ICOSW

3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF SOCIAL WORK

Social Security in 21st century:
Shared Partnership for Transformative Changes

International Conference on Social Work
4th & 5th of September 2024

CONFERECE PROCEEDINGS

The Theme of
Social Security in 21st century: Shared Partnership for Transformative Changes

National Institute of Social Development (NISD) the 3rd International Conference on Social Work

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Dr. Raveendra Withanachchi
Director General
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I am deeply honored and delighted to welcome you all to the 3rd International conference on Social Work 2024, hosted by the National Institute of Social Development. The theme of this conference "Social security in 21st Century: shared Partnership for Transformative Changes," encapsulates our collective commitment to advancing the field of social work and social security in various dimensions.

Our Institute has always strived to be at the forefront of promoting research, collaboration, and innovation in the realm of social work. This conference represents a significant milestone in our ongoing journey to foster an international community of researchers, academicians, and students who share our passion for improving the well-being of individuals and communities worldwide.

The theme of this conference is not merely a topic of discussion but a call to action. In an era marked by unprecedented challenges and opportunities, the role of social work in providing social security to individuals and households to ensure access to healthcare, career and other fundamental facilities, particularly in cases of old age, vulnerability and invalidity etc. "International conference on Social Work" holds significant importance for various reasons. These events provide a platform for networking, expose participants to the latest research, and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. Recognition and publication opportunities, career advancement, and the cultivation of a research culture are additional benefits.

I have every confidence that the deliberations during this conference will yield valuable insights, meaningful ideas, and innovative solutions that can drive progress in our field. By exchanging experiences, research findings, and best practices, we have the power to shape the future of social work and create a lasting impact on the communities we serve.

As Director General of the National Institute of Social Development, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all the participants, keynote speakers, presenters, authors and organizers who have contributed to making this conference a reality. Your dedication and commitment to the cause of social development are truly commendable, and I am grateful for your continued support.

Let us make the most of this opportunity to learn from each other, forge lasting partnerships, and inspire change. Together, we can pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future where the principles of social work drive socioeconomic development and empower communities around the globe.

I wish you all a productive and inspiring conference, and I look forward to the transformative ideas and collaborations that will emerge from our time together.

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

M.S.M. Asmiyas
Director Social Development Policy, Research & Publications
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It is with great excitement that I warmly welcome each of you to the upcoming 3rd International Conference on Social Work 2024, centered on "Social security in 21st Century : shared Partnership for Transformative Changes." In response to the ongoing national situation, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants, while also seizing the opportunity to engage with a broader, more diverse audience than ever before.

This conference aims to navigate the role of social work in ensuring social security in avenues such as education, health and economy for all individuals and society at large. We expect that the discussions and deliberations during this conference will yield meaningful insights and innovative solutions in the field of social work. Our theme reflects our commitment to fostering positive change within communities, so that all are enveloped in security and stability. We eagerly anticipate hearing from participants who will bring new perspectives and address the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. We are also honored to host esteemed speakers who will offer diverse viewpoints on the theme of Social Work and Social Work Practices. Their expertise will undoubtedly enrich our discussions.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the supporting organizations that have generously provided financial and technical assistance. Their support is invaluable in ensuring the success of this conference. I extend my heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all contributors. I am confident that ICSW - 2024 will be a great success, and I eagerly look forward to the enriching discussions and collaborations that will emerge from this gathering.

Keerthi Jayawardane

Dear Colleagues, Scholars, and Participants,
It is my distinct honor and privilege to welcome you to the 3rd International Conference on Social Work (ICOSW-2024). This year's conference, centered on the theme "Social Security in the 21st Century: Shared Partnership for Transformative Changes," offers a critical platform to explore the evolving role of social security systems in our rapidly changing world.

As we navigate the complexities of the 21st century, the concept of social security has become more vital than ever. The unprecedented challenges posed by global economic shifts, demographic changes, and technological advancements require a rethinking of traditional social security frameworks. Our theme underscores the importance of collaborative partnerships between governments, private sectors, civil society, and communities in fostering transformative changes that can lead to more resilient and inclusive social security systems.

ICOSW-2024 brings together a diverse group of professionals, including researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and students, to engage in rigorous discussions and share pioneering research. The insights generated here will undoubtedly contribute to shaping policies and practices that promote social justice, equity, and human dignity across the globe.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have worked tirelessly to make this conference possible the organizing committee, our sponsors, the esteemed reviewers, and the contributors who have enriched this gathering with their knowledge and expertise.

As we embark on this journey of learning and collaboration, I encourage you to engage fully in the sessions, workshops, and networking opportunities. Let us seize this moment to build connections, challenge our thinking, and work together towards transformative solutions that ensure social security for all.
Thank you for your commitment to this important cause, and I wish you a productive and inspiring conference.

Warm regards,
KeerthiJayawardane
Conference Chair
ICOSW-2024

Social Security and Health Life

Good morning/afternoon, everyone.

I am Dr. Machiko Ohara, a Professor at the Japan College of Social Work and the President of the Asia-Pacific Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW-AP).

It is a pleasure to be here today to share insights and discuss [Social Security and Health Life] with all of you.

I hope today's presentation will provide valuable insights and foster meaningful dialogue.

今日の発表の目的は、1つ目は、近年のグローバルヘルスケアの現状を理解すること、2つ目は日本における移住者の増加と彼らのヘルスケアの現状を理解すること、最後に、日本における移民への医療サービス提供とソーシャルワークの実践を理解し、スリランカで生まれた医療政策を考察することです。アウトラインはここに示しています。

みなさんは、日本が地理的にどこに位置するかわかりますか? この小さな国が日本です。スリランカはインドの下に位置しますね。日本はスリランカの国土の6倍くらいあるそうです。日本の人口もSri Lankaと比較すると6倍になっています。グローバル化の影響を受けて、日本の保健医療はどのように変化していったのでしょうか。

さて、この20年間で日本、スリランカそして世界全体も大きく変化しました。
グローバリゼーションとは、各単位システムの国家が存在し、その関係として規定されているinternationalization,つまり国際化ではなく、国家間を越えた地球規模を示しています。グローバルとは国家、民族という枠を越えて、「地球化」していく過程やその現象を指しています。これが、経済的、政治的、技術的側面で世界中に影響を及ぼしています。
似たような概念として、アメリカナイゼーション、例えば、マクドナルドやコカ・コーラのようなマニュアル化によって、同じものを世界どこでも食べられるファーストフードなどがあります。または、メディアで影響を与えるハリウッド映画があります。グローバリゼーションは、アメリカ的文化要素を一方的に押し付けるのものとは異なり、"相互作用"を前提としていています。この点はとても重要ですので、ここで説明しました。

　このグローバリゼーションの影響を受け、日本の医療はどのような課題があるのでしょうか。ソーシャルワークの視点からお話したいと思います。
　現在、私たちは、医療の進展、ITなどの情報システムの普及、そして陸、空、海の交通機関の発達により、私たちは、簡単に世界中を移動できます。
　一方では、現在の国際開発は、富の蓄積と貧困が同時に存在する状況を生みだし、社会経済的不平等が明らかです。これらの影響を受け、先進国では、発展途上国から多くの労働者を受け入れました。
医療の国際化では、日本の医療を求めて、「医療ツーリズム」があります。日本の医療機器や医薬品なども多く、輸出されています。
　また、先進国を中心とした富裕者が発展途上国の貧困者から臓器を買う「移植ツーリズム」などが日本でも、世界的にも問題になっています。
　さらに、生殖医療の進展を受けて、代理母による出産が可能です。日本では、アメリカより費用が安く代理母による出産ができるインドなどで行われています。
　しかしここには宗教上の問題や、代理母が子の引き渡しを拒否する事件や生まれた子が障害を持っていたために依頼元の父母が引き取りを拒否する事例も日本では起きています
　また、Covid-19のような感染症は、人類にとっての大きな脅威となっています。地球規模の課題として日本もかかわっています。
　日本ではあまり報道されていませんが、性風俗産業で女性移民者を強制労働させている実態があります。日本の医療機関にはそのような患者さんが来院されることがあります。来院されて初めて人身売買だったことが発覚するケースも少なくないです。

　このような現状から、グローバル化の進展による保健医療は様々な問題が生じています。
　私は、課題を6つにまとめました。1つ目は、人権侵害、　人体搾取、　リプロダクト・ヘルス・ライツの課題、　世界の経済間格差から生じているhealthの課題、　宗教的・文化的な課題、　環境破壊による健康被害です。
このようなことから、グローバル化の進展により日本の保健医療は倫理的課題が多く存在しています。

次に、日本に在住している移住者の現状と保健に関連した現状と課題についてお話しします

　日本に在留する外国人は、年々増加傾向にあります。2023年では、３２２万人であり、国が予想していた早いペースで多国籍社会となります。詳細は後ほど、ヴィラーグ博士が説明すると思います。

日本に住む在留外国人数の国籍・地域別では，中国が78万人で全体の24．5パーセントを占め，以下，ベトナム、韓国，フィリピン，ブラジル，ネパール、インドネシアと続いています。
　この中には非正規滞在の方々は含んでいませんが、22万人くらい滞在していると言われています。
　日本に在住外国人は多様化し、抱える問題は複雑になってきました。現状は、移民者の国籍を問わず、病気や身体や精神障害になることもあります。その理由は、彼らの労働環境や生活環境に関連していることも多くあります。これは次のスライドで話をします。

　日本では、1990年前後、人手不足の深刻になり、日本には多くの移住者が訪れました。彼の多くは、日本の中小企業で雇用されました。
　特に、建設・解体、化学薬品・重機、ホテル、介護サービス産業などで働いています。いわゆる日本では、３Ｄ、つまりDirty, Dangerous, Difficultです。このような仕事を、夜勤、日雇い、パート就労者として、従事してきました。彼らによって日本経済を支えてきた事実があるのです。そこから生じる健康に対する、日本政府の保障は不十分でした。

　さまざまな状況下での移民者が病気になった際に生じる問題の典型がここに示す通りです。医療を受ける時に言葉の不自由さがあること、治療費・生活費を含む経済的な課題、疾患に対する認識の違い、文化、習慣の違い、そして、サポート体制や適切な社会環境の不備です。
　これに対して、日本の医療ソーシャルワークには課題があります。卒前後教育で対応できる能力を育成する機会が十分であったか、医療ソーシャルワーカーが十分に対応できているか、社会システム構築のための十分なアクションをしてきたかなどが課題です。
　このように、健康を実現するのは単に医療だけがあればよいのではありません。彼らの生活環境や労働環境、栄養や情報など日常的な生活基盤の安定こそが重要です。日本政府による統計調査では、女性移民者の死亡率が、日本人に比較して、とても高いことが明らかになっています。日本国内でも、日本人と移民の健康格差がみられています。

　これまでのことを受けて、健康状態を規定する社会的条件に関して、20世紀後半以降、人びとの健康や病気が、社会的、経済的、政治的、環境的な条件に影響を受けることが広く認められるようになり、その研究が進んできました。
1、社会格差は平均寿命に関連する。
2.ストレス ストレスのある環境は、人々を精神的に不安定にする。これは不健康になり、死亡につながる。
3.幼少期の家庭環境や教育環境は、健康への影響する
4.社会的排除されて、生活の質が低いと、その人生は短くなること
5.労働職場でのストレスは、病気の可能性が高まる。
6.失業割合が高いことは、疾病の可能性と死亡と関連している。
7.社会的支援 家庭や職場、地域における友情、好ましい社会的関係、支援ネットワークは、健康につながる。
8.薬物依存は本人だけの問題ではなく、社会的状況と関連していること。
9.食品
10.交通
　これらのことを考えると、健康は社会的な側面からも大きく影響を受けており、これは自国だけではなく、解決できるものではなく、世界全体で取り組む課題であることがわかります。
　世界規模の健康の推進は、医療従事者だけでおこなわれるのではなく、この負の社会的要因を改善していくために、ソーシャルワーカーが戦っていく意味が見いだせるでしょう。

最後に、Globalization and the State of Social Work Practice and Future Challenges、として私の話をまとめたいと思います。

　さて、グローバリゼーション化で、ソーシャルワーカーは、保健政策を促進するために何をしたらいいのでしょう。皆さんはどう考えるでしょうか。
　グローバリゼーション化で、ソーシャルワーカーは、保健促進するためのメゾ、マクロ支援について、８つ示しました。すなわち、1.関係機関とのネットワークづくり、2.通訳システムの開発と医療機関への設置、3.ソーシャルワーカーが利用しやすいシステムの構築、4.地域レベルでの救急医療体制確保のための活動、5.自国の医療情報の把握、6.自国の関係機関・医療機関との連携、7.国際レベルでの国内状況報告の共有、８．社会活動、です。

　また、グローバル・ソーシャルワークの推進のためには、社会政策と人材開発の二つを検討する必要があると思います。すなわち、　グローバル人材（質）・マンパワー（量）の育成すること、　多文化対応能力・人材の育成すること、　ミクロとマクロの両側面を統合できるソーシャルワーク実践能力をつけることです。
　そのためには、私たちに必要なことは、　グローバルな視点に立ったSW養成プログラムの充実、　人権、社会正義などの原則を学ぶプログラムの充実、　国際的視野を養うための経験と機会の提供、　事例研究を蓄積・分析し、ソーシャルワーク・スキルについて研究し、現場でソーシャルワーク実践に生かすことです。

　今後の課題として私は皆さんと共に考えたいことをいくつか提案をします。
1つ目が、スリランカ、日本など国内のグローバル化の中でのソーシャルワークの強化です。二つ目が、社会変革・社会開発を目指すソーシャルワーク実践の推進・参画・活動です。3つ目は、アジア太平洋地域におけるソーシャルワーカーの連携と参加です。4つ目がIFSWグローバルとの連携強化、これらを一緒に検討して行きたいと思います。

　さて、今年のIFSW世界ソーシャルワーク・デー2024のテーマは「ブエン・ヴィヴィル」（Buen Vivir）です。
英語では 「the good life」（良い人生）、「living well」（良く生きる）という意味です。また、人生に対するホリスティックなアプローチも含まれ、人間界、自然界、精神界の調和、バランス、相互利益を強調している。良い暮らし」とは、経済成長や物質的な豊かさだけで十分だという考え方ではない。
これは、経済成長や物質的な豊かさのみに基づく西洋的な発展の概念ではない。
より包括的で持続可能な開発モデルを推進し、地域社会と環境の幸福を優先するものである。
　私たちアジア太平洋地域は、ソーシャルワーカーが団結してさまざまな社会的課題に 取り組むことを必要としている。
　さらに、私たち IFSW-AP は、互いの強みを認め合い、紹介し合い、多様性を通しての団結、 国境を越えた相互のつながりを称え、さらに重要なこととして、私たちを結びつける絆は強いということを信じています。
ご清聴ありがとうございました。

Social Security and Health Life

Good morning/afternoon, everyone.

I am Dr. Machiko Ohara, a Professor at the Japan College of Social Work and the President of the Asia-Pacific Region of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW-AP).

It is a pleasure to be here today to share insights and discuss [Social Security and Health Life] with all of you.

I hope today's presentation will provide valuable insights and foster meaningful dialogue.

The purpose of today's presentation is, first, to understand the current state of global health care in recent years, second, to understand the increasing number of migrants and their health care in Japan, and finally, to understand the provision of health services and social work practices for migrants in Japan and to discuss the health care policy that emerged in Sri Lanka. This is to be discussed. An outline is shown here.

