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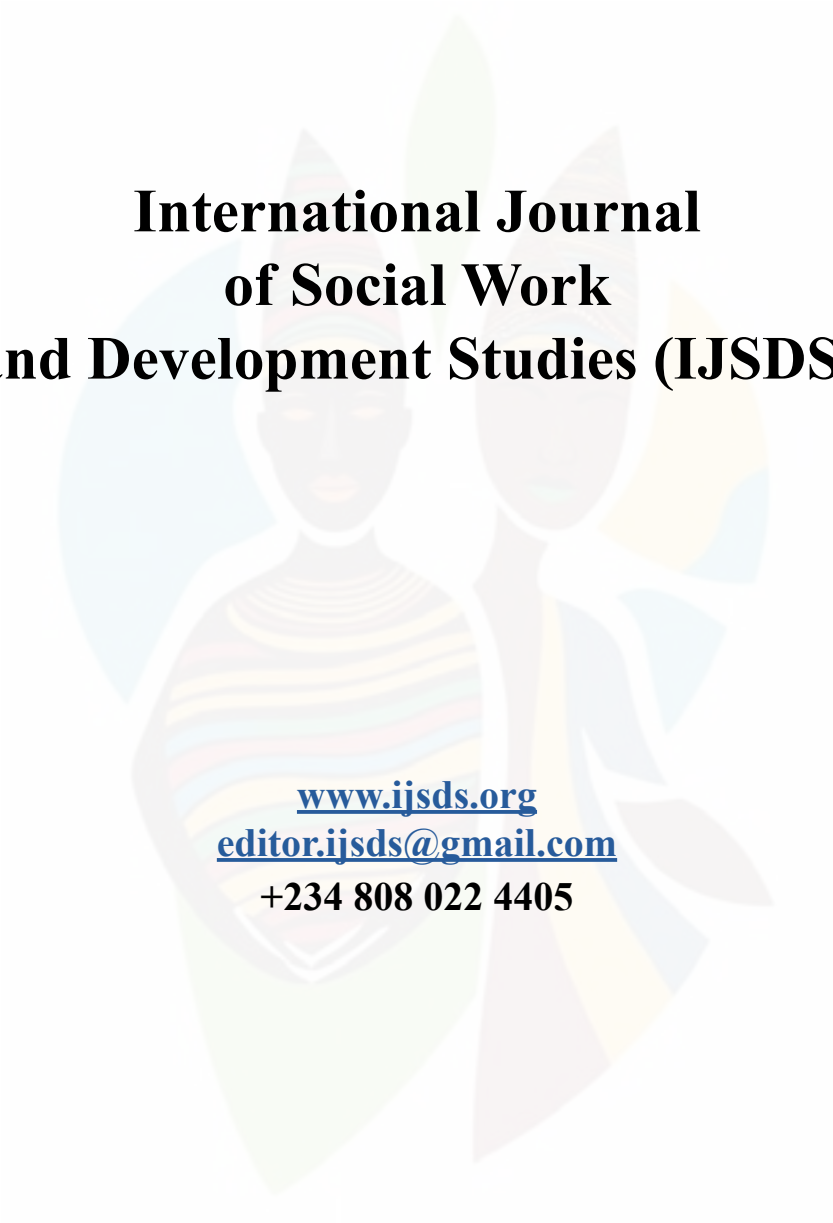


