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| Collective Empowerment and Social Mobilization: a comparative analysis of experiences from social work in Mumbai and Stockholm |
| **Abstract:** |
| Cities like Mumbai in India and Stockholm in Sweden have known an increasing level of social exclusion and marginalization of vulnerable groups within the communities as a consequence of both intra and inter country migration resulted by globalization and neo-liberal thrust. Within this particular context, social workers are facing numerous challenges regarding collective empowerment and social mobilization as a strategy for social action. Using a comparative approach, the aim of this study is to explore how collective empowerment and social mobilization are being undertaken by social workers within marginalized urban settings. Deonar-Mumbai, India and Tensta -Stockholm, Sweden were used for data collection. The research participants for this study were 12 key informants from 2 social work organizations from each setting. Semi-structured interview questionnaire was used for collecting the data and the gathered data were analyzed with the help of Atlas-ti 6.2 using critical discourse analysis method. The main findings are that in Mumbai the beneficiary groups mainly consist of intra-country immigrants, while in Stockholm inter-country immigrants are pre-dominant. Social work in Mumbai is conducted in a context of extreme poverty and most of the work is within the informal welfare sector, while in Stockholm most social work is being done within the public sector under a structured welfare model. Informants from both Mumbai and Stockholm described their respective contexts as urban areas of advanced marginality, with social exclusion, unequal living conditions, high rates of unemployment, and multiple social problems. In Stockholm interventions are aimed towards getting people together, strengthening the social networks and trying to relate the vulnerable people to the surrounding “established” communities. But there seems to be no direct aim of social mobilization towards social actions and movements for change at the more structural level. In Mumbai a key aspect of community based social work is organizing people for social mobilization, collective empowerment and social action, in order to strengthen the power of marginalized groups, and to achieve social change and community development. A concluding remark emanating from the study is that, community based social work in Stockholm is generally focused on coping; while social work in Mumbai is more focused on social change through collective social movements and actions. |