1. Globalization and Trends in World Health Care

Do you know where Japan is geographically located? This small country is Japan. Sri Lanka is located under India. Japan is about six times the size of Sri Lanka. Japan's population is also 6 times larger than Sri Lanka's. How has Japanese healthcare changed under the influence of globalization?

Now, Japan, Sri Lanka and the world as a whole have changed a lot in the last 20 years.
Globalization is not internationalization, which is defined as the existence and relationship of nations in each unit system, but it indicates a global scale that transcends nations. Globalization refers to the process and phenomenon of "globalization" that transcends national and ethnic boundaries. This is affecting the world in economic, political, and technological aspects.
A similar concept is Americanization, for example, fast food where the same food can be eaten anywhere in the world, such as McDonald's, Coca-Cola or there are Hollywood movies that influence in the media. Unlike the unilateral imposition of American cultural elements, globalization is based on the premise of "interaction. This point is so important that I have explained it here.

What challenges does Japanese healthcare face as a result of this globalization? I would like to talk from a social work perspective.
Today, we can easily move around the world thanks to the progress of medical care, the spread of information systems such as IT, and the development of land, air, and sea transportation systems.
On the other hand, current international development has created a situation where wealth accumulation and poverty exist at the same time, and socioeconomic inequalities are evident. In response to these influences, developed countries have taken in many workers from developing countries.
In the internationalization of medicine, there is "medical tourism" in search of Japanese medical care. Many Japanese medical devices and pharmaceuticals are also being exported.
In addition, "transplant tourism," in which wealthy people, mainly from developed countries, buy organs from poverty-stricken people in developing countries, has become a problem in Japan and around the world.
Furthermore, with advances in reproductive medicine, surrogate mothers are available for childbirth. In Japan, this is being done in countries such as India, where surrogate mothers can give birth at a lower cost than in the United States.
However, there have been cases in Japan where the surrogate mother refused to give up her child due to religious issues, or where the requesting parents refused to accept the child because the child was born with a disability.
In addition, infectious diseases such as Covid-19 are a major threat to mankind. Japan is also involved in this global issue.
Although not widely reported in Japan, female immigrants are forced to work in the sex industry. Such patients sometimes come to Japanese medical institutions. In many cases, it is not until they come to the hospital that they are discovered to have been trafficked.

This current situation has led to a variety of problems for healthcare due to the advancement of globalization.
I have summarized the issues into six categories: 1) violation of human rights, 2) exploitation of the human body, 3) issues of reproductive health rights, 4) health issues arising from disparities between economies around the world, 5) religious and cultural issues, and 6) health problems caused by environmental destruction.
As a result of these factors, Japanese health care faces many ethical challenges due to the advancement of globalization.

I will now discuss the current situation of immigrants living in Japan and the current status and issues regarding their health.

The number of foreigners residing in Japan is increasing every year; in 2023, it will be 3.22 million, making Japan a multinational society at a faster pace than the government had expected. I am sure Dr. Virag will explain the details later.

In terms of the number of foreign residents in Japan by nationality and region, China accounts for 780,000, or 24.5 percent of the total, followed by Vietnam, Korea, the Philippines, Brazil, Nepal, and Indonesia.

This does not include undocumented people, but it is estimated that about 220,000 people are living in Japan.

The number of immigrants living in Japan has become increasingly diverse, and the problems they face have become more complex. The current situation is that immigrants, regardless of their nationality, can become ill or suffer from physical or mental disabilities. The reasons for this are often related to their working and living environment. This will be discussed in the next slide.

Around 1990, Japan experienced a serious shortage of labor, and many immigrants came to Japan. Many of them were employed by Japanese small and medium-sized enterprises.

In particular, they worked in the construction and demolition, chemical and heavy machinery, hotel, and nursing service industries. In Japan, they are so-called 3D, or Dirty, Dangerous, Difficult. They have been engaged in these jobs as night, day, and part-time workers. It is a fact that these workers have supported the Japanese economy. The Japanese government's guarantee for their health has been inadequate.

Here is a typical example of the problems that arise when immigrants fall ill under various circumstances. These include language barriers when receiving medical care, financial challenges including treatment and living expenses, differences in perception of illness, culture, and customs, and inadequate support systems and appropriate social environments.

In contrast, medical social work in Japan has its challenges. The challenges include whether there have been sufficient opportunities to develop the ability to respond in pre- and post-graduate education, whether medical social workers are adequately prepared to respond, and whether sufficient action has been taken to build social systems.

Therefore, achieving health is not simply a matter of medical care alone. It is the stability of their living and working environment, nutrition, information, and other daily life infrastructure that is critical. Statistical surveys by the Japanese government reveal that the mortality rate among female immigrants is much higher than that of the Japanese. Even within Japan, there are health disparities between Japanese and immigrants.

In response to the above, with regard to social conditions that determine health status, since the late 20th century, it has been widely accepted and studied that people's health and illness are influenced by social, economic, political, and environmental conditions.

1. social disparities are associated with life expectancy.
2. Stress Stressful environments make people mentally unstable. This leads to poor health and death.
3. Childhood family and educational environments have an impact on health.
4. Social exclusion and low quality of life shorten their lives.
5. Stress in the work place increases the likelihood of illness.
6. Higher rates of unemployment are associated with the likelihood of illness and death.
7. Social support Friendships, positive social relationships, and support networks at home, at work, and in the community are linked to good health.
8. Drug addiction is not only a problem for the individual, but is related to social circumstances.
9. Food
10. transportation.

These considerations indicate that health is heavily influenced by social aspects, and that this is not something that can be solved only in one's own country, but is a challenge to be addressed by the world as a whole.

The promotion of health on a global scale will not be done only by health professionals, but social workers will find it meaningful to fight for the improvement of this negative social factor.

【Part 3】
3. Globalization and the State of Social Work Practice and Future Challenges

Finally, I would like to summarize my talk as "Globalization and the State of Social Work Practice and Future Challenges.

So, what should social workers do to promote health policy in the face of globalization? What do you think?
In globalization, social workers have identified eight mezzo-macro supports for promoting health: 1. These are: 1. networking with related institutions, 2. development of interpretation systems and their installation in medical institutions, 3. construction of systems that are easy for social workers to use, 4. activities to secure emergency medical systems at the local level, 5. understanding medical information in the home country, 6. collaboration with related institutions and medical institutions in the home country, 7. sharing national situation reports at the international level, and 8. Sharing domestic situation reports at the international level; and 8. social activities.

In addition, in order to promote global social work, we need to consider two aspects: social policy and human resource development. That is, 1) to develop global human resources (quality) and manpower (quantity), 2) to develop multicultural competence and human resources, and 3) to develop social work practice skills that can integrate both micro and macro aspects.
To achieve these goals, we need to (1) develop SW training programs from a global perspective, (2) enhance programs to learn principles such as human rights and social justice, (3) provide experiences and opportunities to develop an international perspective, and (4) accumulate and analyze case studies, research social work skills, and apply them to social work practice in the field. social work practice.

I have a few suggestions for future issues that I would like to discuss with you.
The first is to strengthen social work in the context of globalization in Sri Lanka, Japan, and other countries. The second is the promotion of social work practice, participation, and activities aimed at social change and social development; the third is collaboration and participation of social workers in the Asia-Pacific region; and the fourth is strengthening collaboration with IFSW Global, which I would like to discuss with you.

The theme for this year's IFSW World Social Work Day 2024 is Buen Vivir.
In English, it means "the good life" or "living well. It also includes a holistic approach to life, emphasizing harmony, balance, and mutual benefit among the human, natural, and spiritual worlds. Living well" is not the notion that economic growth and material wealth alone are sufficient.
In other words, it is not a Western conception of development, such as economic growth and material wealth.
It promotes a more inclusive and sustainable development model that prioritizes the well-being of local communities and the environment.
We in the Asia-Pacific region need social workers to unite and address various social challenges.
Furthermore, we, the IFSW-AP, recognize and showcase each other's strengths, celebrate unity through diversity, interconnectedness across borders, and more importantly, believe that the bonds that bind us are strong.

Today, as we gather, let us prove once again that we are strong, united, and determined as a force in numbers and as social workers of the world.
I sincerely wish this conference a successful outcome and look forward to the future development and success of social work.

Social Security in the 21st Century: The Sri Lankan Perspective and the Role of Social Workers

S.P.Premaratna

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished guests, and fellow social workers, it is a great honor to stand before you today to discuss a topic that lies at the very heart of our profession—social protection. In fact, social protection goes beyond social security and safety nets, although the theme of the conference is social security in the 21st century.

I am especially delighted to be here today for three main reasons:

1. The areas of social protection and social security are more critical than ever in today's world, and the methods and delivery systems have evolved to meet the demands of the 21st century and the 5th Industrial Revolution.
2. I am thrilled to stand before you today because this very institution was my dream place when I did my social work diploma in 1989. Being here is a personal milestone.
3. The topic we are discussing today aligns closely with some of my recent research areas. We assessed Sri Lanka's social protection since independence and developed a comprehensive social protection system for Sri Lanka, in collaboration with the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance. I am proud to share that just two weeks ago, the Ministry of Finance launched the Sri Lanka Social Protection Policy although they did not take our key strategies.

Therefore, I feel deeply connected to today's discussion. I extend my heartfelt thanks to the National Institute of Social Development for inviting me to speak on this important subject.

The theme for today's discussion is social security in the 21st century. However, before we look into this, it's essential to understand that social security is just one component of the broader concept of social protection. When taken it in isolation, social security loses much of its significance. Therefore, I prefer to use the term social protection, which encompasses four key pillars: (1) social security, (2) social safety nets or social assistance, (3) the labor market, and (4) social services.

By definition, social protection includes three main functions: protection—which involves social assistance, prevention—which is covered by social security, and promotion—which relates to the labor market, such as creating job and employment opportunities. Social services, on the other hand, include essential services like education and healthcare.

In 2020 and 2021, we conducted a comprehensive study on social protection in Sri Lanka for the World Bank and the Ministry of Finance, resulting in the development of a universal, life-cycle approach to social protection policy for the country. I am pleased to mention that many parts of this policy document were utilized by the Ministry of Finance and the World Bank when they launched the Sri Lanka Social Protection Policy two weeks ago.

In 2024, we undertook another extensive study, focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In this study, we projected future economic growth under various scenarios and assessed the likelihood of achieving the SDGs. We also estimated the annual investment required to meet SDGs, identifying potential funding sources, including government contributions, private sector investments, foreign direct investments (FDIs), international donations, and contributions from the general public.

My speech today is primarily based on these two studies, as well as two additional studies conducted for the UNDP, led by Professor Lakshman Dissanayake, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Colombo. I, along with Professor Manori Wejethunga from Colombo, were part of this research team. These studies focused on National Transfer Accounts and National Time Transfer Accounts. While such studies have been conducted in many other countries, this was the first time NTA and NTTA were done for Sri Lanka. The findings from these studies form the foundation of my address today. But before we go deeper into the academic discussion on social protection, I would like to share a story with you—one that forms the backbone of today's address.

The Story of Love and Perception

The story is about a young married couple deeply in love. A young man married a beautiful woman, they loved each other lot before getting married, and their early days of marriage were also filled with love and admiration, like some of you here as well. They lived a simple but happy life, sharing their joys and sorrows. However, as time passed, the woman contracted a skin disease, and her beauty began to fade. As her skin condition worsened, she began to withdraw, feeling ashamed and worried that her husband would no longer find her beautiful.

Her husband, a man of keen perception, noticed the change in his wife. He saw the way she avoided mirrors, how she would turn away when he looked at her, the sadness that now remained in her eyes. He knew her heart was breaking, not because of the disease, but because she feared losing his love. The man got a chance to consult a social worker. Around this time, the man had to leave home and the town to undertake an assignment as part of his studies. One of his tasks was to investigate and resolve a complex case within a small organization of about fifty workers. As he investigated into his work, he came across a woman within the organization who was facing her own share of hardships. She was beautiful, but her life was marred by misfortune. Her husband had fallen into the dark clutches of drug addiction and had become notorious activities. As word spread about her family situation, her coworkers began to avoid her, treating her with suspicion and dishonestly. The man, moved by her plight, took her case to heart. Using his skills as a young social worker, he tirelessly worked to clear her name, to protect her from the harsh judgments of her peers. Through his efforts, the woman was able to regain her dignity and find some semblance of peace in her troubled life. In Sri Lanka we also have many similar stories, but unfortunately, we do not have a system to get support from social workers in our workplaces.

Social Protection in Sri Lanka

Let me share a story about a young married couple that is still unfolding, but before I continue, let's discuss social protection in Sri Lanka. I deliberately avoid referring to it as a 'system' because, since independence, Sri Lanka has not had a comprehensive social protection system—only a collection of ad-hoc and isolated programs. Currently, there are around 26 national programs aimed at social protection, but they operate without coordination or integration.

In our assessment of social protection in Sri Lanka, we employed a life cycle approach, identifying risks that individuals and families face at different stages—starting from early childhood, through school age, youth, working age, and into old age. Each stage presents unique risks and requires different forms of protection. Unfortunately, Sri Lanka lacks a system to effectively shield individuals from these risks, leading some to fall into poverty. This makes social security an essential element of a robust social protection framework. Once someone falls into poverty, the country must spend significant resources on social assistance programs, which is why Sri Lanka spends considerable amounts on initiatives like Samurdhi.

Using the National Transfer Account, we estimated the funds required to provide full social protection for children and the elderly. In 2016, it was estimated that Sri Lanka needed LKR 447 billion to care for these groups, and by 2032, this amount is projected to rise to only LKR 497 billion. However, in 2019, Sri Lanka needed just LKR 20 billion to lift all those below the poverty line, yet the government spent LKR 161.5 billion across 20 social welfare programs, with LKR 44.5 billion allocated to Samurdhi alone. The total government expenditure on social services—including health, education, and community services, but excluding production-related subsidies—was LKR 807 billion in 2019.

When compared to other countries in the South Asia region, Sri Lanka's spending on health was 1.6% of GDP, 2.8% on education, and 0.7% on social security.

Despite this, our coverage is high, with 54.7% of intended beneficiaries receiving government support. However, the per capita benefit is low, amounting to just $47.11 in 2019.

Among low-income workers, a staggering 92% do not contribute to any social security system, a percentage that is even higher among self-employed individuals.

When we examine the main economic activities of low-income workers, apart from the garment and textile sector, nearly all other sectors almost do not contribute to social security. This is the situation with low-income employees in the country.

While Sri Lanka does have several social security programs—such as the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF), Employees' Trust Fund (ETF), public servants' pension schemes, and medical insurance for the formal sector, as well as farmers' pensions, self-employment insurance, and fishermen's pensions for the informal sector—their coverage remains limited.

Life cycle approach to social protection

In our study, we analyzed the level of social protection support throughout the different stages of the life cycle, focusing on social assistance, social security, labor market support, and social services. Our objective was to identify gaps in coverage and develop strategies to address these gaps.

We thoroughly examined each social protection program to assess whether they effectively mitigate the risks individuals face at each stage of their lives.

Starting with pregnant mothers and infants, the primary risks are health-related. We then reviewed existing social protection programs to determine if they adequately address these risks and considered the role social workers can play at this stage. The next stage focuses on school-age children, where it is crucial to ensure they progress smoothly to the next phase—youth—without setbacks. While free education in Sri Lanka provides some level of support, education is still the third-largest expenditure for households, particularly due to the prevalence of private tuition. The key question is whether our education system adequately prepares children for the next stage of life. What social workers can do at these stages?