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**SOCIAL WORK AND DEVELOPMENT
IN A CHANGING WORLD**

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ABSTRACT

In a world evolving global landscape marked by technology, environmental challenges, and shifting societal norms, social work plays a crucial role in promoting development and addressing social issues. This paper explores the contributions of social work to development, emphasizing community engagement, advocacy for social justice, provision of support services and interdisciplinary collaboration. It is a profession that adapts to promote wellbeing, address inequalities and uphold ethical standards, social work apply key theories like ecological systems, and empowerment theory to understand and address complex client's needs, navigating ethical dilemmas around confidentiality, self-determinations, and cultural competence. The articles highlight the contributions of social workers as a profession and as a discipline in today's changing world, emphasizing the profession's adaptability to ethical commitment and pursuit of justice, equality and social inclusion to the vulnerable and the oppressed populations. This paper explores the contributions of social work to development emphasizing advocacy for social justice, provision of support services, integrating evidence based practices to guide intervention and to enhance outcome in diverse settings in today's changing world. A literature review reveals that social work interventions lead to positive outcomes in community development, empowerment and wellbeing. Effective practice requires understanding local context and adapting to changing challenges. As social workers navigate complexities in a changing world, the wellbeing of the vulnerable remains crucial. This paper underscores the importance of responsive and adaptable social work practice in contributing to equitable and just development outcomes in today's changing world as social workers are committed to the lives of the oppressed.

Keywords: Social Work Development. Social justice. Changing the world. Profession. Ethical.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social work is a profession and a discipline that strives to alleviate poverty and to liberate venerable and oppressed people in order to promote social inclusion, as a profession social works adapts to changing societal needs and addressing emerging challenges, the professional social worker also engage in policy formulation, advocacy and evidence base practice and fostering professional development and expertise, as a professional social worker demonstrate effectiveness in promoting wellbeing and addressing inequalities. The profession is committed to the pursuit of social justice and to the development of full potentials of individuals, groups and communities in the society, this is collaborated by Brieland, Costin & Alberton (1980) who describe the profession as a group of people who have specific training and skills, and engage in providing welfare service they cited Pincus and Mihahan (1973) who stated that the purpose of social work is to enhance the problem solving and coping capacities of people, link people with systems and to contribute to the development, behavior, and social systems to analyze complex situations and to facilitate individuals, organizations, and social and cultural changes. As a discipline, social work is shaped by their education, practice, experience, and adherence to professional principles. It is a discipline involving the application of social theories and research methods to study and improve the lives of people, groups and societies. Social work started in the 19th century, this was a response to societal problems that resulted from industrial revolutions and an increased interest in applying scientific theories to various aspects of study.

During the 20th century, the profession began to rely more on research and evidence based on practice, as it attempted to improve professionalism, social work has gained recognitions in various settings, the professionals are employed in myriad of settings, the profession has organized themselves into local, national, and international professional bodies to fur-

ther the aims and objective of the profession. Social work is variously defined and this is collaborated with the outcome of the International Federation of Social Worker (IFSW) in her general meeting in Montreal Canada in July, 2000 who stated that, it understood that social work in the 21st century is dynamic and evolving and therefore no definition should be regarded exhaustive, however while we agree with the assertion of the body, we believe that the focus of social work is the same everywhere as Ekpeyong and Raimi (2008) pointed that the basic focus of social work is the application of social theories and research method to study and improve the lives of people, groups, and societies at large. Stroup (1980) has also argued that social work is the art of bringing various resources to bear on individuals, groups, and community need by the application of a scientific method of helping people to help themselves, Iwainime Jaja (1995.5) defines social work as a process of helping individuals, groups or families including communities who suffers from an anomaly or social problem resulting from an unmet need. To this end, every definition of social work revolves around five key words; helping, theories, principle, methods and profession; any definitions that run short of these key words may not be accepted in the field of social work.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the largest professional association of social workers in North America, came up with a definition that captures the essence of social work.

They define social work as follows:

The professional activities of helping individuals, groups and communities to enhance or restore their social functioning and to create societal conditions favourable to this goal. Social work practice consists of the professional application of social work values, principles to one or more of the following ends, helping people to obtain tangible services, providing counselling and psychotherapy with individuals,

