providing or facilitating updating seminars and workshops and experience sharing forums as parts of their major work.

Implications for Social Work Education

Based on the feedback from the participants, in the education provided by the institutions which are offering social work training, an attention shall be given on the work of promoting the profession in addition to teaching which may include research and influencing policies. Ensuring

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better quality in the education provided and taking roles in the areas of developing the profession towards standardization is suggested for the teaching institutions. In addition, another greater attempt is expected from the schools to develop models of practice based on indigenous knowledge and experience to provide a contextualized education which is considered as the first task in terms of contextualizing the practice according to the practitioners.

The education curriculum can take into consideration the wrong perceptions infiltrating the profession and act on the ways of looking for interventions targeting the problem thereby contribute to minimize the inconsistency between expectation and tangible working circumstances. Expanding social work education across the country can help to produce more professionals to engage in the practice and develop the profession's status in the country which can be augmented by effective partnerships among the schools whilst this would facilitate the presence of experience sharing forums and updating workshops and seminars and addition of further specializing education and trainings for professionals in the teaching institutions.

The demand from the ground clearly tells that other graduates like sociologists are overtaking the positions to be filled by social workers and this may be utilized by offering more social work courses for such closer departments and work aggressively for the exclusion of people from unrelated disciplines from taking positions of social workers. Given the high salary demand of the master's level graduated professionals and incompatibility of working positions and their interests, it is better to train generalist social workers at the first degree and diploma levels. This would help to produce more graduates for the country and address the needs of the community more practically. Providing a specialized masters level education of social work to produce competent professionals to lead their juniors in an effective path of developing the

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profession will be of imperative significance too. This is suggested by the researcher for the fact that the wide range of developmental challenges in the country demand both enormous generalist and specialist professional engagement with the collaboration of potential partners. In this context, the specialized education on social development, community development and community health and population groups of age like children youth and elderly is very essential. As Shawky commented in 1973, "the majority of the African population is living in rural and semi-urban areas seem to be real misfits using any kind of measure in the world" (p. 53), it is time to take a highly developmental orientation in the education and practice instead of focusing on short term solutions and remedies due to the presence of majority of a population to be served by professionals unlike the few misfortunate's in the west.

Implications for Social Work Research

Future research can target at exploring local experiences of best practices to be shared for all with further exploration of challenges of social work theory and practice integration and promoting and introducing successful practice guidelines and frameworks developed by professionals separately. Other ways of conceptualizing and understanding the profession may be revealed with further research and the practical challenges of forming an association can be enlisted. Identifying the areas for further specializations and updating trainings can be assessed and used for action.

Better ways of promoting the profession can be known if an inquiry is conducted on the major strengths and pitfalls of previous attempts made to promote the profession. Indigenization of social work can be facilitated if investigation of the link between the unique local cases and

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experiences and the profession is started. Evaluative research can help to test and verify major practice models and theoretical approaches in use today for application in our context.

Looking for the factors behind absence of mainstreaming of the profession especially in the government offices and reasons for scarcity of vacant positions can help to make necessary and useful recommendations. Continuous research on the contributions of Para-professionals can be a very good input for the thought and action on the trends of professionalization and de-professionalization. The educational quality problems can be researched to come up with practical challenges and solutions for contextualizing the education.

An assessment on the discrepancy between the benefits and salary standard expectation of professionals and the actuality can help to devise better mechanisms. Furthermore, the above cases demonstrate that this area is not yet covered by a research and many issues remained unexplained for this research was only a prelude inquiry. In doing so, the extent and coverage of professional social work practice can be researched more in the future to add on the available knowledge in this regard and contribute for the development of the profession in the country.

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Annex A. A Questionnaire for Preliminary Survey

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

A questionnaire for Preliminary study on Professional Social Work Practice in Ethiopia from the experience of graduates of School of Social Work MSW program

Dear graduates,

- ❖ This is a simple questionnaire to identify potential respondents and study participants for a thesis to be undertaken in this year on the title “Professional Social Work in Ethiopia: Integration of Theory and Practice” for a completion of MSW.
- ❖ I collected your addresses from the school of social work and I hope you all will be delighted to contribute your part for the development of the profession in our country and participating in this research would help.
- ❖ I am planning to carry out the research using both quantitative surveys, through self-administered questionnaires via e. mail, and in depth interviews with practitioners who are found to be willing and reachable, working in the country.
- ❖ The following questions are prepared to know where the practitioners are working and living, the status of their progress both professionally and academically and the responses of these questions will be helpful to decide the number of people who will be participants of the study and to determine the budget needed to conduct the study.
- ❖ The study participants will be send questions prepared in reference to their working contexts and if they are willing for in depth interview they will be contacted by the researcher in the place of their work or better convenience.
- ❖ Practitioners living abroad who are willing to take part in the study will be send questions especially related to the nature of training they got in Ethiopia and the practice context in their current country of residence or study abroad.
- ❖ Replying this e. mail soon and willingness to participate in the study will be highly appreciated, without forgetting the motivational gifts, and can be considered as one committed and simple response to the development of the profession.