Moving on to youth, the focus shifts to skill training and preparation for the job market. Many of you may already be familiar with the gaps and challenges at this stage. You know the risks and what young people truly need. As we continue to the working-age adult stage—just like the young married couple in our story—questions arise about the adequacy of social protection. Do we have sufficient job opportunities? Are there unemployment benefits?

Finally, we reach old age. What provisions are in place for the elderly? Do all elderly individuals have access to protection? For example, in the Maldives, there is a universal pension system. In contrast, many women in Sri Lanka, who often work more than men, lack pension coverage or any form of social protection. Without a system to address the risks and needs at each stage of life, more individuals will inevitably fall into poverty, which is precisely what has occurred in Sri Lanka.

Now, let's compare this to the situation in the USA, where children are well-protected, and then look at what happens to youth in Sri Lanka, their innovative ideas, and the opportunities they lack. Why can't we create a social protection system to safeguard them? It's crucial to understand that social protection should not only target those who are already vulnerable but also provide support to prevent others from becoming vulnerable.

Consider the realities faced by our women, and those who need social assistance, such as persons with disabilities. What is happening to our elderly population? What are the conditions like in our workplaces?

In 2022, we proposed a universal social protection strategy using a life cycle model. We advocated for a development-oriented social protection system that, according to our calculations, could contribute around 60% to economic growth. This strategy is built on four pillars, including a proposed Social Protection Fund and a system designed to include everyone, regardless of income level. We have even developed specific products to support this initiative.

However, this effort requires the support of social workers. Now, let me continue with the story of the young married couple and explore how social workers can play a crucial role in changing mindsets and ensuring that our social protection system serves everyone effectively.

Back to the married couple

In the story, the man was on his way home after successfully completing his assignment, but his thoughts were consumed by the challenges awaiting him. He had learned that his wife's condition had worsened—the illness had taken a much greater toll on her than he had imagined. She was no longer the beautiful woman he had married, at least not in the way the world defined beauty.

During his journey back, accidentally he became a complete blind. When he reunited with his wife, she was shocked by his condition. With a bittersweet smile, he explained that he had lost his sight during his travels. He could no longer see the world around him, but he assured her that it didn't matter, because in his heart, he could still see her—his beloved wife—just as she had always been.

And so, they continued their lives together. She, believing that her husband could no longer see her perceived ugliness, found peace in his presence. Her fears about her appearance slowly melted away, and she felt cherished and loved, as if nothing had changed between them.

What a profound impact social workers can have in situations like this.

Now, let me discuss the vital role of social workers in social protection.

The Vital Role of Social Work in Advancing Social Protection

Today, I will highlight how social work contributes to social protection through advocacy, direct service, community development, capacity building, research, emergency response, and collaboration. Although the young couple story gives us a message, social workers role is much more complex.

1. **Advocacy and Policy Influence:** Social workers are often the voices for those who cannot speak for themselves. They advocate for policies that create social safety nets, social security, and opportunities for employment, ensuring that vulnerable populations have access to essential services like healthcare, education, and financial assistance. By engaging with policymakers and stakeholders, social workers help shape legislation that safeguards the rights and well-being of marginalized communities.

2. **Direct Service Provision:** Second, at the heart of social work is the direct provision of services to individuals and families. Social workers are on the front lines, offering counseling, case management, and connection to resources such as food assistance, housing support, and healthcare. These services are often a lifeline for people in crisis, helping them navigate challenging situations and access the support they need to survive and thrive. Social workers ensure that social protection is not just a theoretical concept but a practical reality for those who need it most. I still remember while I was doing the social work diploma from this institute, how we helped many children to join school and education.

3. **Community Development:** Third, social workers also play a key role in community development. By facilitating community initiatives, they help build resilience and support networks that address issues like poverty, unemployment, and inequality. Social workers empower communities to find their own solutions, fostering a sense of ownership and sustainability in social protection efforts. This approach not only addresses immediate needs but also strengthens the community's capacity to withstand future challenges.

4. **Capacity Building:** Fourth, empowerment is a foundation of social work. Social workers help individuals and communities build the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to navigate life's challenges and access available social protection programs. Whether it's through educational workshops, vocational training, or financial literacy programs, social workers equip people with the tools they need to improve their circumstances and break the cycle of poverty.

5. **Research and Evaluation:** Fifth, social workers contribute to the body of research that informs evidence-based policies and practices in social protection. By conducting studies and evaluations, they ensure that interventions are responsive to the actual needs of vulnerable populations. This research is critical in refining social protection programs, making them more effective and better tailored to the realities of those they serve. Some like you are doing here at the International Conference. This will be a great opportunity if you further invited here and worked with policy makers and other stakeholders.

6. Emergency and Crisis Response: Sixth, during times of crisis, social workers are often the first responders, providing immediate relief and psychosocial support. Whether it's a natural disaster, a public health emergency, or a social upheaval, social workers step in to offer critical assistance and help communities recover. Their work doesn't stop at the initial response; they also play a vital role in the long-term recovery process, helping individuals and communities rebuild their lives. This remind me how we worked in flood situation when we were doing our social work diploma here.

7. Collaboration with Stakeholders: Finally, social workers understand the importance of collaboration. They work closely with government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and community groups to strengthen social protection systems. By fostering partnerships, social workers ensure that the support provided is comprehensive and that no one falls through the cracks. Their collaborative approach helps to create a more cohesive and effective social protection network.

In conclusion, social work is integral to the advancement of social protection. Social workers bring compassion, expertise, and dedication to their work, ensuring that vulnerable individuals and communities receive the support they need.

Best Practices and Approaches to Social Work for Social Protection:

As we explore the role of social work in promoting social protection, it's crucial to draw inspiration from successful models around the world. Different countries have implemented innovative approaches that demonstrate the power of social work in creating resilient, equitable societies. Let's take a look at some of these best practices and approaches.

1. The Nordic Model (Denmark, Sweden, Norway): The Nordic countries—Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—are often cited as exemplary in providing comprehensive social protection. Their approach is characterized by:

- Universal Social Services: These countries offer universal access to healthcare, education, childcare, and eldercare. Social workers in these systems ensure that every citizen, regardless of their economic status, has access to essential services, thereby promoting social equity and inclusion.
- Active Labor Market Policies: In the Nordic model, there is a strong focus on retraining and job placement programs. Social workers play a vital role in these initiatives, helping individuals who are unemployed or at risk of job loss to acquire new skills and re-enter the workforce. This proactive approach not only prevents long-term unemployment but also fosters economic inclusion.

2. Canada: Canada offers another effective model of social protection, particularly through its integrated service delivery and community-based approaches:

- Integrated Service Delivery: In many Canadian provinces, social services are integrated with healthcare and education. This ensures that vulnerable populations receive coordinated and comprehensive support. Social workers are central to this integration, providing a continuum of care that addresses multiple needs simultaneously.
- Community-Based Approaches: Canada's emphasis on localized support through community health centers and social service hubs is notable. These centers, staffed by social workers and other professionals, are responsive to the unique needs of the communities they serve, offering a tailored approach to social protection.

3. Brazil: Brazil's social protection efforts have garnered attention, particularly through programs that target poverty and health disparities:

- Bolsa Família Program: This conditional cash transfer program supports low-income families by providing financial assistance contingent upon children's school attendance and healthcare visits. Social workers are instrumental in monitoring compliance and ensuring that families receive the support they need to break the cycle of poverty.
- Community Health Agents: In underserved areas, trained social workers and health professionals conduct home visits and provide basic health education. This approach not only improves health outcomes but also builds trust within communities, ensuring that social protection efforts are both effective and culturally appropriate.

4. South Africa: South Africa has developed a robust social protection system that addresses the needs of its most vulnerable populations:

- Social Grants System: The country's system of social grants, including child support grants and old-age pensions, plays a crucial role in alleviating poverty. Social workers assist beneficiaries in navigating the application process and ensure that grants reach those who need them most.
- Community Development Workers: These workers are deployed within communities to provide social support, link individuals to services, and initiate community development projects. Their presence on the ground helps bridge the gap between policy and practice, making social protection more accessible.

5. Singapore: Singapore's approach to social protection combines economic development with comprehensive social policies:

- Comprehensive Social Policies: Singapore supports its citizens across their life course with policies such as housing subsidies, healthcare financing, and lifelong learning credits. Social workers ensure that these policies are implemented effectively, helping individuals at every stage of life to access the resources they need.
- Community Care Networks: The Community Development Councils (CDCs) in Singapore are a prime example of localized support. These councils coordinate community resources, ensuring that social protection is delivered efficiently and meets the specific needs of each community.

6. Australia: Australia's social protection model emphasizes early intervention and cultural sensitivity:

- Early Intervention Programs: Initiatives like the Stronger Families program focus on providing support to at-risk families early on. Social workers offer parenting support, counseling, and family mediation, helping to prevent crises before they escalate.
- Indigenous Community Controlled Organizations: These organizations empower Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to deliver culturally sensitive social services. Social workers within these organizations ensure that social protection efforts respect and reflect the cultural values and needs of Indigenous populations.

In conclusion, the examples from these diverse countries illustrate the powerful impact that social work can have on promoting social protection. Whether through universal access to services, community-based approaches, or culturally sensitive interventions, social workers around the world are making a difference in the lives of millions. As we continue to develop and refine our own social protection systems, let us draw inspiration from these best practices and remain committed to the principles of equity, inclusion, and justice.

Key Models and Approaches in Social Work Contributing to Social Protection and security

Let's examine some of the key models that significantly contribute to social protection and welfare.

1. Strengths-Based Approach: The Strengths-Based Approach is a foundational model in social work that shifts the focus from problems to potentials.

- Overview: This approach centers on identifying and leveraging individuals' strengths, resources, and capacities rather than merely addressing their deficits or problems.
- Application: Social workers utilize this approach to help clients recognize their inherent strengths and resources, empowering them to overcome challenges. By building on what individuals and communities already possess, this approach fosters resilience and self-efficacy, enabling them to achieve their social protection goals.

2. Rights-Based Approach: Grounded in human rights principles, the Rights-Based Approach emphasizes the fundamental entitlements and freedoms that individuals possess.

- Overview: This approach is anchored in the belief that every individual is entitled to certain rights by virtue of being human, including the right to social protection.
- Application: Social workers adopting this approach advocate for and uphold their clients' rights, ensuring access to essential services and opportunities without discrimination. This approach is particularly effective in addressing systemic inequalities and ensuring that vulnerable populations receive the protection and support they deserve.

3. Empowerment Approach: The Empowerment Approach focuses on enhancing the capacity of individuals and communities to take control of their lives and actively participate in decision-making processes.

- Overview: This approach is about giving power back to the people, enabling them to make informed decisions and advocate for their needs.
- Application: Social workers empower their clients by providing them with the necessary information, skills training, and support to navigate social protection systems. This approach is crucial in helping individuals and communities advocate for themselves, ensuring that their voices are heard in policy and program development.

4. Ecological Systems Theory: Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes the complex interactions between individuals and their environments.

- Overview: This theory posits that individuals are influenced by various systems at multiple levels, from their immediate family and community (micro-level) to broader societal and policy contexts (macro-level).
- Application: Social workers use this theory to assess how different systems impact individuals' access to social protection. They intervene at various levels to address barriers and create environments that support positive outcomes. This holistic approach is particularly effective in addressing the multi-faceted nature of social protection challenges.

5. Trauma-Informed Approach: The Trauma-Informed Approach recognizes the pervasive impact of trauma on individuals' lives and integrates trauma-sensitive practices into service delivery.

- Overview: This approach acknowledges that many clients have experienced trauma, which can affect their ability to access and benefit from social protection services.
- Application: Social workers create safe and supportive environments, employing practices that minimize the risk of re-traumatization. By integrating trauma-specific interventions, they ensure that social protection services are accessible and beneficial to all clients, particularly those who have experienced significant adversity.

6. Community Development Approach: The Community Development Approach focuses on empowering communities to identify and address their own needs, fostering self-reliance and collective action.

- Overview: This approach emphasizes the importance of community-led initiatives in achieving sustainable social protection outcomes.
- Application: Social workers collaborate with communities to develop and implement social protection strategies. By mobilizing local resources and building sustainable support networks, they help communities become more resilient and self-reliant.

7. Intersectionality Approach: The Intersectionality Approach recognizes that individuals experience multiple interconnected social identities, such as race, gender, and class, which intersect to shape their experiences.

- Overview: This approach is critical in understanding the complex and layered nature of social inequalities.
- Application: Social workers analyze how intersecting identities impact individuals' access to social protection and advocate for inclusive policies and services. By addressing the diverse needs and experiences of clients, they ensure that social protection systems are equitable and accessible to all.

In conclusion, the models and approaches discussed here are essential tools in the social worker's toolkit, enabling them to effectively promote social protection and welfare. Whether through empowering individuals, advocating for rights, or addressing complex systemic barriers, these approaches ensure that social work remains a powerful force for positive change.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As we navigate the complexities of social protection in an ever-evolving world, it is crucial to acknowledge the transformative role that technology, particularly Artificial Intelligence (AI), can play in enhancing our efforts. AI has the potential to significantly improve social protection systems, making them more efficient, responsive, and inclusive.

AI in Targeting and Eligibility Determination: One of the most powerful applications of AI in social protection is in the area of targeting and eligibility determination. AI algorithms can analyze vast datasets to identify individuals or communities most in need of social protection interventions. By considering socioeconomic indicators, demographics, and other relevant factors, AI helps us target resources more effectively. This ensures that the most vulnerable populations receive the support they need, reducing the risk of exclusion.

Fraud Detection and Prevention: AI also plays a critical role in safeguarding the integrity of social protection programs. Through pattern recognition and anomaly detection, AI can identify fraudulent activities or misuse of social protection funds. This not only protects resources but also ensures that benefits reach those who are truly entitled to them.

Personalized Service Delivery: AI-driven systems have the capability to personalize service delivery by analyzing individual needs and preferences. By recommending relevant services or benefits, AI optimizes resource allocation in real-time, ensuring that individuals receive the most appropriate support. This personalized approach enhances the effectiveness of social protection interventions.

Predictive Analytics for Early Intervention: AI's predictive analytics can forecast trends and identify potential risks or vulnerabilities within communities. This allows for early intervention strategies that can prevent issues such as poverty, homelessness, or health crises before they escalate. By anticipating challenges, we can respond proactively, rather than reactively, to emerging social protection needs.

Automation of Administrative Processes: AI-powered automation offers significant benefits in streamlining administrative tasks. From application processing to eligibility assessments and case management, AI reduces bureaucracy and enhances the efficiency of service delivery. This not only saves time but also improves the overall experience for beneficiaries.

Enhanced Decision-Making Support: AI tools provide decision-makers with data-driven insights and scenario analysis, enabling them to optimize policy formulation, resource allocation, and program design. This leads to better social protection outcomes, as policies are informed by comprehensive data and predictive models.

Monitoring and Evaluation: AI analytics are invaluable in monitoring program effectiveness and measuring impact metrics. By conducting real-time evaluations, AI helps us assess the outcomes of social protection interventions and informs adaptive management strategies. This ensures that programs are continuously refined and improved.

Examples of AI Applications in Social Protection:
- India's Aadhaar System: Utilizing biometric data and AI for identity verification, this system enables the efficient delivery of social benefits and subsidies, ensuring that support reaches the right people.
- Kenya's Ushahidi Platform: This platform uses AI for crowd-sourced data collection on social issues, facilitating targeted responses and interventions that address the needs of the most vulnerable.

