

## 2

## The Role of the Mental Health Social Work Professionals in Dealing with the Psychological Problems Caused by the Covid 19 Pandemic

**B.G.I.M. Samarasinghe**

*Training Officer, Training Division, National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka.*

**A.M.K.L. Adikari**

*Training Officer, Training Division, National Institute of Social Development, Sri Lanka.*

**Abstract:** This study focuses on the covid-19 epidemic, one of the recent most devastating and catastrophic events in the Sri Lankan context. It explores the psychological problems faced by people during the covid-19 period and the role of the mental health social worker in alleviating these problems. This study is a quantity based qualitative research. Twenty mental health social workers who mediated for communities during the covid-19 pandemic were selected as the sample under the purposive sampling method. Colombo District was selected as the study area. The main reason for this was that this district was subjected to more restrictions than other districts during the Covid 19 pandemic period. Interviews were used for data collection and this was done to collect qualitative data. Data analysis was performed under the method of narrative analysis using cognitive theory and functional perspective. The study has shown that changes over time have had

an impact on a person's mental health as well as their social status. Similarly, social changes have also affected the mental health of individuals. Mental health impact of Covid-19 can be divided into two main sections; mental health issues and mental disorders. The role of the mental health social worker is to accurately assess problems and make relevant referrals, to intervene at the individual and family level, to assess the consequences of such psychological problems and to address issues through coordination with relevant parties, as well as through using mental health methods. In macro level, the mental health social worker conducts awareness programmes as well as various programmes to equip people to face the psychological problems.

**Key words:** Psychological problems, Covid-19 pandemic, Mental Health Social Work, Sri Lanka and Human wellbeing.

## 1.INTRODUCTION

The various social problems that arise from time to time affect different aspects of the life of an individual. The problems that arise from the society impact very strongly on the psychological aspects of a person's life. Thus, a person's mental health profile can be seen as a factor that has a strong impact on a person's residual aspect. In recent years, there has been an increase in acknowledgement of the important role mental health plays in achieving global development goals, as illustrated by the inclusion of mental health in the Sustainable Development Goals. Mental health encompasses emotional, psychological and social well-being. It influences cognition, perception, and behaviour. It also determines how an individual handles stress, interpersonal relationships, and decision-making. Mental health includes subjective well-being, perceived self-efficacy, autonomy, competence, intergenerational dependence and self-actualization of one's intellectual and emotional potential, among others ([https://www.who.int/stress/mental\\_health](https://www.who.int/stress/mental_health)).

'Since Covid-19 was declared a global health emergency on 31st January 2020, more than 126 million cases have been reported globally, with the number of deaths exceeding 2.5 million' (Rohanachandra, 2021, p.188). Considering this, this study aimed to find out how the covid-19 epidemic situation affected the mental well-being of individuals. The role of the social worker can be cited as one of the professionals who can intervene for the mental well-being of individuals. Thus, this paper discusses the role of the mental health social work professional in dealing with the psychological effects of the covid-19 epidemic.

Covid-19 pandemic can be described as a condition that has a direct impact on the life of an individual as it has spread rapidly in many developed as well as under developed countries around the world. It first spread from China. The corona virus is a large group of viruses commonly found in the genus SARS virus. The virus causes respiratory infections in humans, but can be fatal in rare cases. It can cause diarrhea in cows and pigs, and upper respiratory infections in birds ([www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). 2021-11-23). Early symptoms include fever, cough and shortness of breath. This is most common in pneumonia symptoms, which can sometimes damage the kidneys. In Severe conditions of corona virus, what is critical is the management of pneumonia, management of kidney failure and the death (The world health report 2001 – Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope).

It is clear that various studies have been conducted on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic locally and well as globally. WHO Global Health Estimates for frequency of mental disorders are aligned with Global Burden Disease study estimates. The brief summarizes recent estimates of the Global Burden of Disease 2020 study. This brief is also based on evidence from research commissioned by WHO, including an umbrella review of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (published up to October 2021) and an update to a living systematic review (updated to September 2021), and other relevant WHO publications. Literature searches in commissioned reviews were not restricted by language.