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Instruction: Putting 'X' or '√' in the boxes near to your answers or writing the answer on the boxes and spaces provided is just enough. If you have more than one answer it is possible to put the marks in more than one boxes of the answers.

1. Sex; Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age;

3. Living in; Ethiopia ☐ Abroad ☐

3.1. If Ethiopia, where?

Town/city: -

Sub city/zone: -

Woreda/Kebele: -

3.2. If Abroad, where?

Country: -

City/state/county: -

4. MSW Graduation status;

Graduated

☐

Withdrawn

☐

Thesis incomplete

☐

Quitted

☐

5. Employment Status;

Permanently employed

☐

temporarily employed

☐

Part time employment

☐

Self employment

☐

Job searching

☐

6. Further education status;

Pursuing other Masters/bachelor degree

☐

completed other master/bachelor degree

☐

Pursuing pre Doctorial

☐

Completed pre Doctorial

☐

Pursuing PhD

☐

Completed PhD

☐

Post Doctorial

☐

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7. Working in;

8. Academic institution ☐ Non academic institution ☐ both ☐

8.1. Name of the employing organizations/institutions;

1.

2.

3.

8.2. Full address of the institutions/organizations;

1.

2.

3.

8.3. Area of non-academic engagement (as a permanent, temporary, self or part time job) in;

Children	☐	Youth	☐	Elderly	☐
Community	☐	Health	☐	Correctional center	☐
School	☐	Court setting	☐	Family	☐
Other specify					

8.4. Your position, major responsibilities and duties;

8.5. Description of the client population and its environment;

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9. Willingness to participate in this research;

Willing

☐

Unable

☐

9.1. If willing, in what way?

Filling e. mail questionnaire

☐

participating in in-depth interview

☐

both

☐

10. Current usable address;

Phone number; Personal Cell phone: -

Personal Fixed Phone: -

E-mail address: -

Office address: -

- By chance, if it is another person who found this message I will appreciate if he/she answers the questions as much as possible or answer only question no. 9 on behalf of the targeted person.

Eyoel Nigussie, MSW student 2011/12

Thank you in advance

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Annex B. Questions sent via e. mail to social workers living abroad.

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Questions for a study on Professional Social Work Practice from the experience of graduates of
School of Social Work AAU, MSW program

Dear informants,

- ❖ This is a questionnaire for a thesis to be undertaken in this year on the title “Professional Social Work in Ethiopia: Integration of Theory and Practice” for a completion of MSW.
- ❖ Willingness to participate in the study and replying to the questions will be highly appreciated and can be considered as one committed and simple response to the development of the profession.

Background Questions

1. Sex; _____
2. Age; _____
3. Country of living: _____
4. Residence; Town/city: - _____
Sub city/zone: - _____
Woreda/Kebele: - _____

5. Employment Status:

Permanently employed

☐

temporarily employed

☐

Part time employment

☐

Self employment

☐

Job searching

☐

a. If employed, working in;

Academic institution

☐

Non academic institution

☐

both

☐

b. Name of the employing organizations/institutions;

c. Full address of the institutions/organizations;

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d. Your position, major responsibilities and duties;

e. Description of the client population and its environment;

6. Area of non-academic engagement (as a permanent, temporary, self or part time job) in;

Children	☐	Youth	☐	Elderly	☐
Community	☐	Health	☐	Correctional center	☐
School	☐	Court setting	☐	Family	☐

Other specify

7. Further education status;

Pursuing other Masters/bachelor degree ☐ completed other master/bachelor degree ☐

Pursuing PhD ☐ Completed PhD ☐ Post Doctorial ☐

Theory and Practice Integration Questions

8. Would you tell me what theories from what discipline are used in your practice?
9. Have you got any chance to engage in therapeutic practice using psychoanalytic theories?
10. Do you depend solely on your expert knowledge and experience to help clients?
11. How the practice environment is like in terms of being client centered, empowerment oriented and based on best practice?