In conclusion, the integration of AI into social protection systems presents a unique opportunity to enhance our ability to protect and empower vulnerable populations.

Connecting to the story

As we explore the innovative ways technology, such as AI, can enhance social protection, it's important to remember the core of our work—the human stories that drive our passion and commitment to social justice. Allow me to share a poignant story that underscores the very essence of what social protection aims to achieve.

For years, the husband continued to care for his wife with unwavering devotion. He led her around the house, tended to her needs, and showered her with love and kindness, never letting on that he could see her as clearly as ever.

Sadly, the wife's health deteriorated, and she eventually passed away. After her funeral, the husband decided to leave their home, and it was then that the truth was revealed. The neighbors, concerned for him, asked how he would manage now that his wife was gone. The husband calmly replied, "I was never blind. I pretended to be blind because I knew how much her appearance troubled her. I did it so she could live without the burden of feeling unattractive. My blindness was my way of protecting her dignity and her heart."

This story, though simple, carries a powerful message about the true nature of social protection. It is not just about providing resources or services; it is about understanding the deep, personal struggles that people face and responding with compassion, dignity, and love. Social protection is about more than just policy or technology—it's about humanity.

As we incorporate advanced technologies like AI into our social protection frameworks, we must never lose sight of this fundamental truth. AI can help us identify those in need, streamline services, and predict crises, but it is the human touch, the empathy, and the willingness to truly see and understand others that makes social protection meaningful.

Just as the husband in the story chose to protect his wife's dignity through his actions, we too must strive to protect the dignity and well-being of the vulnerable populations we serve. Whether through advanced technology or simple human kindness, our goal must always be to uplift, empower, and preserve the dignity of every individual.

As we move forward in this 21st century, let us combine the power of technology with the strength of human compassion. Let us use AI not only to optimize our social protection systems but also to ensure that they are rooted in empathy and respect for human experience. In doing so, we can build a world where everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can live with dignity, security, and hope. For such, social workers must work together with new technology such as AI. Therefore, social workers must have a bigger role in this AI lead 5th industrial age.

Finally, allow me to leave this stage today without blind to see how our young social workers work in the 21st century and in the 5th industrial age. Thank you once again for inviting me for this wonderful event.

S.P.Premaratna 3-09-2024

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Economic Difficulties Facedby Thalassemia PatientsinKurunagala DS Area

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As reported in the 2012 UNICEF progress report, Sri Lanka has been identified as having an intermediate prevalence of thalassemia, with approximately 3,500 patients. In 2017, 1,063 thalassemia patients were recorded in the Wayamba district, marking it as a highly prevalent area. A lack of disease knowledge among the population and the practice of consanguineous marriages are key contributing factors to the high incidence rates. Many patients face severe economic burdens, threatening their quality of life. Due to the excessive cost, thalassemia management has become a major health issue in the country. The high cost of medication has led to an inadequate supply, causing patients to discontinue treatment. The financial strain on affected individuals and families is significant, with the national cost of treatment exceeding 0.4 million rupees annually for a caseload of approximately 5,000 patients, presenting a challenge for the country. This research aims to scrutinize the economic difficulties faced by thalassemia patients. A qualitative approach was adopted, using purposive sampling, with in-depth interviews and observations as data collection tools. A sample size of 12 was analyzed through the Narrative Lifeline Case Study Method. The analysis revealed that the majority of patients are vulnerable due to the costs associated with travel, medication, and treatments such as dialysis. The lack of proper government support or policy exacerbates their situation. Recommendations include implementing premarital counseling, allocating monthly funds from the national budget, and providing support for self-employment to improve the living standards of thalassemia patients. Additionally, decentralizing thalassemia centers and offering medication at nominal prices are suggested to ensure a healthier life for those affected.

Keywords: Cost of medication process, Dialysis, Economic difficulties, Lack of knowledge,Thalassemia patients.

Impact of economic crisis on the social security system of rural elderly peoplein Medagama GS area, Monaragala District.

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Economic downturns have posed a significant challenge to social protection systems, affecting vulnerable groups such as the elderly in rural areas. The primary objectives of this study were to assess the financial sustainability of social security programs for rural elders during an economic downturn, evaluate the adequacy and accessibility of social security benefits, and identify strategies and support mechanisms used by rural elders during times of financial hardship. A mixed methods approach involving quantitative data analysis and qualitative interviews was used for the research. Data were collected through government reports, social security program statistics and interviews and questionnaires with 55 elderly residents aged over 65 years in Medagama Divisional Secretariat, Monaragala District. In addition, data on personal experiences and systemic challenges were obtained from local policymakers and social service officials. Quantitative data provided statistical analysis on the financial sustainability and adequacy of social security benefits, while qualitative data from interviews offered detailed accounts of accessibility issues and informal support mechanisms used by the elderly. The integration of these methods enabled a comprehensive assessment of the challenges faced by rural elders during economic crises and highlighted the need for resilient social protection systems.

The study found that the economic downturn significantly undermined the financial resources allocated to social security systems, resulting in reduced funding and benefits for the elderly. These populations already face limited access to health care and economic opportunities and experience heightened vulnerability during economic crises. 85% of data contributors revealed that the adequacy of benefits often fails to meet the basic needs of the elderly, leading to increased poverty and health complications. Accessibility is a major issue that makes it difficult for rural elders to access social security benefits and health care. Despite these challenges, the elderly community relies heavily on informal support networks, including family and community-based organizations, to manage economic hardship. However, these informal networks are also vulnerable during downturns, underscoring the need for strong formal social protection mechanisms.

The findings highlight the urgent need for resilience and responsiveness in social protection systems to support rural elders during economic downturns better. Strong collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations and local communities is essential to create a stronger support system for rural elders.

Keywords –Accessibility, Adequacy of Benefits,Financial Sustainability, Rural Elderly, Social Security Systems

Social Security for Women Tea Plantation Workers in Golaghat District of Assam: Compliance with the Plantation Labour Act, 1951

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The social security of women workers in the informal economy remains a pressing concern across the globe. The present paper is based on a study from the tea plantation industry located in the north eastern parts of the Indian grassroots. It seeks to examine the extent to which the tea estates in the Golaghat district comply with the Indian Plantation Labour Act, 1951, with respect to safeguarding the social security of the women tea plantation workers. The objective of the study was to evaluate the adherence to the provisions intended to protect the women tea plantation workers and identify the disparities while implementing these provisions, if any.

The methodology adopted was a qualitative approach with a descriptive study design, wherein the data was collected through semi-structured interviews and observations within the selected tea estates. The study has revealed significant non-compliance with the provisions mentioned in the Act, and critical social security measures such as maternity benefits, welfare services, etc are either inadequately provided or selectively available, thereby favouring certain section of women workers over others.

These research findings are vital from a social work perspective, as they highlight the need for targeted interventions and policy-making in order to ensure equitable treatment of all the women workers. Ensuring compliance with the legal measures is a fundamental aspect of promoting social justice and welfare of the workers. The study recommends the need to advocate the rights of the marginalized populations, and support the empowerment of women in the informal economy.
Key words: Social security, women tea plantation workers, Plantation Labour Act

Key words: Social security, women tea plantation workers, Plantation Labour Act

Cultural Context of Care & Social Security: A Review of Elderly Care in India

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The elderly population is growing in terms of size and proportion necessitating robust mechanisms to meet their needs. Rapid aging leads to dependency, health issues, and insecurity impacting their ability to work and with dignity. This review explores the current status of the social security system in India, focusing on the cultural context of care, dependency, and the economic value of unpaid care. It examines the civil society interventions, compares the social safety nets of other countries for cost-effectiveness and sustainability, identifies the shortcomings within the social security measures, and highlights challenges faced by the elderly and their families. The aim is also tore commend comprehensive policies that support the elderly and their families. Using a thematic review approach, the study is based on secondary data. Literature will be manually searched with a strategy including major keywords. Information will be gathered through academic search platforms and databases. Thematic analysis will be used to analyze the themes. The study emphasizes India's cultural shift from the traditional joint family system (primary unit of social security for the elderly) to nuclear and alternate family systems. This transition is accompanied by numerous factors such as declining fertility, longevity, and changing lifestyle making it a systemic problem and a challenge in elderly care. It explores different ranges and layers of dependencies in old age such as health, economic, social, and technological, with widowed women being the most vulnerable. The study highlights the replacement costs of unpaid care emphasizing the role and importance of informal caregivers gaining insights from cross-cultural comparisons, especially with the US and Canada). The relevant interventions ensuring social security for the elderly undertaken by CSOs in India are presented. The study also highlights some of the best practices of developed countries such as Germany, Japan, and South Korea, that may be adopted or adapted by developing countries like India, especially in the domains of universal health coverage, pension systems with special protections, and subsidies to meet the differential needs of the older persons. Finally, it advocates fora holistic policy approach to address the diverse needs of the elderly population. India's social security system for the elderly needs improvement. An integrated approach, involving state and civil society, can enhance coordination, effectiveness, sustainability, and reach, drawing from the cross-cultural perspective. Policies should support and recognize family roles in elderly care.

Keywords: Aging, Elderly, India, Informal Care, Social Security

Towards Sustainable Support: Analyzing Social Security Schemes for Elderly Welfare in India

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India's elderly population has been steadily growing since 2011, with projections indicating a potential increase to 16% by 2041, attributed largely to declining Total Fertility Rates and smaller family sizes. Globally, ageism remains prevalent, posing challenges to the productivity and well-being of the elderly. Thus, ensuring their empowerment and social security has become paramount. Understanding the efficacy of current social security schemes is crucial for informing necessary adjustments and improvements.

This research aims to achieve three primary objectives: (i) Analyse existing social security schemes for the elderly in India. (ii) Identify gaps within these schemes. (iii) To document the ideas to improve the social security schemes for the elderly population in India.

Utilizing a qualitative approach, this study employs the Delphi method and conducts a systematic literature review to gain insights into current schemes as well as their shortcomings. Experts' perspectives will be gathered to assess the relevance of these schemes and gain insights necessary to improve the social security schemes for elderly.

Social security schemes in India are typically aimed at providing financial support for improved quality of life. However, lack of awareness and underutilization, particularly evident in pension schemes, highlights existing inadequacies. The review also reveals the scope of improving the existing scheme to the times that they live in the view of active-aging.

This paper underscores the need to address gaps in India's social security schemes for the elderly. By incorporating insights from key stakeholders and experts, the study proposes the means to improve and innovate the existing scheme from the stand point of empowerment by realising UN Principles for Older Persons – Care, Dignity, Independence, Fulfilment and Participation.

Keywords: Elderly, Social Security Schemes, Gaps, Active Aging, Empowerment

The Impact Of Globalization On Cross-Border Social Security Systems: A Special Focus On Sri Lanka

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Globalization has transformed the global landscape, fostering economic, cultural, and social integration. One critical area affected by globalization is the provision of social security benefits for individuals who move across borders. Ensuring the portability and coordination of social security benefits has become essential in a world where mobility is increasingly common, especially for countries like Sri Lanka with significant migrant worker populations. The primary objective of this study is to analyze how globalization has influenced cross-border social security systems, with a specific focus on Sri Lanka. It aims to identify the mechanisms through which countries, including Sri Lanka, coordinate social security benefits and to assess the effectiveness of these mechanisms in protecting the rights of mobile individuals. This research adopts a secondary-based qualitative approach, relying on existing literature, policy documents, and case studies. The study involves a comprehensive review of bilateral and multilateral social security agreements, reports on Sri Lanka's social security policies, and data from international organizations. Additionally, the research examines case studies from regions with significant cross-border mobility, such as the European Union, to draw relevant comparisons and insights for Sri Lanka.The study finds that globalization has prompted the development of various bilateral and multilateral agreements to ensure the portability of social security benefits. In Sri Lanka, initiatives to protect migrant workers' social security rights have been established, but challenges persist. Comparisons with the European Union's coordination of social security systems highlight the potential benefits of more robust and integrated frameworks. However, significant challenges remain, including administrative complexities, differences in national social security systems, and issues of equity and non-discrimination. Based on thematic analysis, the findings underscore the importance of international cooperation and comprehensive policy frameworks to address the complexities of cross-border social security. Effective coordination not only protects the rights of mobile individuals but also enhances social cohesion and economic stability.

For Sri Lanka, strengthening bilateral agreements and adopting best practices from regions like the European Union can improve social protection for its migrant workers. Consequently, policymakers must continue to innovate and adapt social security systems to the evolving demands of globalization, ensuring that social protection keeps pace with increasing global mobility.

Keywords: Cross-border, Globalization, Social security, Sri Lanka

Exploring the Existing Gaps of Service Delivery Mechanisms in Estate Sector in Sri Lankan Context

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Sri Lanka is a country that consists of urban, rural, and estate sectors. The estate sector has specific characteristics that reflect geographical and climatic variances, numerous livelihood patterns, socio-cultural aspects and norms and values. The service delivery mechanism is distributed through the government, non-government, and private sectors on an equal basis. However, according to previous studies, there are visible loopholes within the service delivery mechanism, specifically within the estate sector. Therefore, the main objective of this research study is to explore the existing gaps in the service delivery mechanism in the estate sector. The study utilized qualitative research methods, and the study area comprised the Thalawakele Divisional Secretariat. The overall sample includes estate sector families, government organizations, non-government organizations, as well as private organizations within the Thalawakele Divisional Secretariat. Interviews, FGDs, and observations have been used as data collection tools, and the collected data has been analyzed by thematic analysis. The study revealed several key gaps in the service delivery mechanisms in the estate sector, such as geographical and accessibility issues, inadequate service provision, socio-cultural barriers, coordination and communication issues, unawareness about service provision, lack of education, and disparities in resource allocation. The findings underscore the need for targeted Social Work Interventions to address geographical and accessibility challenges, ensure more equitable service distribution, and improve socio-cultural sensitivity in service provision. Enhanced coordination and communication among government, non-government, and private sector organizations are crucial to bridging these gaps and improving the overall effectiveness of service delivery in the estate sector.

Keywords: Estate Sector, Gaps, Service Delivery Mechanism, Social Work Intervention

The Impact of the Post-Covid Economic Crisis on the Psychosocial Well-being of Urban Low-Income Women in Sri Lanka

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The post-covid economic crisis created numerous challenges in Sri Lanka, impacting various social groups in different ways. This study investigated the impact of the post-Covid economic crisis on the psychosocial well-being of urban low-income women. The objectives were to identify the current state of psychosocial well-being of urban low-income women, the factors that have affected it, and the impact on their family relationships. The case study method was used, focusing on the Sath Hiru Sewana Housing Complex in the Modara GN Division of the Colombo Divisional Secretariat. Fifteen urban low-income families and five key informants were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using case studies, interviews and observations, and analyzed thematically. According to the study, the economic crisis led to an increase in the cost of living, economic pressure, job instability, job challenges, mental health challenges, stress and anxiety, rising educational expenses, the need to engage in economic activities, changes in family responsibilities and change in gender roles, all of which negatively impacted the psychosocial well-being of urban low-income women. The study also found that these effects negatively affected their family relationships. However, the economic crisis also had some positive effects on social relations. The existence of social support strategies, neighborhood support, socio-emotional support, and support services provided by the government and various organizations helped them cope with the economic crisis. The study highlights the importance of social work interventions in mitigating the adverse effects of the economic crisis on the psychosocial well-being of urban low-income women. These interventions can provide essential support, such as mental health counseling and access to social support services, thereby improving overall well-being and strengthening family relationships.