This study revealed the pandemic has led to a worldwide increase in mental health problems, including widespread depression and anxiety. People living with pre-existing mental disorders are also at greater risk of severe illness and death from Covid-19 and should be considered a risk group upon diagnosis of infection. Overall, data indicated that suicide rates in most countries did not rise

early in the pandemic. However, there were indications of increased risk in young people and the longer-term impact of the pandemic and associated economic recession on mental health and suicide rates remains a concern, given the well-recognized link between suicidal behaviours and economic hardship. Finally, before Covid-19, only a minority of people with mental health problems received treatment. Studies show that the pandemic has further widened the mental health treatment gap, and outpatient mental health services have been particularly disrupted. WHO recognizes these impacts and continues to view mental health as an essential health service that must be continued during the Covid-19 pandemic. Likewise, WHO Member States have emphasized the importance of scaling up mental health services and psychosocial supports as an integral component of universal health coverage and in preparedness, response and recovery for public health emergencies. In response to the pandemic, WHO and partners have developed wide range of resources to address mental health needs during the pandemic and continue to work to promote resilience and recovery (WHO, 2022, p.6).

The study on Prevalence of anxiety and depression during Covid-19 in South Asia examined the impact of this pandemic on South Asian countries. This was conducted as cross-sectional studies on eight major bibliographic data bases and additional sources up to October 12, 2020, that reported the prevalence of anxiety or depression in any of the eight South Asian countries. A random-effects model was used to calculate the pooled proportion of anxiety and depression.

According to this study, a total of 35 studies representing 41,402 participants were included in this review. The pooled prevalence of anxiety in 31 studies with a pooled sample of 28,877 was 41.3% (95% confidence interval [CI]: 34.7–48.1,  $I^2 = 99.18\%$ ). Moreover, the pooled prevalence of depression was 34.1% (95% CI: 28.9–39.4,  $I^2 = 99\%$ ) among 37,437 participants in 28 studies. Among the South Asian countries, India had a higher number of studies, whereas Bangladesh and Pakistan had a higher pooled prevalence of anxiety and depression. No studies were identified from Afghanistan, Bhutan, and Maldives. Studies in this review had high heterogeneity, high publication bias confirmed by Egger's test, and varying prevalence rates across sub-groups (Hossain, Rahman, Trisha, Tasnim, Nuzhath, Hasan, Clark, Das, McKyer, and Ping Ma, 2021, p.01).

It also reveals that, “South Asian countries have high prevalence of anxiety and depression, suggesting a heavy psychosocial burden during this pandemic. Clinical and public mental health interventions should be prioritized alongside improving the social determinants of mental health in these countries. Lastly, a low number of studies with high heterogeneity require further research exploring the psychosocial epidemiology during COVID-19, which may inform better mental health policymaking and practice in South Asia” (Hossain, Rahman, Trisha, Tasnim, Nuzhath, Hasan, Clark, Das, McKyer, and Ping Ma, 2021, p.01).

It is clear that various studies have been conducted on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Sri Lankan people as well. A total of 512 healthcare professionals were surveyed using an online survey for the study conducted by Perera, Wickramarachchi, Sammanalie and Hettiarachchi in 2021 on Psychological experiences of healthcare professionals in Sri Lanka during Covid-19. The Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-item scale, the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale-Revised-10, and psychosocial and occupational factors predictive of depression and anxiety were included in the survey questionnaire. Logistic regression determined the factors associated with the presence of depressive symptoms and anxiety. Among the study findings Fear of being infected and

distress caused by fear of spreading it among family members, stigmatization, poor self-confidence, poor occupational safety and heavy workload are vital risk factors that need to be considered in future psychological support services designed for the healthcare professionals in unprecedented outbreaks like Covid-19 (Perera, Wickramarachchi, Samanmalieand Hettiarachchi, 2021, P.01).

Patabendige, Wanniarachchi, Weerasinghe, Ruwanpathirana, Jayasundara and Jayawardanewho studied the sustained adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on mental health among pregnant women in Sri Lanka: a reassessment during the second wave conveniently recruited 311 pregnant women was studied from which 272 (74.3%) were having uncomplicated pregnancies at the time of the survey. Overall, the prevalence of anxiety was 17% (53/311) and depression was 27% (84/311). 106 (34.1%) were either anxious, depressed, or both (entire psychologically disturbed proportion) and 30–39 years age group had the highest psychological disturbance (53/106, 50.0%). The differences were not statistically significant between the two hospitals (Patabendige, Wanniarachchi, Weerasinghe, Ruwanpathirana, Jayasundara and Jayaward, 2022, p.01).

