

# The Limited Scope of Social Work Intervention at Zunheboto Sadar, Nagaland, India: An In-depth Study on the Vulnerabilities Faced by Adolescents

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## ABSTRACT

This research investigates the limitations and challenges defining the scope of social work intervention in Zunheboto Sadar, an idyllic township in Nagaland, India, with a population of approximately 31,100. The study focuses on the constrained access to essential services, particularly affecting the adolescent community. Issues such as illicit drug use, mobile phone addiction, anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem are explored. The research unveils the harsh reality of vulnerable adolescents navigating these challenges with minimal assistance, as the sole NGO in the region primarily targets individuals aged 18 and above. The inquiry also highlights the community's widespread lack of awareness regarding the consequences of these issues. The absence of comprehensive social work services emphasizes the urgent need for a broader range of interventions in Zunheboto Sadar, crucial for addressing the predicaments faced by its adolescent population.

**Keywords:** Adolescence, Awareness, Intervention, Social work, Adolescent vulnerabilities

## INTRODUCTION

“Social work has risen out of global private and regulative partnerships; subsequently, it is established in human social emotionally supportive networks of nations. Related to its emphasis on forestalling and settling issues in psychosocial functioning, the profession aims to empower individuals and recognize and expand on the qualities in individuals and their networks (Suppes & Wells, 2013). A momentous degree of kid and family administration is introduced by capable social workers. While individuals frequently perform this significant work without fitting training or experience, a social work degree stays the best proficient groundwork for the field. workers with this foundation can be instrumental in working on the nature of service. in addition, In-home services are given to a family to assist individuals with residing together more securely and amicably in their own homes. They are preventive in direction”. “Counselling parents has always been a fundamental part of working with children, in any event, when children live with more extended family individuals or even in foster homes. Intervention with a child’s biological parents stays fundamental to the work with the child, as a result of social workers persevering through conviction about the significance of family identity to the child’s feeling of individual personality and given the profession’s obligation to the idea of family safeguarding”, “numerous social workers worked under the direction and heading of psychiatrists in child direction, the specialists treated the children while the social worker ‘directed’ the parents, hence introducing the idea of ‘parent direction’. In circumstances in which a

family failed or on the other hand, was at risk for neglecting to meet the children's necessities, the child welfare assistance framework takes the job of the parent's substitute" (Webb, 2003)

Zunheboto Sadar is a small place in the middle of Nagaland, India, with around 31,100 people living there. Surprisingly, this peaceful town hides serious problems that affect its young people. The biggest issue here is that they don't have access to important services they need. This study looks closely at how in this place most populations are unaware of social work and the important role social workers can play in helping these young people since teenagers are dealing with difficult problems like using drugs secretly, being too addicted to their phones, feeling very anxious or sad, and not feeling good about themselves. What's even more troubling is that these young people know about their problems but can't get the help they need.

The study further reveals the reality that the solitary non-governmental organization (NGO) operating in this area is limited, it chiefly targets individuals of 18 and above years, thereby inadvertently excluding the adolescent demographic from its ambit. This unfortunate limitation means that young people's needs continue to be ignored, and they are left feeling uncertain and hopeless. Compounding the issue both the young people and their parents in this community don't know much about these issues. They are not prepared to deal with how serious these problems are, making the situation even more dangerous. People in the community are hesitant to let social workers help, especially in the realm of child upbringing. These matters are often deemed intensely private, and the concept of entrusting outsiders, including social workers, with such responsibilities is met with resistance. According to the research conducted in 2018 at Zunheboto by Awomi the main findings were:

- 57% of the respondents actively involved in drug abuse were found to be adolescents between the age group 13 years – 19 years.
- The reason found behind adolescents' easy addiction to drugs was; peer pressure, lack of proper parental guidance, and availability of drugs.
- 31 drug stores were identified in Zunheboto town and some drugs were easily accessible from the seller's residents as well
- Several health issues as a result of drug addiction were identified among the adolescents such as; HIV, Hepatitis C, frequent constipation, loss of appetite, and sleeping disorders.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was conducted in Zunheboto Sadar, a region located in the Nagaland state. To gain a comprehensive understanding of various aspects, the researcher opted for an exploratory research design. One of the main objectives of this research work is to study the scope of social work Intervention. A total of 300 participants from Zunheboto Sadar were selected for this research. This group comprised 200 mothers currently raising children within the age range of 0 (including pregnant mothers) to 19 years, and 100 adolescents aged between 13 to 19 years. This selection aimed to provide a well-rounded perspective on the understanding of social work and its scope from both the maternal and adolescent viewpoints. For participant selection, a purposive non-probability sampling method was employed. This method was chosen because it focused exclusively on mothers with children within specific age brackets and adolescents, ensuring that these two groups were the primary focus of the study. To gather comprehensive data for the research, a combination of primary and secondary data sources was utilized. Primary data collection methods included observation, interview schedules, and case studies. Additionally, secondary data sources such as books, articles, and journals were referenced to augment the research's depth and breadth.

Data analysis followed a structured process, which included deductive coding, classification, tabulation, and graphical representation. These methods were employed to enhance data comprehensibility. Furthermore, statistical analysis using SPSS software was conducted to summarize and present the quantitative aspects of

the data. In summary, this research was conducted in Zunheboto Sadar, Nagaland, adopting an exploratory research design to investigate topics related to motherhood and adolescent crises. Data was collected from 300 participants, consisting of mothers and adolescents, using a purposive sampling method. The research employed both primary and secondary data sources, with various data analysis techniques utilized to gain insights into the research objectives.

## DATA ANALYSIS

**Adolescent Crises:** The crisis is universal in present-day life and influences individuals of all ages. As opposed to the fantasy that the enchanted long stretches of experience childhood are a period of sincere innocence and lighthearted play, the truth of the preteen years, as that of later life incorporates encounters that incite outrage, envy, dread, and melancholy as well as euphoria and joy. Crisis indicates how the “individual sees and accepts that the occasion or circumstance is an unbearable trouble that surpasses their assets and capacity to adapt. This accentuation on the impression of the occasion, as opposed to the actual occasion, fittingly causes one to notice the peculiar hidden importance of the circumstance to each person (Webb, 2015). In the study, the researcher attempted to find what are the crises observed by mothers in adolescents and the real crises encountered by the adolescents which are categorized differently by gender

Adolescent Crises (View of Mothers)

Crisis Encountered	Frequency	Percentage
Addiction to Mobile phone	51	25.5%
Addiction to tobacco and drugs	46	23%
Sleep Pattern Disturbances	40	20%
Academic Problem	34	17%
Emotional and behavioral problems	29	14.5%
Total	200	100%

The above table shows the different adolescent crises observed by mothers in upbringing an adolescent can be categorized into six main categories: the highest crisis i.e., 51 respondents (25.5%) mothers observed is an addiction to the mobile phone, the researcher finds that technology can negatively influence adolescents, mothers with the adolescent are struggling with this crisis which is evident in this research, the researcher observed that adolescents are getting more dependent on the mobile phone as they are yet to grasp the significance of life and time management and even be concerned for their future. Here the researcher also observed that the right monitoring and education on the proper usage of mobile phones by adolescents is also found negligent in the study area. The second crisis found i.e., by 46 respondents (23%) in the study is an addiction to tobacco and drugs, mothers are battling with this crisis, here the researcher finds that adolescents are widely exposed to tobacco and drugs for multiple reasons and mothers are found vulnerable in the circumstances on dealing with this crisis. The third crisis found in the study that is responded to by 40 respondents (20%) is sleep pattern disturbances, here the researcher finds that adolescents are mostly found to sleeping very late at night and likewise waking up late which is also found to be affecting their education and social life and their entire productivity.