Keywords: Post-Covid Economic Crisis, Psychological Well-being, Social Work Interventions, Urban Low-Income Women

Evidence-Based Approaches to Reducing Domestic Violence against Women: A Comprehensive Review for Social Work Professionals

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Domestic violence against women remains a persistent issue across the globe, affecting individuals, families, and communities. Social work professionals are often on the front lines of addressing this complex problem. The purpose of this review is to synthesize current evidence-based approaches to reducing domestic violence against women, offering actionable strategies for social workers to implement in their practice. This paper employs review approach, Scholarly articles, published in peer-reviewed journals over the past two decades were included. The search focused on interventions in social work that demonstrated a measurable impact on reducing domestic violence against women. Criteria for inclusion were studies with rigorous evaluation methods and clear outcomes. The review highlights that no single intervention works universally. Instead, a multi-faceted approach that includes prevention, direct services, and systemic change is most effective. Moreover, culturally sensitive approaches that consider local contexts and barriers are crucial for ensuring the success of interventions. This review highlights the importance of equipping social work professionals with diverse, evidence-based strategies to combat domestic violence against women. By understanding and applying proven interventions, social workers can more effectively protect and empower victims, reduce recurrence, and advocate for systemic changes that address the root causes of violence.

Keywords: Domestic Violence, Social Work, Evidence-Based Practice, Women's wellbeing, Intervention Strategies,

Social Work in the Criminal Justice Field in Japan

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In Japan, social workers have been assigned to the criminal justice system as crimes against the backdrop of poverty and social isolation have attracted social attention. However, due to a lack of social resources and refusal to provide support, it is difficult to say that support based on the person's choice and initiative is sufficiently provided. As a result, there exist incidents of offending the dignity of prisoners in prisons and problems of exclusion in the community. However, previous studies have only analyzed the actual situation of support in the field, and there has been little analysis from a theoretical perspective of social work.

Based on the above awareness of issues, a literature review was conducted to analyze the current state of social work in the criminal justice field in Japan from theoretical perspectives of social work and international standards.

Prior research indicates that people within the criminal justice system, including those in prisons, are considered a vulnerable group, and advocacy for their rights and participation by social workers has been emphasized (United Nations 1994; BASW 2015). Moreover, the "United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners," an international rule for the treatment of detainees, stipulates that full-time social workers should be present in each correctional facility to take measures to protect the rights and interests of detainees as broadly as possible within the bounds of law and judgment. In Japan, although programs to facilitate the smooth social reintegration of elderly or disabled inmates are implemented nationwide, these programs include information provision about the welfare system as part of the "guidance" and do not reflect the person's independence and empowerment perspectives. To enable participation by the parties involved, it is important to ensure both access and support (Michael Lavalette 2023). Furthermore, Social work in the criminal justice field in Japan is premised on an approach aimed at social defense, and does not reflect the perspective of participation of the parties concerned. In the future, it is necessary to develop a system that takes into account the theoretical perspective of social work.

Keywords ： Criminal justice system,Rights based approach,Social Exclusion,Social Work,The United Nations Minimum Standards for the Treatment of Detainees Regulations

Real Convergence Leading to Real Sustainability: Implementation of Sustainable Livelihood Program Integrating the Cash-For-Work Program

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Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is a capability-building program of DSWD for poor, vulnerable and marginalized households and communities to help improve their socio-economic conditions through accessing and acquiring necessary assets to engage in and maintain thriving livelihoods. On the other hand, the Cash for-Work Program – Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation is a short-term intervention to provide temporary employment to distressed/ displaced individuals by participating in or undertaking preparedness, mitigation, relief, rehabilitation or risk reduction projects and activities in their communities or in evacuation centers.

In 2017, the Local Government Unit of Real initiated to converge the SLP and Cash for Work Program through planting of Tiger Grass in upland barangay in our Municipality. The LGU main goal is for Realeños to have a sustainable income addressing the issue of poverty and at the same time protect the environment by mitigating hazard (landslide).

The Maragondon Dragon Grass SLPA piloted the project since their livelihood is "Walis Tambo" (Broom) and their barangay was a landslide prone area which was heavily affected during the 2004 disaster. The association was organized on August 10, 2015 with 56 members compose of PantawidPamilya Pilipino Program (4P's), Senior Citizens, Persons With Disability (PWD's), Solo Parents and Farmers.

Every year, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Field Office IV-A CALABARZON allocate a number of beneficiaries in the Municipality. In 2017, we had a total of 260 beneficiaries and increasing every year and in 2021 we had a total of 800 beneficiaries (2 batches). Out of this allotment, the LGU prioritized the members of The Maragondon Dragon Grass SLPA as beneficiaries of the Cash for Work Program to have continuity.

A team of LGU Real employees, that includes Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO), Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) and Municipal Agriculture Office (MagO), conducts assessment and prepare project proposal submitted to Disaster Response Management Division of DSWD Field Office IV-A (CALABARZON) for approval. Upon approval of the proposal, LGU Real in coordination with DSWD Field Office IV-A (CALABARZON) conduct schedule of the orientation to target beneficiaries.

The 10-days cash for work program commence to identified sites with the supervision of the MSWDO staff. The partner beneficiaries were monitored through their daily time record and actual photos of the activity. After 10 days, the LGU prepares the accomplishment report including DTR, post implementation survey and other necessary documents for the pay out. The incentive they get from the cash for work were mostly utilized to buy basic needs and some use the money as additional or starting capital for their own small business.

Pay out does not mean the project has to stop because they already earn. The association continue to plant and propagate the Tiger Grass to make it stalk lengthy. Harvesting the Tiger Grass (Rasa) happens only once a year usually from March to May and its finish product is "Walis Tambo" (Broom) which is their main livelihood project.

At present, Maragondon Dragon Grass SLPA alone has a total land area of about 12 hectares or 12,000 Tiger Grass planted and approximately 6,400 walis tambo made in a year.
Monitoring and evaluation of the project plays a significant factor in its sustainability. LGU Real designated a Focal person in Cash-For-Work Program and a Livelihood Worker for SLP who work hand in hand for the harmonious convergence of the DSWD programs. A regular monthly meeting of the Maragondon Dragon Grass SLP Association is conducted attended by the livelihood worker in order to know the project status and accomplishments which is also submitted to DSWD Field Office IV-A (CALABARZON) for their information.

Empowering Communities through ESG: A Social Work Perspective

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This study investigates the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into social work practice in Sri Lanka, aiming to empower communities and promote sustainable development. By focusing on the intersection of ESG frameworks and social work, the research explores how these principles can address socio-economic disparities and environmental challenges within the unique socio-cultural context of Sri Lanka.

Employing a qualitative research design, the study involves semi-structured interviews with social workers, community leaders, and stakeholders, as well as focus group discussions and case studies. These methods provide an in-depth understanding of the awareness, implementation, and impact of ESG principles on social work interventions. The research also examines the challenges and opportunities faced by practitioners in incorporating ESG into their work, highlighting variations across different regions and communities.

As part of the intervention, capacity-building workshops are organized for social workers and community leaders to enhance their understanding of ESG principles and their application in social work. Additionally, the study implements pilot ESG-integrated social work projects in selected communities, addressing specific socio-economic and environmental issues. These projects are monitored and evaluated to assess their effectiveness and scalability, offering practical insights for future initiatives.

The study's findings underscore the importance of culturally sensitive approaches, collaborative partnerships, and capacity-building in leveraging ESG for community empowerment. Successful strategies and lessons learned from case examples provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and practitioners. By documenting the impact of ESG-integrated social work on community well-being and sustainable development, the research contributes to broader discussions on social work, environmental sustainability, and governance. Ultimately, the study offers pathways for strengthening ESG integration within social work education, practice, and policy frameworks in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance), Social work, Community empowerment, Sustainable development, social equity

A Study on Factors Influencing the Abandonment of Resettlement by War-Displaced IDPs

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This study examined the factors influencing the abandonment of resettlement by war-displaced people after resettlement. It investigated how problems associated with the resettlement process and issues faced by the resettled community have affected resettlement. The case study method was used for the study, and Marichchukkaddi village, belonging to the Musali divisional secretariat of Mannar district, where people displaced due to the war have been resettled, was selected as the field of study. Fifteen families and five key informants from the resettled community were selected for the sample through purposive sampling. Case studies, in-depth interviews, structured interviews, and observation were used to collect data from them. Data analysis was done by thematic analysis. According to the study, problems related to the resettlement process such as lack of a specific plan, not identifying the exact community to be resettled, political influence, impact on the natural environment due to resettlement, and not paying attention to the second generation were observed. Consequently, due to the isolation of the settlement, contact with outside areas is distant, the resettled community faced environmental impacts, the youth are pushed out of the area and the resettled community has to face problems related to land issues, public facilities and infrastructure. As a result, it was revealed that the majority of the resettled communities are not permanently settled in these resettlements. Two reasons for this were identified in the study one was the aforementioned problems related to the origin place, and the other was the attraction to displaced areas (host communities). Because of this, the study identified a bilateral settlement pattern within the resettled community.

Keywords: Abandonment of Resettlement, Host Communities, Resettlement, War Period, War-Displaced IDPs

A Study on Challenges Faced by Professional Counsellors in Sri Lanka

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Counselling is one of the most important professions in the world when discussing mental health. The main objective of this study is to identify the challenges faced by Sri Lankan Professional counsellors in their professional setting. The current situation of establishing Counselling in Sri Lankan context and the practical challenges of counselling were studied. For the study, 20 Professional counsellors and 5 paraprofessionals were selected using purposive sampling. This descriptive study collected qualitative data through primary and secondary data. Interviews and participant observation were used as techniques. The collected were analyzed through content analysis. It was revealed that counsellors hold ambiguous legally authorized power in contemporary Sri Lanka. Counsellors do not have an opportunity to take an accepted license to practice the profession. Many of them refer to international licenses and its code of ethics such as ACA and BCA. Less public awareness/ acceptance and hope of mental health services from counselors are other professional challenges.Counselors who deal with confidential information have faced an immeasurable challenge regarding confidentiality due to the request forclient informationon the Freedom of Information Act. A similar effect has been encountered through exploratory, investigative journalism programs involving unannounced live recorded phone calls.Some paraprofessionals at the top of the hierarchy have had to face professional pressure from professionals if there is any popularity in the counseling center and counselor in dealing with paraprofessionals.Looking at counselors in the government sector, because the administration evaluates only on reports, many things that are done in practice are not properly evaluated. They think that counselors should be given a suitable atmosphere to reduce work stress and work freely.

Keywords : Challengers, Counselling, Government Sector, Para Professionals, Professional

Gendering of Sustainable Livelihoods: Reflection of Rural Women's Experiences in India

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For poor communities living on fragile and degraded lands, actions must address environmental conditions that undermine their livelihoods and capacity to cope with disasters. Protecting and enhancing the natural resources and providing them with assets for coping with shocks will improve local capacities to adapt to climate change.

Earlier research shows that there can be no single way to secure food and livelihoods among communities based on subsistence economy . It has to be a diverse set of activities supported by green agricultural practices, handicrafts, natural resource management and non- farming activities. These have been examined from a gender perspective.

The paper highlights how women's involvement in green practices and collective action through SHGs in rural areas of Odisha and Andhra Pradesh have brought about social transformation reflecting change in gender roles, enhanced self worth , participation in decision making , attaining nutritional security thereby showing incremental evidence of women's empowerment. Using a qualitative research method, field data is analysed using an empowerment framework. The paper concludes that the intervention must take into account gender inclusive community action through informed choice and set up strong institutions built on local skills of women to ensure sustainable livelihood options.

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF ASSERTIVENESS IN ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT: A STUDY IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT.

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This study investigates the assertiveness levels among adolescents aged 17-19 in Tiruchirappalli, focusing on its significance in facilitating healthy communication and relationship dynamics during this critical phase of development. Utilizing a descriptive research design, 300 college going late adolescents from selected arts and science programs were sampled using a stage-by-stage random selection process. Primary data was collected through the administration of the Assertiveness Scale developed by Tasneem Naqvi (1988) via questionnaire systems. The study highlights the distinction between assertiveness and aggression, emphasizing the importance of assertive communication in respecting others' opinions while expressing one's own needs and opinions clearly. The findings contribute to understanding the developmental challenges faced by adolescents and underscore the value of assertiveness training in promoting positive social interactions and personal growth

Keywords: Assertiveness, Adolescence, Development, Communication, Relationships, College Students

The Impact of Mobile Phone Usage Among 2-5 Year-Olds In The Madawala Region

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This study explores the impacts of mobile phone usage on children, focusing on their mental health, cognitive and physical development, and social interactions. Drawing from available literature, the research examines normative versus abnormal developmental patterns and how these are influenced by excessive smartphone usage.

The research was conducted in two stages. First, insights were gathered from psychological counsellors and teachers to understand the broader implications of mobile phone usage among children. This too helped to find a sample group to go to the stage two. Second, an in-depth study was conducted with a sample of 10 children, selected based on available resources. This involved a 360degree analysis, including interviews with the children, their parents, teachers, and siblings. Findings highlight significant mental health challenges, such as increased anxiety, depression, and disruptions in sleep patterns, aligning with the conference sub-theme on mental health challenges. The study also reveals how mobile phone usage affects children's social interactions, both within family settings and in broader societal contexts.

A key component of the research involved regulating the children's smartphone usage, which demonstrated notable improvements in their cognitive and emotional well-being in a short period (during the time of the research). These findings emphasize the need for societal efforts to promote awareness and implement effective strategies. This includes initiatives in education, public policy, and community engagement to empower parents and caregivers in fostering balanced digital lifestyles for children.

Moreover, the study examines the long-term societal implications of digital habits formed during childhood, including their impact on future workforce readiness and social security systems. It advocates for comprehensive societal responses to support healthy digital habits among children, emphasizing collective responsibility and societal change.

Key words: mental health, significant, anxiety, depression, emphasize, digital habits, comprehensive

Enhancing Child Protection in the Apparel Sector: A Community-Based Childcare Center Approach in Sri Lanka

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This qualitative research study examines the necessity of social work intervention in Day care centers related to the apparel sector. The study's aim was to highlight the importance of social workers' intervention for the development of children in daycare centers related to the apparel Industry. Using life experience research approach, Interviews were conducted with a sample of 15 apparel employees including both male and female from well-known apparel manufacturers from SriLankan Context where day care centers are established. The interviews explored the services available within the daycare centers for the children and how they may impact child development. The findings of the research study show that Day care centers situated within the apparel company premises are highly focused on fulfilling basic needs of the children such as feeding, storytelling and Snooze time. Also, respondents highlighted that support and facilities are less for the children in their cognitive development, physical development, social development, creative / critical thinking, Moral ethical and Language development. Apparel employees as Parents who are coming from less educated backgrounds expressed the need of proper intervention for their children's development. The research study drew attention about Lack of recognition of the social work profession in SriLankan context and how it can be applied to the setting as it has benefited children's development and wellbeing. Further it elaborated on the need to recruit social work graduates as center managers to have proper schedules and strategies to work with children by focusing on their overall development. Employees as parents who are related to the apparel sector, they may have to spend 8 –10 hours per a day at work. Less association with children, less emotional and social bonds, Behavioral issues, health & safety related issues, academic effects, increasing of independency can be identify as findings of the study which highlighted the need of policy implementation and support mechanisms to implemented by Government and private bodies which worked on employee rights and wellbeing. By addressing these issues policy makers can focus on implementing new policies which are more friendly for childcare related services and child development. Additionally, it will be beneficial to establish and recognize the profession of social work in Srilankan context and within apparel sector.