A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out at the two large maternity hospitals in Colombo, Sri Lanka: Castle Street Hospital for Women (CSHW) and De Soysa Hospital for Women (DSHW). Overall, continuing Covid-19 pandemic increased antenatal anxiety and depression. The trend was to aggravate depression more intensively compared to anxiety in this cohort of women studied. Special support is needed for pregnant mothers during infectious epidemics taking more attention to antenatal depression (Patabendige, Wanniarachchi, Weerasinghe, Ruwanpathirana, Jayasundara and Jayaward, 2022, p.01).

These studies make it clear that various health-based problems in society, such as the Covid-19 epidemic, directly affect individual mental health. Although the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic on mental health has been studied, not much attention has been paid to the role of the mental health social worker. Therefore, this study examines the role of social worker working with mental health issues caused by the covid-19 pandemic.

Social work is a unique profession that works with individuals, families and groups to make changes in their behaviour and to improve their quality of life. It promotes social change, resolves problems in human relationships, empowers people, and promotes people's freedom to improve their existence. The social work profession has been created for the purpose of achieving social progress and thereby economic progress by minimizing the social problems of the people and the main objectives of this profession are to meet human needs and develop human capabilities.

The basis of the social work profession is humanitarian ideas and ideals, religious ideas and ideals and democratic ideas and ideals. The social work profession has become popular in the world as a Western concept, even though it has existed in Asian countries since ancient times and today it is a globally recognized profession. People living in a society face various problems related to their existence. The majority of them try to solve those problems somehow and to achieve a maximum satisfactory standard of living and to maintain such a situation. Social work is the only scientific techniques that can help individuals meet these goals more effectively. The social work profession works to apply sustainable solutions to the maximum possible level according to a well-planned reality-based approach that uncovers the root of every problem scientifically.

According to Professor Werner Boyam, social work seeks to engage with individuals, either individually or collectively, through activities aimed at their social interactions involving interactions between individuals and their (social) environment. These activities are divided into three types. That is,

1. Restoration of weak or damaged energy
2. Provision of personal or social resources
3. A social evil as a means of mitigation (Wijesinghe, 1993).

When people face life struggles and challenges, social workers support them to cope with those issues. According to IFSW and IASSW, social work is defined as follows: “Social Work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing” (International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, 2014, p.25).

In addition to this definition, Ronald, Malar and Laavanya (2013) explain social work as, “Social work is a field of study in social sciences. It is mainly concerned with the study of social problems and social interventions. Social work sets to study individuals, groups, communities and institutions and these remain as the academic boundary of the subject. Social work is also regarded as a practice discipline, because unlike the other social science professionals, social workers involve in direct practice and intervention in the field” (Ronald, Malar and Laavanya, 2013, p.03).

Thus, social work is not only a profession which deals with people, but also with social factors which cause problems in the society. The main purpose of social work is social welfare. The aim of social work is to establish human rights and justice through it. It intends to bring about a social change that contributes to the quality of life of the individual as well as to the well-being of human beings. Furthermore, social work is done to liberate the individual as well as to eliminate the mentality of dependence on other people.

Mental health social work can be referred to as a basic field of social work. Mental health social workers play a critical role in improving overall well-being and mental health in the society. These professional dedicate their time assessing, diagnosing, treating and preventing mental, behavioural and emotional issues. Also, mental health social work professionals play a unique role in relieving people with mental disorders. In addition to working with clients directly, they also provide therapy in individual, group and family settings, depending on the circumstances (<https://socialworklicensemap.com/social-work-careers/mental-health-social-worker>).

## **2.METHODOLOGY**

This study is a quantitybased qualitative research, for which 20 mental health social workers who mediated for communities during the covid-19 pandemic were selected as the sample with the purposive sampling method. Colombo District was selected as the study area. The main reason for this was that the district was subjected to more restrictions during the covid 19 pandemic period than other areas. Interviews were used for data collection and this was done to collect qualitative

data. Data analysis was performed using the method of narrative analysis and with cognitive theory and functional perspective. The study focused on two main objectives, which are to identify the psychological problems that people faced during the covid-19 pandemic and to study the mental health social work intervention in mitigating such psychological issues.

