

The settlement house movement history essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jane Addams is among those social work pioneers who have done tremendous job for poor people living in urban areas Addams was an advocate of people who are poor and immigrants and looking for peace. She has been author of various articles and books and was the first lady who founded settlement house in United States of America. The best book of Jane Addams is *Twenty Years at Hull House* which was about the time that she spent in settlement house. She led campaigns against various issues such as child labor, women's right for voting and promotion of reformation in cities, states and even on national levels (Whipps, 120).

The lady has the image of "Gentle angle of mercy" which is accurate but incomplete to certain extent as she was also viewed as businesswoman who is shrewd but has expertise in fund rising and skilled agent for publicity. All of these skills combined proved to be successful for the lady as it drove Hull House to success and gave Jane Addams a status of being a celebrity. She has been made Head of The National Conference of Charities and Corrections, the Women's League for International Peace and Freedom and the Women's Peace Party. She was awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 1931 that was shared with Nicholas Murray Butler (Pickus, 10).

Bibliography of Jane Addams:

Jane Addams is among the pioneers of social work and her main of life was to provide as much help as possible to the people who are poor. The lady has been recognized worldwide for establishing a settlement house in Chicago, Illinois; the house was her home which was dedicated to help poor people who are living in urban areas. The primary aim of Jane Addams was to live

side by side with poor people and understand their problems while help them in dealing with them so that they can live a good life (Rabin, 50). She was born in Cedarville region of Illinois State on 8th September in 1860. Her father was Legislator of the State and she had eight siblings. Her mother passed away when she was only three years old; Jane was born with curved spine and it was embarrassing for her as she was getting older.

In 1881, Jane Addams completed her graduation from Rockford Female Seminary and she started studying medicine in Women's College of Pennsylvania; she was unable to continue her education when her father passed away and her health problems made difficult for her to complete her studies. In order to have surgery for her congenital spinal defect in 1882, she abandoned her studies and went for this remedial solution for her problem. From 1883-1885, she went for tour to Europe with her stepmother and in East London, she observed urban poverty; this left a lasting impression on Addams. In 1887, she went for Europe tour again with her college roommate, Ellen Starr (Whipps, 119). In London, they visited Toynbee Hall which is a settlement house; it influenced Jane Addams significantly and she decided to open such house in United States of America (Knight, 17-18); the main idea was to address the consequences faced by human as a result of urban poverty, immigration and industrialization.

Social work done by pioneers of Settlement House Movement:

In 1899, Addams and Starr returned to United States and leased a mansion which was wrecked in appearance; it was located on the corner of Halstead and Polk streets. The mansion was named as " Hull House" after the original

owner as it was the first settlement house in the country. The mission of settlement house was too investigated and improves the conditions on Chicago's industrial districts while functioning as the center point of social and civic life in the neighborhood which comprises of various groups of immigrants (Heather, 5). The mansion was located in that area of Chicago where people had income of low level; it was a factory, a store for furniture that has been used and even a home for the poor elderly which was run by the Little Stars of the Poor Nuns; Addams and Starr moved in the mansion and began creation of community center for the people who were living in the neighborhood (Heather, 4).

Addams was troubled by presence of extreme differences between people who are either rich or poor; she was unhappy to see such huge gap between people who were wealthy and others who were suffering from hardships of life. Both Jane Addams and Ellen Starr got help from wealthy people to make contribution in terms of money and time for development of an effective settlement house. The volunteers provided child and health care and even took care of the people who were suffering from illness and gave counseling sessions to people.

Initially, Addams and Starr offered some cultural uplifts programs to immigrants who were patronizing Hall House such as reading books aloud for them, showing them famous paintings in slideshows form and many more. However, all of these activities were considered as impractical ones as they were unable to highlight and address real problems of urban immigrant's life. They were looking for education, health care services, adequate homes and advocate to help them struggle for safe and secured safe working conditions;

cultural uplift programs were not suitable for them at that point of time as it was not adding anything valuable for struggling working class families.

Keeping these points in mind, Addams and Starr adopted an approach that was pragmatic for building their relationship with the community as it's allowed them to address the needs of the community; they shifted their perceptions from valuing their priority to their client's priority.

Fortunately, Addams and Starr were successful in getting assistance from Julia Lathrop who was a trained lawyer and reformer; she worked with complete dedication to curb the negative points of industrial capitalism. W. I. Thompson, renowned Progressive Era Sociologist and John Dewey, one of the initial founders of American Public Education, also helped Addams and Starr in achieving their goals for helping immigrants live a peaceful and good life in their area. As the time passed and efforts of pioneers of Hull House increased, it developed into an institution that was complete from every aspect that help immigrants and urban poor people to meet their basic necessities (Bryan, 81).