Keywords – Apparel sector, Day care centers, social work, Sri Lanka

Symbolic approach among the urban youth achieve deviant behavior patterns

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The symbolic approach focuses on the meanings, symbols, and interpretations that individuals use in their daily interactions and how these shape their behaviors and perceptions. Deviant behavior refers to conduct the departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social statuses. The symbolic interactionist perspective provides a valuable framework for understanding how youth engage in and achieve deviant behavior patterns. This study focusing on the role of symbolic interactionism in shaping the behaviors and identities of young individuals. The main objective of this study is to identify the symbolic approach among urban youth in achieving deviant behavior patterns. The sub objectives are identified the role of social interactions and relationships in shaping and perpetuating deviant behavior patterns and explore the implications of the symbolic approach for interventions aimed at addressing and preventing youth deviance in society. This study conducted in urban area of Kandy city. As data contributors for this research school students, university students and school leavers were used. This study was carried out both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data was collected through 50 (n=50) responses under random sampling. The qualitative data were analyzed using SPSS and the qualitative data were analyzed using questionnaire, grounded theories and observation. According to the identified results the information was classified categories as, subcultural Ideology, status and Power, rebellion and resistance and emotional expression. The main symbols of the youth deviant behavior identified as, Tattoos, Piercing, Language, Drug usage, Substance Abuse, Online Behavior and social media, Fashion and Dress, Music and Subcultures. The symbolic approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intricate motivations and meanings behind youth engagement in deviant behaviors. It underscores the importance of identity formation, social interactions, and cultural contexts in shaping and perpetuating deviant behavior patterns among youth.

Key Words- Symbolic approach, Urban youth, Deviant behavior, Social interaction

Exploring alternative social work knowledge based on practitioners' experiences: A case study from Sri Lanka

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The exchange of knowledge and experience is one of the classic international themes in social security and social work to promote the well-being of all people. This study describes the progress and achievements of trial dialogues among the social workers involved in community activities in Sri Lanka.This study adopted a practice-based research methodology that integrated several qualitative studies. Following a pre-interview survey and a meeting in January 2023, a joint conference was held by the Sri Lanka Association of Professional Social Workers, the National Institute of Social Development and the Asian Research Institute for International Social Work on 2 November 2023. After 11 individual presentations, we held a dialogue session with approximately 20 practitioners and scholars. A book based on the findings has since been compiled and published entitled Exploring alternative social work knowledge: Based on the narratives of practitioners from Sri Lanka (Osaka Metropolitan University Press, 2024). The findings were organised with a focus on exploring three questions: 1. What terms, concepts and perspectives are essential to social work practices in the field?; 2. Why are they essential?; and 3. What do we think of their roots?Participants discussed community-based practical knowledge and skills while considering their relationships with Western-rooted professional social work. For example, opinions were exchanged on the association between 'social work' practice and community-based concepts of human relationships rooted in religion and culture. Furthermore, participants pointed out various key aspects of the changing context of modern societies and economic difficulties and discussed how diverse practical knowledge can be utilised.This study had several limitations, asexchanges with practitioners and other stakeholders took place mainly in one country. Weare currently exploring the possibility of exchanging knowledge and experience with social work practitioners in Asia.

Keywords: dialogue, diverse knowledge, indigenous knowledge, international exchange, practitioners

The Impact of Heat Stress on the Mental Health of Rural Workers across Marginalisations in Rajasthan

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climate change poses severe threats to marginalised communities, including informal workers in rural rajasthan—one of india's hottest states. these workers, often engaged in agriculture, manual labour, and construction, face extreme weather impacts on their livelihoods and mental health. this study investigates the relationship between climate change-induced heat stress and the mental health of informal labourers from marginalised backgrounds in rural rajasthan, focusing on economic conditions, social context, geographical settings, physical health, education and employment access, structural discrimination, and nature of work. despite most of india living in rural areas, these communities are often overlooked in climate change discourse and policy initiatives, with scant attention to their physical and mental health needs in government adaptation plans.this research assesses the impact of heat stress on the mental health of informal workers in rural rajasthan, examining the intersections of psychosocial factors and structural inequality. it also explores existing initiatives or policies aimed at mitigating heat stress for these communities and their implementation on the ground.

the research employed a mixed-method approach. the field researcher, a community member familiar with the local language and context, gained insights that an outsider would have found difficult to obtain from the respondents. interviews were conducted with 97 rural workers, including women, individuals with work-induced chronic illnesses, and persons from dalit, bahujan, adivasi, and muslim communities. four focus group discussions were carried out with groups of women labourers. right to information applications were filed to examine government data on rising heat temperatures, domestic violence, and suicide levels during summer months, and implementation of climate adaptation strategies. qualitative data were thematically analysed, and a secondary data analysis of government climate change and heat policies was conducted.

results indicated a significant correlation between climate change factors and increased physical and psychosocial distress in informal workers. prolonged heat exposure influenced self-perception and community views, leading to irritation, increased alcohol consumption, helplessness, loss of impulse control, physical violence, extreme anger, exhaustion, abusive language, depressive episodes, and suicidal thoughts. community-based coping methods were observed, but few government strategies were implemented.

systemic neglect of rural areas underscores the lack of quality education, job opportunities, and access to basic resources, compounded by deep-rooted social discrimination. this discrimination forces families into intergenerational informal labour, often in extreme heat. intersectional oppressions that marginalised communities face compound the effects on their physical and mental health. qualitative data highlighted that heat waves have an impact that resulted in uncertainty, debt, and job insecurity.

the research underscores the need for mainstream discourse to acknowledge that marginalised communities face a disproportionate burden of the effects of slow onset climate change on their mental health. effective policy, policy implementation, increased government support, and valuing and scaling community initiatives are critical to mitigating the adverse effects of heat stress on these workers' physical and mental health.

Keywords: climate change, heat stress, marginalised communities, mental health, policy, rural India

Unseen Struggles: Mental Health Challenges and the Urgent Need for Social Work Intervention for Rohingya Refugee Children in Malaysia

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Malaysia hosts a significant number of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, totalling 108,440 refugees which include 51, 170 Rohingya refugee children who possess UNHCR documents.

Despite Malaysia's international commitments, the absence of a specific legal framework within its domestic laws exposes these refugees, including children, to exploitation and deprives them of their fundamental rights. Refugee children are often marginalized, making them particularly vulnerable and in need of special assistance to address their mental health and well-being. This article used qualitative research and a phenomenological approach, through in-depth interviews with eight informants aged 12 to 17. In Malaysia, the UNHCR card is a vital tool for Rohingya refugee children as it allows them access to essential services, including healthcare at public hospitals with a 50 percent discount, ensuring stability and security. However, this situation would pose even greater challenges for undocumented Rohingya refugee children. In regard to this, the researcher underscores in this article the mental health challenges faced by Rohingya refugee children, especially those without UNHCR documentation, throughout their experiences in the country. The objective of this article is to explore the pervasive mental health challenges faced by Rohingya refugee children in Perak, Malaysia, and propose social work interventions to support their mental health and well-being. The findings indicate that mental health challenges from a social perspective include psychological pressure, loss and grief, social isolation, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and low self-esteem. Furthermore, this article underscores the urgent need for comprehensive social work interventions to improve the mental health and well-being of Rohingya refugee children. It emphasizes the critical importance of providing psychosocial support and implementing family reunification programs.

Keywords: Malaysia, Rohingya Refugee Children, Qualitative Research, Mental Health Challenges, and Social Work Interventions

The Daily Hardships and Health Risks Faced by Rag pickers at Trichy City, Tamil Nadu, INDIA.

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Rag pickers plays a crucial role in waste management, contributing significantly to urban cleanliness and recycling efforts. Despite their essential contributions, they face severe hardships and health risks daily. This study aims to investigate the specific challenges encountered by rag pickers in Trichy, focusing on their working conditions, health issues, and socio-economic vulnerabilities. Through a combination of fieldwork, including surveys and interviews among 50 rag pickers, as well as analysis of secondary data from local health and waste management authorities were collected. Key findings indicate that rag pickers in Trichy suffer from a high prevalence of respiratory ailments, skin infections, and musculoskeletal problems due to prolonged exposure to dust, hazardous waste, and physically demanding labour. The lack of protective equipment exacerbates these health risks, while limited access to healthcare services further complicates their situation. Social stigmatization and marginalization add to their daily struggles, limiting their opportunities for better livelihoods and education. This study highlights the urgent need for targeted interventions to improve the working conditions and health outcomes of rag pickers in Trichy. Recommendations include the provision of protective gear, regular health check-ups, and the establishment of support systems to integrate rag pickers into the formal waste management sector.

Key Words: Rag pickers, Respiratory Ailments, Skin Diseases, Drug Addiction, Waste Management.

IMPACTS OF MENOPAUSE SYMPTOMS AMONG WORKING WOMEN AT TRICHY CITY, TAMIL NADU

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Peri menopause means around menopause. Peri menopause is the natural transition in the human stage of development, stating that the women physical body come to the end of the reproductive years. It can be otherwise termed as menopausal transition. The aim of this study is to assess the impacts of menopause symptoms among working women at Trichy city, Tamil Nadu. The objectives of this study is to describe the socio-demographic details and the impacts of menopausal symptoms among the working women at Trichy City. This is a descriptive research and a questionnaire method was used to collect data from 30 respondents. Standardized questionnaire was used which was designed by Schneider HPG et.al in order to explore the assessment of impacts of menopausal symptoms. This study revealed that high majority of the respondents (80%) are experiencing physical discomfort and above average (65%) of women who occupies professionally high position gets physical as well as psychological discomfort during their work time period. These circumstances can be changed by the support of their own family members.

Key Words: Menopausal Symptoms, Assessment, Working Women, Questionnaire Survey

The Unseen Victims of Conflict: Children and Their Invisible Psychological Wounds

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Recent wars have detrimental effects on the life of children. These wars have shattered the life of children in multiple aspects. According to various studies almost every child has one or the other problem caused by the war and most of the traumas persist through their entire life. Most of the children of war are affected by post traumatic stress disorder and the situation is worsened when there are comorbidities like neuroticism and depression. Situations like extreme poverty escalate the situation. This study is trying to find out how badly the mental status of children are being affected and to suggest measures to minimize the adverse effects. This study is trying to find out the emotional turbulence children at war are facing, to analyze its long-lasting traumatic effects in their lives and to suggest ways to minimize their psychological hardships. This study aims to conduct a rapid systematic review regarding the psychological impacts of war in the lives of children. The study is to be conducted through a comprehend analysis of peer reviewed journals, news reports, reports by international organizations regarding the war in the lives of children. All relevant original articles, letters, editorials, and policy papers assessing the mental and physical health and social repercussions of the war are to be consulted. The children of war have long-lasting mental health issues ranging from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, depression to behavioral issues. Peace should be reinstated in the world for the betterment of humankind. Effective interventions should be done to minimize these negative impacts in the life of children. Our children deserve a better world to live their dreams.

Key Words: emotional turbulences, psychological hardships, war, peace, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Depression, Neuroticism, behavioral issues.

Substance use and other Risk Behaviors among Youth: A Qualitative study based on Handessa Rehabilitation Center, Kandy, Sri Lanka

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Substance abuse among youth is a critical concern in Sri Lanka, profoundly affecting individuals and communities.This qualitative study examines the nature of substance abuse and associated risk behaviors among youths aged 15-21 at the Handessa Treatment and Rehabilitation Center in Kandy District, Sri Lanka. Through semi-structured interviews with 21 male youths and a key informant interview with the chief counselor, the study explores the diverse substances abused, including Beedi (a local version of cigarettes), cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis, ice, various tablets, heroin, and tobacco powder.The majority of these youths come from rural, low-income families and have been using drugs since their school years, often funding their addiction through money intended for lunch, theft, or earnings from work after dropping out of school or engaging in illegal part-time work. Social influences (peer pressure, lack of family relationships),the availability of substances, psychological factors (curiosity, self-pleasure, escapism),media influence, imitation of drug-using family members, social media exposure, and socio-economic challenges (economic hardships, drug trade involvement)drive youth substance abuse.The consequences of drug addiction among these youths are severe, leading to diminished prospects, lack of discipline, strained family relationships, school absenteeism, long-term physical and mental health issues, and reduced critical thinking abilities.Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between substance abuse and engagement in anti-social activities, indicating a strong link between substance abuse and delinquency, including theft, stealing money from families or friends, and engaging in illegal drug transportation and business.From a social work perspective, these findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions.Effective, practical school-based drug awareness programs and psychological counseling for self-control are essential. Strategies to prevent relapse and comprehensive educational programs by trained officials are crucial in addressing the root causes of substance abuse among youth. Social workers should focus on building strong support systems, promoting healthy family dynamics, and enhancing community engagement to create a supportive environment for at-risk youth.Government agencies and authorities must implement these interventions to curb substance abuse and foster successful prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation strategies.

Keywords: Rehabilitation, Risk behavior, Social Work Interventions, Sri Lanka, Youth substance abuse

3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - 2024

Exploring the social impacts of family separation on children's mental health – A sociological study

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This study focuses on the social impacts of family separation on children's mental health. Divorce or dissolution of marriage is the final termination of a marriage, cancelling the legal duties and responsibilities of marriage and dissolving the bonds of matrimony between married persons. The impacts of family separation on children's mental health are universal concept and it is crucial and high ratio in Sri Lankan context. Every day, minimum one or two cases reported to relevant departments to resolve their problems. Aftermath of the family separation, children live with their relatives and suffering stressful life. This research is to find out that what are the impacts of family separation on children's mental health? And the objective of the study was to identify the impacts of family separation on children's mental health. A mixed method was used for analyzing purpose of this study. Due to the family separation, it cause dependency on non-relatives, isolation, poor educational performance, stress, self-harm, attempt to suicide, hat speech, violence and emotional imbalances. So, family separation influences on children's mental health and it induce vulnerabilities. As the result of the above factors, 65% of the children depend on other relatives and some barriers occurred due to their biological mother against their biological fathers. 72% of the children have emotional imbalances in their life cycle. Due to the reasons for violence behavior and suicidal thoughts 35% of the children were victimized. Therefore, it is an essential study to understanding the factors influencing in children's mental health.

Keywords: Family separation, Social impacts, Children, Mental health, imbalances

The Impact of Substance Abuse in the Youth Community on their Mental Health

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Among the broad range of social issues being widely discussed in the contemporary global context, drug addiction has taken a prominent place. The current youth population's engagement in socially deviant behaviors due to substance abuse further deepens the uncertainty regarding a nation's future. Accordingly, this study was conducted with the aim of studying youth drug addiction and its psychological impacts, through the lens of a rehabilitation and treatment center for drug addicts.

The study selected 44 male residents rehabilitation center in Puwakpitiya, Avissawella, aged between 18 and 24 years, who were undergoing rehabilitation at the center, using a purposive sampling method. Utilizing a post-positivist research methodology, qualitative data for the study was collected using targeted interviews and open-ended interviews as primary tools.

According to the study's findings, the reasons for youth drug addiction were identified as both personal and social factors. Personal factors included experimentation, attraction to drugs, weak masculinity, trust in others, and a lack of knowledge about the consequences. Social factors revealed included the availability of drugs, promotional mechanisms, family influence, and economic difficulties.