### 3. PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS FACED BY INDIVIDUALS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 pandemic period was a new experience for the people in Sri Lanka during which, individuals were exposed to health risks as well as to social barriers. Therefore, this pandemic can be described as a period that affected the mental health of the individual as well as his/hersocial wellbeing. In this study, the mental health problems faced by individuals are analyzed in terms of the problems that mental health social workers dealt with during this period.

This fact was further analyzed by functional analysis. Functionalism is a theory about the nature of mental states. "According to functionalism, mental states are identified by what they do rather than by what they are made of" (Polger, iep.utm.rdu). Therefore, mental health problems can be identified through the behaviours that the person exhibits. Based on the study data, the mental health impact of Covid 19 can be divided into two main sections. That is, mental health issues and mental disorders. Mental health issues experienced by individuals during this period can be categorized as follows.

**Table 3.1. Mental health issues that arose during the Covid-19 period**

S.No.	Mental Issues	Percentage of cases transacted by social workers
1.	Uncertainty about the future	02
2.	financial pressures	06
3.	social isolation	02
4.	Inability to manage anger	04
5.	Relationship issues	09

Source: (Field data, 2021).

According to the findings of this study, the most common problem was problems related to relationships. Further more; problems based on various relationships could be identified. In this case, inability to engage in social relations due to home restrictions and travel restrictions was an unbearable situation for some people.

"The travel restrictions affected mostly the people who had jobs; those who have had a lot of contact with people during their job. They were the ones who broke down mentally when they were locked inside the house for months" (Mental Health Social Worker 12, 2021).

It was clear that people who were employed and had extensive social interactions were directly exposed to such situations. Conflicts have arisen in some families due to social distancing and the restriction of individuals within their own household. Within some families or households, this situation has further exacerbated existing conflicts.

It was also clear that the absence of social relationships led to conflicts within the family organization. In one case, a man who had developed extramarital affairs was suffering as a result of not being able to maintain his relationship. Staying away from such relationships could lead to emotional distress. Two professionals attached to essential services were identified as suffering from mental health problems due to separation from family. The family then has to find alternative ways to fill the gap left by the absence of that family member.

“During this period not only ordinary people but also those who do good jobs faced a lot of mental problems. We also provided psychological support to those who were depressed like this. They had not been home for months due to their job. As a result, were away from children and family. Because of this situation they needed the help of other professionals to mentally adjust.” (Mental Health Social Worker 1, 2021).

It was clear that job losses as well as job instability also caused psychological distress during this period. It was clear that this was due to the weakening of the economic power of the people and their inability to meet their existing needs. It was also observed that the number of dependents had increased and meeting their needs had become a challenge. It was clear that in the face of such factors, individuals have become insecure about their future. Specifically, job insecurity, health insecurity and general lack of satisfaction were identified.

Social isolation can be defined as the loss of social relations at a personal level or disengagement from essential social institutions at societal level (Masoom, 2016, p.241). This condition was also another identifiable problem during covid-19 period. This may include restrictions on contact with people outside the family, distancing one from close relatives as well as friends. Even when social contact could be accommodated, many imposed self censorship due to fears about the spread of the Corona virus and the possible consequences of violating existing laws.

“There are some people who habitually meet their close relatives and friends like that. It was part of their lifestyle. The fact that they were very limited at this time also made people feels more isolated” (Mental Health Social Worker 7, 2021).

In addition, one of the major mental health problems that have arisen is that the individuals have become more prone to mental disorders. The mental disorders that were identified during the Covid 19 period can be described as follows.

**Table 3.2. Mental disorders that emerged during the Covid 19 period**

S.No.	Mental Disorder	Number of cases transacted by social workers
1.	Depression	02
2.	Anxiety	01
3.	Insomnia	01
4.	Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	02
5.	Phobia	02

Source: (Field data, 2021).

Considering the mental disorders that have occurred during this period, it is clear that this period has led to the re-emergence and development of mental disorders.

“This period was a time when even those who had no real mental illness were made sick. This period also led to an increase in the incidence of those who were under the control of those who had similar mental problems” (Mental Health Social Worker 5, 2021).

Consequences of this period with social constraints and social oppression are the re-emergence of the incidences of depression that had been previously controlled with medication. Study data also shows that anxiety has improved in the face of economic hardship.