In about two years of starting up of Hull House, about two thousand people were being provided services by it. In order to provide education to its people, classes of various levels such as Kindergarten classes were being taught in morning, meetings of club are organized for students so that they can meet up after school and there were even night classes for students.

The activity initiated by Addams and Starr was both educational and philanthropic one and activists working for the settlement house were first hand learners of the needs of urban community which was so diverse. The

residents of Hull House raised money, looked for volunteers especially young female college students and graduates, helped children who were suffering from some illness, aided displaced families in finding appropriate place for living, conducted vocational and educational classes and even offered their support to working people of Chicago. The major services offered by Hull House were related to care of children and health, development of clubs for adults and children, art gallery creation, development of kitchen, gymnasium, theater, library, music school, labor museum and employment bureau (Bryan, 82).

In Hull House, she was offering her assistance to bring about equality and justice among people. Addams tried to educate people on various things that are common among people along with the qualities that make them special as she wanted to bring them back to life and show them the positive side of living a peaceful life in good neighborhood.

While working at Hull House, Addams became aggressively involved with affairs related to civics of Chicago and she was leader of Social Reform Movement; she was the pioneer who fought for legislation regarding sanitation, immigrant, inspection of factory and housing rights. She even campaigned with zeal and enthusiasm for laws related to child labor so that children can be protected and also fought for other protective legislations. Addams allied with labor movement strongly and allowed organization of meetings of union that were held at Hull House. In order to demonstrate her support for labor and workers, she arbitrated a garment strike that involved about 90,000 workers and it was done in 1910. During the same year, she

became the Vice President of American Branch of International Association for Labor Legislation (Bryan, 83).

Addams followed a complete feminist approach and supported various campaigns for women's suffrage. From 1911-1914, she even served as the Vice President of the National American Women Suffrage Association and her activity in Progressive Party was prominent as well because she especially supported this platform for safety in industrial sector (Rabin, 49). Although Addams accomplished many things in her lifetime but some people have even criticized her for her ideas that were radical and her different ways of doing things. She emphasized the need of peace which she believed was abnormal during World War 1. She organized the Woman's Peace Party and the International Woman's Conference in 1915; the later organization was met in Hague where Addams was selected for heading the commission so that she could find an end to the war. Addams had to meet the leaders in countries that were neutral along with those that were at War for discussion of mediation. Daughters of the American Revolution expelled her in 1919 but it did not impact her at all and she was elected president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom in the same year. She was also the founder of NAACP and the American Civil Liberties Union; these positions were even more criticized as she was accused of being a communist, socialist and an anarchist (Heather, 6).

Since Addams was strongly against entry of Americans into the war, she was attacked by organizations and newspapers that were in favor of war.

However, her work against war was never interrupted and was even named as Humanitarian assistant to President Herbert Hoover; during her job as this

position, she provided relief supplies of food to women and children of enemy nations. Jane Addams is enjoying worldwide celebrity image as she is among the founders of Hull House and is among the pioneers who initiated social work in the country. However, her image was hurt when she became active in the pacifist and internationalist movements in 1910. Addams founded Women's Peace Party (WPP) in 1915 with a co-founder; both Addams and WPP developed strong networks of activists for peace in the country and abroad as well.

In 1919, WPP evolved into the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) which is a still thriving organization that is working to achieve via peaceful means disarmament of world, give full rights to women, give both racial and economic justice, bring an end to every violence activity and give justice to all by stabilizing all political, psychological and social conditions that create peace and harmony. She served as the President of this organization for ten years i. e. from 1919-1929. In 1931, she was given Nobel Prize for her remarkable social services in the field.

Addams wrote many books throughout her life and the main source of her income was the profits that she made from selling of her books. Some of her major accomplishments in writing world are *Newer Ideals of Peace* in 1907, *Twenty Years at Hull House* in 1910, *The Long Road of Women's Memory* in 1916, *Peace and Bread in Time of War* in 1922 and *The Second Twenty Years at Hull House* in 1930. She died in 1935 as she was suffering from cancer and she was buried in Cedarville.

Concluding Remarks:

Following the footsteps of Addams and other settlement house pioneers like Lillian Wald, founder of New York's Henry Street Settlement in year 1893, numerous American women formed groups to support the social settlement movement. By 1900, there were about one hundred settlement houses that were scattered throughout largest cities of the nation who have goals similar to that of Hull House. Almost all the staff members in these houses are unwed women who have at least completed their college education. Jane Addams is the best social worker who carried forward the concept of Settlement House Movement with the aim of providing basic facilities to people so that they can live a peaceful life with proper living conditions and good neighborhood.