families and groups, helping communities or groups provide or improve social and health services and participating in relevant legislative processes. The practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and behaviours of social economic and cultural institutions and interactions of these factors NASW (1973:45) despite the effort of the professionals in the field of social work is putting to making sure the profession is taken to the fast lane of progress, the profession continued to be faced with a wholesome of challenges, the challenges of social work development in the changing world became more complex and multifaceted, social worker must navigate complex issues like poverty, inequality, discriminations and environmental degradation while adapting to new technologies and ways of engaging with communities. Despite these challenges social work is evolving to meet the need of the changing world, the profession has evolved significantly in today's changing world, the field of social work is experiencing a transformation driven by technological advancements, shifting societal needs and a renewed focus on ethical, culturally, responsive practices. Social workers are leveraging digital tools like telehealth, online counselling and mobile apps to expand their reach and improve service delivery. Social work development in the changing world is prioritizing fairness, dignity and human rights, adhering to the goals of the profession. Social work development in the changing world plays a crucial role in addressing social issues and promoting development, social workers are at the forefront of addressing the need of venerable populations, advocating for individuals, groups, and community wellbeing by fighting for human right and providing essential support services, social work development in the changing world helps to build resilience in communities, address social injustice and promote social justice and inclusive development, social work in the changing world adapt to changes for effective interventions, collaborating across disciplines to address complex issues and developing innovative ap-

proaches to emerging challenges, studies has shown that social work intervention can lead to positive outcome in community development, empowerment and wellbeing, Coxy Pawar (2013). Social work is a versatile field with application in various settings in the changing world, social work development has leveraged in the following key settings. In schools, social workers in school support students' emotional, social and academic needs, they help with counselling and crisis intervention connecting students with resources. The social workers that work in the hospital help patients and families cope with illness, navigate healthcare systems, and access resources for care and recovery. Social workers in a correctional center focus on rehabilitations helping inmates, address issues like substance abuse, mental health and re-entry planning. Occupational social workers that work in the industries promote employees wellbeing, address workplace issues and help companies develop policies for diversification. In disaster response and recovery social work plays a crucial role in responding to disasters, and providing support and helping the community to recover from the loss. Social workers in the changing world also play a crucial role in career development especially in the context where personal challenges or systematic barriers impact career paths. They access individual strengths, challenges, and goals related to the career development, they provide support in overcoming barriers like lack of confidence, trauma, and discrimination, they also link individual and group to resource like job training programmes, educational opportunities or career counselling services, they also advocate for individuals facing systematic barriers in education or employment, promoting equal access to opportunities, they also support individuals in balancing work life. Social work development in a rapid changing world uses social work theories by providing approaches for understanding and addressing complex human behavior and social environments. These theories help social workers access client needs, promote positive chang-

es, and adapt to emerging challenges and evolving social issues. Theories like systems theories, ecological, system theory and psychosocial development theory helps social workers to understand how individuals interact with the environment, empowerment theory and strength base theory focus on fostering self-efficacy and leveraging client's strength for positive change. Contingency theory and crisis intervention theory enables social work to adapt to diverse changing needs, they also apply crisis intervention theory to disaster management, refugee support, and trauma recovery. Conflict theory and anti-oppressive practices help social workers address systemic inequalities and promote social justice, social workers adapt theories based on the specific needs and context of clients, they often combine elements of multiple theories to best address complex client's needs. The ethics and principle of social work plays a crucial role in guiding practices in today's changing world, core values like social justice, dignity and worth of the person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence help social workers to navigate complex situations in guiding decision making, ethical principles helps social workers to make decisions in challenging situations and balancing clients needs with professional obligations. In the same vein, the principle of self-determination, supports social workers to allow clients to make their own choice while receiving support. In addressing emerging issues, principles guide social workers in addressing new challenges like climate change impact on vulnerable populations. The social workers in struggle to better the life of the venerable population in the changing world sometime is faced with ethical dilemma, social worker in today's changing world uses ethical decision making models and rely on core principles, like respect for on autonomy, on promotion of social justice and commitment to clients well-being, social workers develop a framework to systematically address dilemma considering values, principles, and potential outcomes. In today's changing world, social workers use peer supervision

for guidance, ethics committees are also used to make informed decisions in order to meet professional standards, they also seek advice from peer supervisor in order to refine their skills and address areas of growth in their career ensuring accountability to professional standards.

In conclusion, social work is a profession dynamically adapting to complexities in rapidly changing world with a shift in technology, demographics and societal challenges, social workers are tasked with promoting wellbeing, addressing inequalities and upholding ethical standards by leveraging key theories, evidence-based practice and cultural competence, practitioners navigate these evolving landscapes to meet diverse client needs effectively in today's changing world.

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