It was clear that both cases found in relation to Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) were based on cleaning behaviour. It became clear that the growing discourse on cleanliness with the Covid 19 epidemic had led to the development of such conditions. The mild levels of these behavioural conditions had worsened during this period. One of the cases involves Mysophobia which is an extreme fear of germs. The other case involves Hemophobia, or blood phobia, which is the medical term used to describe an intense and irrational fear of blood. Both of these cases can be referred to as covid-19 related situations. In these cases, economic hardship and social isolation triggered or aggravated the conditions.

#### **4. The Role of the Mental Health Social Worker in the Face of Mental Issues**

The role of the mental health social worker in the face of the psychological issues mentioned so far should be discussed here. When it comes to mental health, people tend to think simply of mental illness. But mental health, is more than just a mental disorder, it is a health indicator. Defining mental health is not simple because it depends in many ways on social and cultural conditions. The understanding of ‘mental’ conditions and what is known as ‘mental disorders’ developed as part of the Western European cultural traditions of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

In some sense, mental health “is an integral and essential part of overall health, which can be defined in at least three ways – as the absence of disease, as a state of the organism that allows the full performance of all its functions or as a state of balance within oneself and between oneself and one’s physical and social environment” (Sartorius, 2002).

In the face of such mental health problems, mental health social worker plays a major role. The primary task of the mental health social worker is to properly assess the existing situation. Here the social work professional identifies problems based on his or her professional knowledge and experience, rather than the average person defining a problem. The social worker also assesses its impact. Even during the Covid 19 period, most mental disorders were identified by people as normal mental conditions caused by that period.

“We have a lot of cases of mental disorders but they were not understood in the same way. They did not even realize that they needed medicine. That’s a very dangerous situation. Even if they do not fall down properly, their condition will get worse” (Mental Health Social Worker 9, 2021).



Misdiagnosis of mental disorders can make such situations worse. In such cases, it may be necessary to properly diagnose mental problems and make appropriate referrals for medical treatment. Mental Health Social worker is a professional who specializes in the field of mental health. Therefore, his or her knowledge of mental health is put into practice here. It also ensures social protection in the socialization of people with such mental problems in the future. The social worker teaches family and close friends how to work with people with mental health issues. Here, the mental health social worker engages in work that is person-centered as well as family-centered.

To identify and deal with the mental health affects of abuse, trauma and discrimination are another role of a social worker. Here the mental health social worker plays his or her professional role at the individual as well as at the macro level. This includes organizing special restraint programmes and awareness programmes, conducting various awareness and discussions at the family level and working with people and groups of people through online methods.

Social workers need to work with other disciplines in order to provide a holistic service plan to assist people with mental health problems. But they must take the lead in coordinating and assisting with family affairs and community groups. Interdisciplinary work requires careful organizational work and the development of specialized skills. Here the mental health social worker has to work in collaboration with medical professionals, social therapists, psychiatrists and counselors.

The social worker provides insights into the provision of clients' mental health strategies to cope with challenges to those with mental health problems. It seeks to change the person's view of how mental problems should be interpreted, to develop internal strengths such as endurance, as well as to strengthen the involvement of loved ones in improving the mental health of people with mental health problems.

“Some of the problems people really have are the way they see the problems. That is cognitive problems. Here, we need to restructure the cognition” (Mental Health Social Worker 9, 2021).

Cognitive psychologists claim that in order to change behaviour, one must also change one's thinking or cognitive power. Hence, it is important to identify the reasons why people think irrationally.

- Selective abstraction - focusing on a few factors while ignoring other factors.
- Dichotomous theory - ignoring the middle ground, of extremist thinking.
- Over generalization - draw conclusions about the whole person based on a few factors.
- Magnification - magnification of a small object.
- Arbitrary inference - seeing certain events as bad without evidence.
- Personalization - involves him/her even when events are not relevant.

The primary responsibilities of the social worker are to promote the healing of mental issues, to re-establish the family and community connections of individuals, and to achieve social justice for all. In order for a social worker to do all this, it is important for him to be aware of mental health issues. The social worker has the ability to look at issues in the field in a critical manner. Considering these aspects, the community worker is able to actively respond to the challenges of the family and the community with the knowledge of the quality of existing services. Therefore, the social worker also

has the ability to focus on policy making by prioritizing information on what issues are fundamental to policy.