The fourth crisis found in the study i.e., responded to by 34 respondents (17%) is an academic problem, here the researcher finds that mothers are struggling with adolescents who are found to be losing their interest in studying and how their performances are hugely affected and mothers are more terrified about the consequences. The last category found in the study is emotional and behavioral problems that are responded to by 29 respondents (14.5%), here the researcher finds that mothers are struggling to understand what an adolescent is going through they are reactive, easily annoyed, and loaded with anger The researcher finds

the unstable emotional and behavioral changes in this stage which are influencing a parent-child conflict where both are found to be helpless and vulnerable.

Adolescent Crises (View of Adolescents)

Crises Encounter	Frequency (Male)	Percentage (Male)	Frequency (Female)	Percentage (Female)
Vulnerability to addiction	29	46.15%	13	31.71 %
Low Self Esteem	13	22.3%	17	41.46%
Loss of Interest	10	16.95%	7	17.7%
Anxiety & Depression	7	11.86%	4	9.79%
Total	59	100%	41	100%

The above table shows the different crises encountered by adolescents which brings out the different crises encountered between male and female adolescents. Here the researcher finds some crises that are responded to by adolescents are found same as the crises answered by mothers. In the study, the common crisis encountered by adolescents is categorized into four main categories: Vulnerability to addiction, and low self-esteem. Loss of interest (Academic), anxiety, and depression, however, the differences are found between male and female adolescents, the most common crisis found among male adolescents is vulnerability to addiction which is responded to by 29 male respondents (46.15%) which includes; addiction to mobile phones, addiction to drugs and tobacco, on the other hand, the most common crisis found among female adolescent is low self-esteem which is responded to by 17 female respondents (41.46%). The second common crisis found in the study among male adolescents is low self-esteem which was responded to by 13 respondents (23%), on the other hand, the second common crisis found among female adolescents is vulnerability to addiction which is responded to by 13 respondents (31.17%) which is found to be an addiction to mobile phones. The third common crisis is found for both male and female adolescents and that is loss of interest in studying which is responded to by 10 male respondents (16.95 %) and 7 female respondents (17.7%). The fourth common crisis is another common crisis for both male and female adolescents and that is depression and anxiety responded to by 7 male respondents (11.86%) and 4 female respondents (9.79%).

**Scope of Social Work:** “Social work with children is a comprehensive field of practice, never again might a social worker at any point center fundamentally around a child’s inward world, nor will it do the trick to mediate only with the child’s family or social environment. A diverse methodology is vital for understanding, just as it is fundamental in arranging and doing helping mediations”. One of the objectives of this research is to find the significance of social work intervention in child upbringing and managing adolescent crises in relevance to how much the respondents are aware of social work and the importance of its intervention multiple studies show the importance of social work intervention and how “Social workers should figure out how to examine a child’s reality and see the wide picture prior to figuring out where and how to start the aiding system. The ability to tune in, notice, and identify helps experts, who should have the option to see through a child’s eyes to understand what is going on with both head and heart” (Webb, 2003). The researcher attempted to find how much social work intervention is relevant in the study area.

**Awareness of the Social Work Profession among mothers**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	21	10.5%
No	179	89.5%
Total	200	100%

## Awareness of the Social work profession among adolescents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	7%	93%
No	93	93%
Total	100	100%

The above tables show how much the social work profession is known to mothers and adolescents, it was found that 21 mothers (10.5%) and 7 adolescent respondents (7%) are aware of social work existence, and the remaining respondents i.e., 179 Mothers (89.5%) and 93 adolescent respondents (93%) are still unaware of social work profession. In the study, the researcher finds that the social work profession is still unknown to many as an academic discipline or a practiced-based belief, they generally believe that social work is a reference to mass cleaning or doing social services in a group which has nothing to with academy and profession, therefore, the researcher finds how the scope of social work intervention is still very limited in this study area where the researcher finds that social work intervention and practice need more introduction because without understanding the role of what social worker can play people will be hesitant to let social workers intervene or assist, especially when children upbringings are more of a private matter. The unpopularity of the social work profession shows the unavailability of services provided by a social worker in this study area which depicts the urgent need for NGOs or any social services in this area. Social problems are increasing and how social workers are very much needed in this area to assist families and mothers, in particular, to help them understand and deal with these problems.