Furthermore, the psychological impact of drug use on the youth population was identified more realistically in the research. The study revealed that due to drug addiction, the participants experienced withdrawal symptoms, mental disorders, and were led to social deviance through maladaptive behaviors. Therefore, this research provided a more scientific and analytical understanding of the impact of youth drug addiction on mental health.

Key Words - Drug, Addiction, Youth Community, Mental Health

EMPLOYABILITY AND DISABILITY; CHALLENGES FACE BY VISUALLY IMPAIRED EMPLOYEES

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In Sri Lanka, only 27.3% of the 1.6 million disabled individuals are employed. Visually impaired individuals, in particular, face significant challenges in the workforce, including prejudice, overly sympathetic attitudes, and discrimination. This study aims to explore the barriers faced by visually impaired workers in both the public and private sectors in Sri Lanka, with the goal of enhancing productivity and advancing social sustainability.Using qualitative methods such as convenient sampling, the study examines the working conditions and challenges encountered by visually impaired employees. Data were collected from secondary sources, including the UNCRPD, the 2012 Census of Population and Housing in Sri Lanka, and publications from the International LaborOrganization (ILO), as well as through open-ended surveys, direct observations, and key informant interviews.The study involved twenty visually impaired workers from Uva Province, who participated in questionnaires and workplace accessibility evaluations. Additionally, five employers and five key informants, including HR staff and executives from disability organizations, were interviewed. Thematic analysis revealed five primary employment difficulties, highlighting a lack of accessible support and recognition.Based on these findings, the study offers specific recommendations for creating a more inclusive environment for people with disabilities. Suggestions include improving accessibility, providing appropriate assistive technologies, redesigning jobs, and fostering an inclusive mindset among government bodies, businesses, organizations, and workers. The report underscores the importance of senior management support in addressing these challenges and navigating the transition with minimal impact on labor and resources

Keywords: Disability, Employability, Accessibility, Visually Impaired Employees, Inclusive Workplace

Child Involvement in Decision-Making for Involuntary Removal: Insights from Sri Lankan Child Protection Practices.

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This study evaluates how child protection workers in Sri Lanka involve children in decision making processes related to involuntary child removal. The research focuses on understanding child involvement across three key dimensions: the information provided to the child, the information gathered from the child, and the extent to which children's perspectives and interests are considered in the final decision-making processes. The study has analyzed 45 child protection workers, drawn from diverse regions of Sri Lanka, provides insights into these practices. The findings indicate that child involvement significantly varies depending on the child's age. Older children (ages 10-12) are more likely to receive detailed information, actively participate in discussions, and have their viewpoints considered, compared to younger children (ages 5-7). Despite the existing child protection policies in Sri Lanka that advocate for the participation of children in protection decisions, there is a notable inconsistency in policy implementation. The study highlights that cultural norms and societal values play a significant role in shaping the discretion used by child protection workers when involving children in these critical decisions. While some child protection workers strive to follow best practices in ensuring child participation, others tend to rely more heavily on personal judgment, resulting in variability in how children are involved. This inconsistency underscores the need for standardized training and clearer guidelines to ensure a more consistent and meaningful involvement of children across all cases of involuntary child removal. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on child protection practices in Sri Lanka by offering insights into areas where alignment between policy and practice can be improved. Enhancing child participation in decision-making processes is crucial for safeguarding children's rights and well-being during involuntary removal situations.

Keywords: Child involvement, Involuntary child removal, Child protection practices, Decision-making processes, Child participation, Cultural norms

Impact of Extreme Heatwaves on the Marginalised Community: A Study Among Gypsy Population from Puducherry UT, India

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Human induced climate change is resulting in extreme weather conditions across the world. This extreme climatic event has impact on health care, health care infrastructure, education and livelihood of the people. When it comes to vulnerable sections of the community the impact is comparatively severe, as they face additional burden of poverty. This study explores the impact of the extreme weather conditions on the gypsy community 'Narikuravar', in Puducherry Union Territory, India. This is a qualitative study comprising interviews of 9 community members collected with the help of an interview guide and analysed thematically. The study sheds light on the impact of the extreme weather conditions such as heatwaves on the livelihood, education and health of the 'Narikuravar' community. This study suggests, proper urban planning, community specific healthcare initiatives and other provisions for basic amenities, policies and initiatives focussing on Sustainable Development Goals to combat climate injustice.

Keyword: Climate Change, Heatwaves, Livelihood, Education, Health, Gypsy.

Use of Open-Source Geospatial Data for Building Social Resilience to Mitigate Flood Risk in a Changing Climate- A Case Study from Chennai City, India

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Flooding is a major natural disaster with devastating consequences, and climate change is amplifying the threat. Floods are a devastating reality for many communities worldwide. While infrastructure and technological advancements play a role in mitigating flood risk, building social resilience is equally important. Social resilience refers to a community's ability to prepare for, absorb, and recover from a flood event. As developing countries grow economically and accumulate assets in floodplains and urban areas, their vulnerability to flooding increases. This vulnerability is affected by a combination of economic development, property protection, social condition and urbanization, which increases the risk of flooding in this area. Chennai is a 350-year-old city and is the fourth largest city in India. Flooding risk in Chennai is associated with many land use issues such as depletion of natural areas, flooding, erosion of rivers, canals, and drainage systems, and unmanaged expansion of developed areas. These factors have been identified as factors that make the city more vulnerable to flooding. The aim of this study is to use open-source geospatial data and techniques to determine the vulnerability and risk of the city's 100-year flood map. These maps will provide a better understanding of the city's hazard risk, vulnerability, and overall risk. By accepting the agreement, contingency planning and management can deal not only with specific situations but also with their implications and more serious implications. As part of a broader risk management system, Integrated Flood Management helps to improve and integrate flood risk assessment, making it more integrated and effective for mitigation and urban protection.

Key Words: Climate, GIS, Hazard, Resilience, Open-source Data, Vulnerability,

Enhancing Social Resilience of Elderly Population for Effective Flood Disaster Response: A Case Study from Silchar City, India

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Floods are frequent natural disasters that cause great difficulties for communities, especially for the elderly who are often more vulnerable because of their age-related factors. Floods have turned into a recurrence phenomenon in a city like Silchar (Assam State) of India. The city's low-lying areas and inadequate drainage infrastructure intensify the effects of heavy rainfall, flooding in residential areas, and disruption of vital services not only causing displacement but also posing a threat to the elderly, who must be empowered to respond positively to disaster events by developing their social resilience. The present study aims to explore the significance of building social resilience and examine the strategies and interventions enhancing social resilience among older adults in flood-prone areas of Silchar City. The methodology of the study involves both qualitative and quantitative approaches which include surveys, interviews, and data analysis. The results emphasize the importance of inclusive disaster preparedness and response plans focussing on the needs and strengths of older individuals. The study highlights the importance of indigenous practices in boosting community resilience and finds opportunities for incorporating traditional knowledge and local resources into resilience-building initiatives. The conclusion of the study emphasizes the need for age-sensitive disaster management plans with proper execution mechanisms, capacity-building programmes for organizing the community, and investment in infrastructure development that facilitates the accessibility and mobility of the elderly population.

Key words: Disaster, Elderly, Flood Risk, Resilience, Response, Silchar.

Climate Change and Coastal Erosion: A Study on the Lived Experience of Victims of Coastal Erosion

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Climate change is the long-term alterations in temperatures and weather patterns that have evolved through decades. According to the United Nations, climate change leads to hotter temperatures, more severe storms, increased drought, warm and rising oceans, loss of species, lack of adequate food, more health risks, poverty and displacement. Coastal erosion is one of the major consequences of climate change. The National Centre for Coastal Research has observed that 33.6% of the Indian coastline is vulnerable to erosion, of which, 26.9% is under accretion and 39.6% is in a stable state. In Kerala, out of the 9 coastal districts, three of them are highly prone to erosion. The coastal erosion has a multitude of impacts on the coastal communities residing in erosion-prone areas. Hence, the study focuses on the lived experiences of the victims of coastal erosion in Kerala. The study employed a qualitative method with descriptive phenomenology as the research design to understand the lived experience of the respondents in relation to the phenomenon of coastal erosion. The research study uncovered issues about livelihood, housing, displacement and health issues. The SDG 13, and the rising consequences of climate change in coastal regions, highlight the need for better policy and grassroots-level interventions in this area.

Keywords: Climate change, coastal erosion, disaster

Assessing the Impact of Climate Change on Flood Risks: A Comprehensive Evaluation of Kelani River Flooding and Its Implications for Gampaha District

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Sri Lanka is grappling with significant socio-environmental challenges attributable to climate change, including droughts, storms, floods, and landslides. A recent flood risk assessment concentrated on the Kelani River, which is increasingly susceptible to severe flooding, particularly impacting Gampaha District and its surrounding areas. Utilizing a qualitative methodology encompassing expert evaluations, stakeholder consultations, and contributions from local residents and community leaders, the study identified frequent and intense flooding as primary concerns, driven by erratic precipitation patterns and inadequate river management practices. The findings highlight extensive property damage, disruption of livelihoods, and public health threats, notably the proliferation of waterborne diseases. To address these issues, the assessment emphasizes the necessity of a comprehensive flood management strategy that integrates climate projections and enhances local capacities for effective response and adaptation. Essential social work interventions include enhancing education and awareness, building local capacities, providing psychosocial support, advocating for policy development, and fostering community-led initiatives to bolster flood resilience and ensure the well-being of communities amidst evolving climatic conditions.

These challenges necessitate a multidisciplinary approach, incorporating both scientific expertise and community engagement to develop sustainable solutions. By leveraging local knowledge and fostering community participation, the assessment aims to create a more resilient infrastructure that can withstand the increasing frequency and intensity of flood events. Additionally, the integration of climate projections into planning and policy-making processes is critical to anticipate future risks and mitigate their impacts effectively. Social workers play a pivotal role in this context, not only by providing immediate relief and support to affected populations but also by advocating for long-term, systemic changes that address the root causes of vulnerability.

Key Words: Socio-environmental challenges, Climate change, Community-led initiatives, Flood resilience, Social Work Interventions

A Comprehensive Study based on the Challenges Faced by the Elderly in Maruthanagar Village.

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As global efforts toward sustainable development intensify, the elderly population, particularly those aged 60 and above, increasingly face distinct psychological and social challenges. In Maruthanagar, a village under the Karaichchi Divisional Secretariat in the Kilinochchi District, elderly residents encounter several issues, including isolation, lack of communication, mental stress, disrespect, neglect, poor nutrition, marginalization within family structures, and insufficient access to medical care.

This study aims to illuminate these psychological and social challenges through the collection of both primary and secondary data, employing qualitative research methods. A sample of 20 elderly individuals was selected through simple random sampling. Data collection involved direct observation and unstructured interviews. Additional insights were obtained from key informants such as the Grama Niladhari (village officer), Elderly Rights Promotion Officer, leaders of local village associations, and heads of women's groups. The collected data were then analyzed thematically.

The study's findings indicate that elderly individuals from low-income families experience heightened levels of mental stress, whereas those from more educated households are more likely to face significant isolation. Furthermore, elderly individuals in economically disadvantaged families are prone to nutritional deficiencies. Despite the provision of government pensions, these were found to be inadequate in addressing the needs of the elderly.

In conclusion, the study suggests that future research should focus on the development of social work interventions aimed at alleviating the psychological and social challenges faced by the elderly population.

Keywords: Elderly, Maruthanagar, Psychological Challenges, Social Challenges, Social Work,

Digital Transformation in Rural Communities: A Special Reference to Kindelpitiya Grama Niladhari Division

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By today modern technology has changed every aspect of human life, making day-to-day activities easier. The changes made by modern technology can be defined as Digital Transformation (DT).By today, DT happening rapidly, making changes in human lives. Though urban areas often lead the way in adopting modern technologies, rural areas have unique challenges and opportunities that can significantly benefit from DT. The main objective of this study was to assess the current state of DT in Kindelpitiya grama niladhari division and sub objectives were to identify the factors for digital transformation, to identify thechallenges on digital transformation, and to identify the opportunities in digital transformation. The population of the study was all individuals who living in the Kindelpitiya grama niladhari division and the sample of study was selected using Yamane method with the confidence level of 95%. The simple random sampling method was used to select the sample. The interview method wasused to collect data and interviews were conducted using a pre prepared questionnaire. Collected data has been analyzed using descriptive statistics, factor analysis and chi square test. According to the results, economic development and impact, digital proficiency and accessibility, and digital service integration can be identified as the factors that impact for digital transformation. Demographic factors of education level, household income and employment status showed significant relationships with the usage of online services. Resistance to change, limited training opportunities and lack of coordination can be identified as the main challenges while usage of e-commerce platforms, job creation and entrepreneurship can be identified as the main opportunities in digital transformation in Kindelpitiya GN division. It can be suggested that based on the findings of the study, implementing digital literacy training programs and creating digitalized opportunities for rural communities in fulfilling their daily activities will be advantageous on the digital transformation.

Key Words: Challenges, Digital Transformation, Modern Technology, Opportunities, Rural Communities.

Digitalization Goes Beyond Gender Barriers: The Perspectives Of Women With Disabilities

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Working with women with disabilities can provide a unique understanding of their experiences. The complexities of being a woman, a woman with a disability, and an unemployed woman with a disability can often be understood in a gender-based social construction. This intersectionality exposes them to multiple layers of prejudices. As a result, they usually experience isolation from social institutions, social connections, and the wider society. Even though women with disabilities face everyday discrimination, the digital age has led to the interaction of the entire disability community. Digitalization has opened the door to inclusion and empowerment. In addition, social workers who intervene in the empowerment of people with disabilities also recognize digitalization as a new door for advocacy.

The basis of this research paper is the emic approach. Over the past decade, our work as lecturers, researchers and disability rights advocates has been to understand and intervene in the issues faced by women with disabilities. The field experiences of the qualitative study of the sexual and reproductive health of female students with disabilities in higher education institutions in Sri Lanka allowed us to identify the participants. It has explored how social media has made a difference in the lives of people with disabilities. The study's main aim is to examine the experiences of women with disabilities using social media. The study was purposive and followed a qualitative research approach, using 05 in-depth phenomenological interviews, conversations during the field study, and field notes as tools. Data were analyzed thematically.

Among the emerging themes, the social phenomena in participants' lives became the most common reason for shifting to social media. Through this, getting the opportunity to roam in an open space, meet women with disabilities who have faced similar hardships, overcome isolation, become aware of problems, build the basis for addressing them collectively, and expand social networks, being able to hone social skills, including leadership. Based on the intersection of gender, empowerment, and social capital theories, the study seeks to understand how digital tools, mainly social media, empower women with disabilities.

The findings revealed that digital platforms contribute significantly to empowering women with disabilities. These social media platforms improve their self-skills and self-worth, challenge existing negative social attitudes, try to change society, overcome gender stereotypes, fight loneliness, lead to and improve job opportunities, help to strengthen networks, secure funding, empower more women with disabilities, and engage in advocacy efforts. Integrating digitalization with social work interventions is a vital tool to build an inclusive society where women with disabilities are given social value and dignity. This could include digital literacy programs, the introduction of support networks, employment facilitation, public awareness campaigns, and policy advocacy for the issues of women with disabilities. Digitization combined with these interventions fosters inclusion and empowerment, creating a society that values the contribution of women with disabilities.

Keywords: Digitization, Empowerment, Gender Barriers, Multiple Social Barriers, Social Work Interventions, Women with disabilities.