During the covid-19 pandemic period, Mental Health Social Workers focused on the following areas in their mental health promotions:

1. Respect for individuals - Respect for each individual, regardless of race, religion, social and economic status, gender, age beliefs or contribution to society.
2. Self-selection - Social worker always pays close attention to the client's wishes.
3. Social Justice - This means that everyone should be treated fairly.
4. Confidentiality - The privacy of the clients and their families and all confidential information are maintained with utmost care by the social worker.

The role of the social worker is of the social animator during the covid-19 pandemic. Many mentally ill people and their families do not have a comprehensive understanding of the services they need. Therefore, it was the social work professional that carried out the task of bringing these services closer to the community.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Social work as a profession is not a new concept in the Sri Lankan context, and the social work professional intervention has been effective in the society in minimizing such problems. The scope of social work has expanded as problems arise in new areas in society. Mental health social work can be described as a unique field that has emerged within the discipline. Mental health social work interventions can be used to identify and minimize the psychological aspects of many problems. In the contemporary world, the Covid 19 pandemic can be described as one of the most influential periods in a person's mental health. The psychological impact that individuals experienced during this period can be divided into two categories: mental problems and mental disorders. It is also clear that all the problems that people faced during this period have had a direct impact on their mental profile.

Some problems are solvable at the individual level as dealing with such issues successfully is a subjective matter. But some problems require professional help when they cannot be solved on an individual level and are beyond their individual capabilities. The role of the mental health social worker in this is immense. Mental health social workers are involved in solving mental disorders as well as psychological problems.

The role of the social worker can be to accurately assess problems and make relevant referrals, to intervene at the individual and family level, to assess the consequences of such psychological problems, and to address issues through coordination with relevant parties, as well as through use of mental health methods. At the macro level, the mental health social worker conducts awareness programmes as well as various programmes to equip people to face the psychological problems that arise in the society, with the aim to minimize the occurrence of mental problems.

## REFERENCES

- විජේසිංහ,ඩී. (1993). *සමාජානිවර්ධන කාර්ය ජීවනමය*. කොළඹ:අුප්.ගොඩගේ ජීවකාශකයෝ.
- Hossain, M.D.M., Rahman, M., Trisha, N. F., Tasnim, S., Nuzhath, T., Hasan, T.H., Clark, H., Das, A., McKyer, E.L.J., and Ping Ma. (2021). *Prevalence of anxiety and depression in South Asia during COVID-19: A systematic review and meta-analysis*.Volume 7, Issue 4, Cell Press.
- International Federation of Social Workers and International Association of Schools of Social Work, (2014). *50 Years of International Social Work*.Switzerland: IFSW.
- Masoom, M.(2016).*Social Isolation: A conceptual Analysis*.Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences.India: A & V Publications.
- Patabendige, M., Wanniarachchi, D., Weerasinghe, M., and Jayawardena, A. (2022). *The sustained adverse impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health among pregnant women in Sri Lanka: a reassessment during the second wave*. BMC Res. Notes 15, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13104-021-05893-1>.
- Perera, B., Wickramarachchi, B., Samanmalie, C. and Hettiarachchi, M.(2021). *Psychological experiences of healthcare professionals in Sri Lanka during COVID-19*. BMC Psychol 9, 49. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-021-00526-5>
- Ronald, Y., Malar S., and Laavanya, P.V. (2013). *Social Work, An Introductory Text Book*, New Delhi: Regal Publication.
- Sartorius, N. (2002). *Fighting for mental health*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- The world health report 2001 – Mental Health: New Understanding, New Hope, (PDF). WHO.Accessed on 04.05.2014.
- What is mental health, www.cdc.gov, 2021.11.23. Accessed on 11.04.2021.
- WHO, (2022).*Mental Health and COVID-19: Early evidence of the pandemic’s impact Scientific brief*, WHO/2019-nCoV/Sci\_Brief/Mental\_health/2022.1 <https://socialworklicensemap.com/social-work-careers/mental-health-social-worker>, Accessed on 10.06.2022.
- [https://www.who.int/stress/mental\\_health](https://www.who.int/stress/mental_health), Accessed on 10.06.2022.
- Polger, iep.utm.rdu, Accessed on 10.06.2022.