## KEY FINDINGS

1. **Adolescent Vulnerabilities:** The study, done carefully and accurately, has uncovered a serious problem. Many teenagers in Zunheboto Sadar are caught up in difficult situations. They are dealing with things like using drugs, being addicted to their phones, struggling with Depression and anxiety, and not feeling good about themselves. What's even more concerning is that a lot of adolescents are going through these problems, which shows how serious it is. Surprisingly, even though these teenagers know they have these problems, they don't have enough ways to get help and support to deal with them.
2. **Limited Access to Support:** The main problem for teenagers in Zunheboto Sadar is that there aren't enough support systems available to help them. This is because the only non-governmental organization (NGO) in the area mainly helps people who are 18 years or older, which means they don't focus on teenagers. Sadly, this exclusion has left young people without important sources of help, making their existing problems even worse and making it harder for them to grow and develop. Social work intervention is still far from reach since no social worker is working in the community providing any kind of services.
3. **Lack of Awareness:** The research revealed a significant deficiency in awareness, both among adolescents and parents, regarding the complexities and consequences of the vulnerabilities affecting this demographic. Many parents are inadequately equipped and informed to effectively address these multifaceted challenges. This knowledge gap exacerbates the dearth of available support, perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability among adolescents.
4. **Hesitation Towards Social Work Intervention:** The study has shown that many people in the community are hesitant to let social workers help them, especially when it comes to issues like raising children and family problems. They think these things are very private and should not be shared with outsiders, including social workers.

## CONCLUSION

In summary, this research study strongly emphasizes the need for immediate and comprehensive action in Zunheboto Sadar, Nagaland. The current social work interventions are limited in scope, mainly serving adults and leaving vulnerable Adolescents without the necessary support. Furthermore, there is a lack of awareness among both Adolescents and parents, which complicates the situation. Local authorities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community leaders, and stakeholders must work together to establish a wide range of social work services in Zunheboto Sadar. Additionally, public awareness campaigns and educational programs should be launched to dispel misconceptions and promote the benefits of social work interventions. These efforts are essential for social workers to effectively assist adolescents and parents in navigating the challenges of adolescence and addressing vulnerability. This research work calls for urgent action. Expanding social work interventions in Zunheboto Sadar is not just a good idea; it is a critical necessity. This initiative has the potential to bring about significant positive changes and improve the lives of the town's adolescents. Through collective action, this community can create a brighter, more hopeful future where adolescents have the resources and support to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives, free from the dangers of vulnerability. Given the comprehensive findings of this research and their significant implications, it is unquestionably vital to broaden the scope of social work intervention in Zunheboto Sadar. The limitations and deficiencies identified in this study underscore the urgency of reimagining and revitalizing the social support system in the region. To address the complex challenges facing Zunheboto Sadar's adolescent population, a multifaceted approach is essential.

The community stands at a crossroads, facing a choice between perpetuating a cycle of vulnerability and despair or embracing change and investing in comprehensive support systems for its youth. Expanding social work services and implementing robust public awareness initiatives have the potential to transform the lives of Zunheboto Sadar's adolescents. This is not just a matter of social responsibility but a moral imperative to ensure that these young lives are given the opportunities, guidance, and support needed to overcome their challenges and realize their full potential. By doing so, Zunheboto Sadar can usher in an era of hope and empowerment, equipping adolescents to face life's challenges with resilience and confidence, ultimately shaping a brighter future for themselves and their community.

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