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12. Would you tell me how theories are used in the practice environment, is it using all established theories rigidly or flexibly?
13. How do you integrate different theories and assumptions for your practice if you are not devoted towards using a single theory?
14. How do you see the congruence between the western theories and models you learned in the class and the practice context you are working in right now?
15. Is the social work knowledge and skill you acquired in this country useful for a practice in your country?
16. Would you tell me your position in relation to sticking to the professional standards in social work practice with the engagement of only trained social workers in the process?
17. Do you support the idea that social work practice should be more participatory with democratic relationship between both professional and para-professional practitioners and co-equal clients with a wise incorporation of all resourceful people in social work practice?
18. Is your practice engagement limited to the relationship between a client and a social worker without the involvement of external others?
19. Do you use of available resource, materials, social networks, advocacy and relevant others in a social work intervention?
20. Would you tell me your experience in relation to using a broad spectrum of knowledge and skill to be applied in multiple work and practice settings?
21. Do you depend on specialized and specific skills and knowledge on the area of your practice settings?
22. Does the practice go beyond solving the current problem towards competency, acknowledging and utilizing the strengths of the client or it is the limited up to solving the current problem of the client using inputs mainly from the social worker?
23. Would you tell me the challenges you faced in integrating theories with your practice?
24. May I ask, if you want to suggest and recommend from your experience in terms of developing theoretical knowledge during training and practice?

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Annex C. Questions sent to social workers in Ethiopia via e. mail and used to interview people in person

Addis Ababa University

School of Social Work

Questions for a study on Professional Social Work Practice from the experience of graduates of School of Social Work AAU, MSW program

Dear informants,

- ❖ This is a questionnaire for a thesis to be undertaken in this year on the title “Professional Social Work in Ethiopia: Integration of Theory and Practice” for a completion of MSW.
- ❖ Willingness to participate in the study and replying to the questions will be highly appreciated and can be considered as one committed and simple response to the development of the profession.

Background Questions

1. Sex; _____
2. Age; _____
3. Country of living: _____
4. Residence; Town/city: - _____
 Sub city/zone: - _____
 Woreda/Kebele: - _____
5. Employment Status:

Permanently employed	☐	temporarily employed	☐
Part time employment	☐	Self employment	☐
		Job searching	☐

 - a. If employed, working in;

Academic institution	☐	Non academic institution	☐	both	☐
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 - b. Name of the employing organizations/institutions;

 - c. Full address of the institutions/organizations;

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d. Your position, major responsibilities and duties;

e. Description of the client population and its environment;

6. Area of non-academic engagement (as a permanent, temporary, self or part time job) in;

Children	☐	Youth	☐	Elderly	☐
Community	☐	Health	☐	Correctional center	☐
School	☐	Court setting	☐	Family	☐
Other specify	☐				☐

7. Further education status;

Pursuing other Masters/bachelor degree ☐ completed other master/bachelor degree ☐

Pursuing PhD ☐ Completed PhD ☐ Post Doctorial ☐

Theory and Practice Integration Questions

8. Would you tell me what theories from what discipline are used in your practice?

9. Have you got any chance to engage in therapeutic practice using psychoanalytic theories?

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16. Is your practice engagement limited to the relationship between a client and a social worker without the involvement of external others?
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18. Would you tell me your experience in relation to using a broad spectrum of knowledge and skill to be applied in multiple work and practice settings?
19. Do you depend on specialized and specific skills and knowledge on the area of your practice settings?
20. Does the practice go beyond solving the current problem towards competency, acknowledging and utilizing the strengths of the client or it is the limited up to solving the current problem of the client using inputs mainly from the social worker?
21. Would you tell me the challenges you faced in integrating theories with your practice?
22. May I ask, if you want to suggest and recommend from your experience in terms of developing theoretical knowledge during training and practice?

Thank you in advance

Eyoel Nigussie; MSW student, 2010-2012

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Annex D. Consent Form for Informants

I _____ here by agree to participate in an interview carried out by Eyoel Nigussie for the purpose of research.

I acclaim that my participation in this research project is voluntary but not binding and I may withdraw from the project at any time if I wish to do so without any penalty.

I have been informed about the purpose of the study, and that it is voluntary and I am guaranteed that every attempt will be made to keep my details confidential.

I agree that my interview will be recorded on to an audio tape or a cell phone and this will be later transcribed on paper, after which it can be used as an evidence of conducting the research by the researcher to be listened by the advisor and examining committee. I have been informed that my responses will only be used for this particular research project.

Signed at _____ on _____ day of _____ (month) _____ (year) _____

For further queries; contact me via,

eyoel_n@yahoo.com / 0913042524

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Declaration

I the undersigned, affirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of information used for the thesis have been fittingly acknowledged.

Name; Eyoel Nigussie

Signature; 

Date; 2/7/2012

Approval by the Advisor

Name

Signature

Date

Wassie Behere



7/3/2012