Fostering Social Development Through Inclusive Education for People with Disabilities

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This paper explores the nexus between inclusive education for individuals with disabilities and its role in fostering social development. A comprehensive methodology integrating literature review and qualitative analysis was employed to elucidate the multifaceted aspects of this relationship. Drawing upon a wide range of scholarly sources, including peer-reviewed articles, policy documents, and empirical studies, the literature review revealed compelling evidence of the positive impact of inclusive education on social development outcomes.

Methodologically, qualitative and quantitative analysis was conducted through interviews with educators, policymakers, and individuals with disabilities in Dharwad district to gain insights into the practical challenges and opportunities in implementing inclusive education policies. The findings underscored the transformative potential of inclusive education in promoting social cohesion, fostering empathy, and dismantling discriminatory attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the study identified key barriers to effective implementation, including inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, and attitudinal barriers within communities.

Based on the literature and qualitative findings, the paper concludes by offering actionable suggestions for policymakers and stakeholders to enhance inclusive education practices. These recommendations include increasing investment in accessible infrastructure, providing comprehensive teacher training programs, promoting inclusive curricula, and fostering community engagement initiatives.

By prioritizing inclusive education within broader social development agendas, policymakers can create more equitable and inclusive societies that empower individuals with disabilities to participate fully in social, economic, and cultural life. This paper contributes to the growing body of knowledge on inclusive education and underscores its significance in advancing social development and promoting human rights for all.

Key Words: Inclusive Education, Disabilities, PWD, Social Development

Embracing Innovation with Contemporary Ingredients and New Approaches.

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The goal of social work is to assist communities and vulnerable individuals in overcoming difficulties they encounter on a daily basis, and there is a diverse array of settings in which social workers practice. As the society changes from time to time, the problems in the society also change and to solve it, social workers also have to innovate in their practices. This article briefly discussed background of social work profession and details of some emerging fields of practices such as queer social work, green social work, disaster management and rehabilitation, Forensic social work, military social work, social work with migrants, immigrants, refugees, financial social work and social work and journalism. There is also a description about information and communication technology in field work practicum towards electronic social work practice with integration of Artificial Intelligence in social work research which enables social workers to critically investigate the changing phenomena and make suggestion in policy making and effective implementation. Thus, the present paper highlights the new approaches and contemporary ingredients in social work education for the future transformative change in social work practice.

Keywords: Innovation, Contemporary Ingredients, New Approaches and Social Work Education.

Challenges Faced By Teachers in Classroom Teaching Practices with Digital Transformation during Covid-19: A Survey Study

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Digital transformation is a process of massive change in education that became an urgent topic of 2020 due to COVID-19. During this period all Sri Lankan schools were closed and classes were held online. As a result, students and teachers faced many unexpected challenges. New evolutions of 21st century technology emerged. There has been sudden digital transformation changes in online teaching method, learning content, resources without live teaching. Due to this, teachers faced many challenges in many areas such as technical conditions, relationship and communication of students, emotions and society. The study focused more on students' experience, perceptions and overall exposure to digital education and recent changes. Also, the survey includes questions about technology preparation and infrastructure. The responses are processed by well-known statistical data analysis tools. Based on the results of the study, the students received digital education properly. More are willing to pursue it in the future and more students prefer to use their own devices during online teaching practice, which has caused some changes and complications in the work environment. Unfortunately, some students had technical difficulties that could be caused by the heterogeneous software environment and support materials. The digital transformation was deemed successful and a lot of feedback was integrated into the online classes. In that way, 5schools in Koralaipattu Educational zone under Kalkudah devision in Batticaloa district including 90senior secondary teachers, 125students and 25parents were selected as a sample. Sample collection instruments such as questionnaires, interviews and documents were collected and all selected schools were observed. The collected data were classified, analyzed, interpreted, and discussed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods via-SPSS software. Furthermore, the data obtained were analyzed to ensure reliability and validity and finally conclusions and recommendations were drawn and data for future research were included.

Keywords: Challenges, Digital, Senior Secondary, Technology, Transformation.

Feasibility of using online Education System for Field Studies in Social Work Subject

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Although the subject of Social Work has been theoretically analyzed and understood, it is not a standalone subject just with theory and practice but a composite structure of multidisciplinary subjects. Due to this nature, the study identifies the obstacles, difficulties, and challenges encountered when employing online education methods in the field study activities of social work. Additionally, it explores the possibilities of minimizing these obstacles. The aim is to present recommendations for using online methods in the specific educational area of field studies within social work education.

For this purpose, a mixed-method approach was used to collect data, employing questionnaires, direct observations, documentary evidence, and focus group discussions. The sample was selected using a stratified random sampling method from a leading higher education institution. The sample included 10 lecturers teaching social work, 10 field supervisors, and 250 undergraduate candidates. Thematic analysis was used for data analysis.

The study environment within the online method is detached from traditional classroom methods and physical settings, with internet technology becoming the center of education. This has created a new background that necessitates adaptation for both the instructor and the student, leading to new experiences and adjustments in this environment.

The negative aspects of studying the introduction to the social work subject stream and the relevant field training through online methods include the following: the focus is on adapting to a technological environment rather than a traditional exam environment, leading to the creation of an exam candidate adapted to technological environments. In times of emergency, the instant focus of students and lecturers on new technological tools and learning techniques

Keywords - Social Work, Social Work Practices, Learning Management System, Technology, Online Education

Cognitive Appraisal of Big Data implications associated with a Specialized Disaster Management Software System for Sri Lanka Red Cross
(With special reference to the Western Province)

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Natural disasters and emergencies significantly impact individuals and communities, posing considerable challenges. The Sri Lanka Red Cross plays a crucial role in responding to these crises; however, it encounters challenges such as the absence of a centralized data repository, reliance on manual coordination of volunteers, and limited real-time visibility of ongoing activities.

The research objective of this study is to assess the impact of big data applications on Disaster Management Software systems. To achieve this, the research will focus on several sub-objectives: examining the effects of centralized data management on such systems; identifying the impact of automating resource allocation methods on that system; evaluating the impact of real-time tracking and communication among disaster response teams; and assessing how data analytics can improve decision-making during disasters. The research questions will guide this exploration by seeking to determine how centralized data management, automation of resource allocation, real-time tracking, and data analytics each influence the effectiveness of disaster management software systems.

A subjective interpretation of these features was provided by 60 volunteers, 39 community leaders, 8 first aiders, and 3 staff members of the Sri Lanka Red Cross. Data were collected through an online survey, and the research hypotheses were tested using a regression model generated with SPSS software. This study revealed the positive significant influence of data analytics and insight feature except all the other variables. Furthermore, the selected features contributed to 51.3% of the overall success of the disaster management system.
By leveraging technologies such as React.js, Node.js, PostgreSQL, WebSocket, and AWS, this system will be designed to be secure, scalable, and adaptable to various emergency situations. This specialized software will empower the Sri Lanka Red Cross to respond more efficiently, enhance coordination, and make informed decisions based on comprehensive data, ultimately saving lives and mitigating the impact of disasters.

Keywords: Disaster Management, Centralized Data Management, Real-time Tracking, Automated Resource Management

Ayushman Bharat -Pradhan Mantri Jan ArogyaYojana(AB-PMJAY):Strategic Implementation, Impact Assessment And Deliverables Of India's Flagship Healthcare Scheme

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Introduction

The Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is a ground breaking health insurancescheme introduced by the Government of India in September 2018. Aimed at providinguniversal health coverage, PMJAY targets over 100 million poor and vulnerable families,approximately500millionindividuals.Thescheme offersanannualhealthinsurancecoverofINR 5 lakh per family for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. This research aims toanalyze the strategic framework and key deliverables of PMJAY, evaluating its impact on thehealthcarelandscapein India.

Objective

Thepurposeofthestudyistoexplorethestrategiccomponentsandidentifythekeydeliverables underpinning PMJAY. The study will also evaluate the scheme's effectiveness inachievingits goalsofuniversalhealthcoverageandfinancialprotection.

Methodology

The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative data.Primary data will be collected through interviews with stakeholders, including governmentofficials,healthcareproviders,andbeneficiaries.Secondarydatawillbegatheredfromgovern ment reports, policy documents, and existing literature on PMJAY. Statistical analysiswillbeconductedtoassess thescheme's performance metrics and health out comes.

Results

The research is expected to demonstrate PMJAY's potential in transforming India's healthcare system by making healthcare more accessible and affordable for the most vulnerale populations.Thefindingswillprovideinsightsintothescheme'sstrengthsand are improvement,contributingtopolicyrecommendationsforenhancinguniversalhealthcoverageinIndia.

Conclusion

This research will provide acomprehensiveanalysis of the strategyand deliverables ofPMJAY, highlighting its impact on India's healthcare landscape. By evaluating the scheme'seffectivenessandidentifyingbestpractices,thestudy aimstocontributetotheongoingeffortstoachievethegoalsoftheNationalHealthPolicy2017anduniversalh ealthcoverageinIndia

KeyWords: Health Policy,Universal HealthCoverage,Sustainable Development Goals, Health Insuranceetc.

Ustukhuddus (LavandulaStoechas Linn.) Unani Herb in the Management of Anxiety Disorder : A Systematic Review

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Introduction

Unani medicine is one of the old systems of traditional medicines which recognize the healing properties of the plants, animal product and minerals. Ustukhuddus (UK), one of the well-known Unani herbs, has been widely used in the management several neurological and psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, convulsions, paralysis, headache, dementia, and melancholia. Though, there are few research studies on UK, still many more information are unexplored specially in relation to psychological disorders. Therefore, this study is aimed to gather the authentic information about UK and its properties.

Objective: Present review is to explore the pharmacological actions, and attributes of UK with special reference to anxiety disorder.

Methodology: A comprehensive systematic literature survey was done to gather data in digital databases such as GoogleScholar, PubMed, ResearchGate, Web of Science and authentic Unani classical books such as Al-Qanoon-filtib, KanzulAdvia, etc. The terms such as Ustukhuddus, and Anxiety were used. Inclusion criteria were Unani research, research conducted within 15 years, Clinical Trials, case studies, animal studies, and classical Unani books. Exclusion criteria were literature reviews, research older than 15 years and laboratory research.

Findings: According to Unani pharmacodynamics properties, UK are used for pacifies and evacuation of vitiated Phlegmatic and Black bile humours which are mainly responsible for neurological disorders in the brain. This herb is used in many neurological ailments such as epilepsy, melancholia, paralysis, depression, and anxiety. It has Neuroprotective activity, Anticonvulsant activity, Anxiolytic effect, sedative and analgesic effects and many other pharmacological activities. Especially lavender oil improved associated symptoms such as restlessness, disturbed sleep and somatic complaints in cases of anxiety disorders.

Conclusions:

As per the available data, it is assumed that this herb may be effectivein the management of Anxiety Disorder. This hypothesis can be tested by performing further research like animal studies and clinical trials.

Keywords: Ustukhuddus, Unani herb, Melancholia, Anxiety disorder

Validation of Phone based 24-hour dietary recall against Weighed Food Records among female adults in Sri Lanka

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Dietary assessment is an important type of nutrition assessment. Weighed food records and 24-hour dietary recall methods are widely used dietary assessment methods. Phone based 24-hourrecalls are widely use nowadays. However, their accuracy compared to weighed food records(WFRs)remainsunclear.Thisstudyaimedtovalidatephonebased24hourrecallagainstweighedfood record among female adults in Jaffna, Sri Lanka and to assess the prevalence of inadequacyinnutrientintakecomparedtoEstimatedDietaryAllowances(EAR)valueforadults.Asampleof30femaleadultsbetween20-55yearsoldwererecruitedastheparticipantsinthestudy.Weighedfood records were performed by one enumerator and phone based 24- hour recall was conductedon the next day by a different enumerator and the quantity of energy and nutrient intake in bothdietary assessment methods were taken using food conversion table and food Base 2000 softwareandthroughthestatisticalsoftwareSPSS16.0WilcoxonSignedranktest,Bland-Altmanplotandcorrelation were performed. Significant difference in the median intake of some macro nutrientsincluding energy and protein were observed but no significant difference in mean micro nutrientintake between both assessment methods were observed. Strong positive correlations which wereranged from 0.7-0.8 observed in macro nutrient intake between the two methods of assessment.Mostofthenutrientsshowedagreeablecorrelation.Nutrientinadequacyandpoordietarydiversitywhich were the average of 4 food groups were observed among study population. In conclusionthisstudysuggeststhatphone-based24 hourrecallsconstituteareliablemethodfornutrientintakeassessment,particularlyamongTamilfemaleadultsinJaffna,SriLankaandpossibleinterventionsneed to be addressed to minimize the undernutrition among study population and future researchexploringphone-based24-hourrecallaccuracyinotherLMICsandamongdiverselargepopulationsis recommended

Keywords: Accuracy,dietaryassessmentmethod,LowMiddle-Income Countries

3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - 2024

Ensuring Child Rights during Disasters: Insights from Haldumulla Landslide, Sri Lanka

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This paper investigates the experiences of children and the status of child rights in the Haldummulla Kalipanawela landslide area in Badulla District in December 2023. Using a mixed-method approach, including cross-sectional surveys, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and visual data analysis of children's drawings, the study highlights the multiple challenges faced by children in 29 displaced families, comprising 25 children and 48 parents. Key findings reveal significant impacts on children's education and hygiene due to inadequate housing, water scarcity, electricity supply issues, and substandard sanitary facilities. These conditions have exacerbated children's vulnerabilities, leading to decreased educational performance, increased risk of child rights violations, and social marginalization. Applying the Framework for Integrating Rights and Equality (FIRE) in disaster analysis, the study identifies specific violations of child rights, including the right to education, adequate housing, clean water and sanitation, and protection from exploitation and abuse. Economic pressures, with many families earning less than Rs 30,000 per month from pepper cultivation, further hinder children's ability to meet their needs, violating their right to a standard of living adequate for their development. The government's resettlement plan conflicts with the existing village income sources and agency officials highlight the cost management dilemmas during relocation. The study suggests participatory approaches involving all stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organizations, institutions, officials, children, parents, and the community, to ensure children's well-being and rights during disasters. Comprehensive collaboration and a holistic approach are essential to prevent displaced children from remaining trapped in cycles of vulnerability. The application of FIRE underscores the need for targeted interventions that prioritize the protection and fulfillment of child rights in disaster contexts.

Keywords: Child Rights and Protection, Climate Change, Disaster, Displaced Children, FIRE Framework

3rd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE - 2024

Harassment Experiences of Bisexual Women in Higher Education in Sri Lanka: A Social Work Perspective

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This study explores the distinct harassment experiences of bisexual women within higher education in Sri Lanka, analyzed from a social work perspective. Despite increasing visibility and advocacy for LGBTQ+ rights, bisexual women are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and stigmatization, both from broader society and within LGBTQ+ communities. The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the unique forms and patterns of harassment faced by bisexual women in academic and off-higher education social contexts, examining the types of harassment, its impact, and the coping mechanisms employed. By focusing on this demographic, the research aims to highlight the specific challenges faced by bisexual women and to advocate for more inclusive policies and support systems within educational settings.The higher education sector was selected for this research due to its role as a microcosm of broader societal dynamics and a critical environment where young adults shape their identities and professional futures. Universities, while traditionally viewed as spaces for intellectual growth and diversity, often mirror societal biases and discriminatory practices. For bisexual women, these institutions can present unique challenges, making it essential to understand their experiences within this context.Bisexual women were chosen as the focus of this study due to the "double discrimination" they face, encountering prejudice from both heterosexual and homosexual communities. This dual marginalization can lead to specific challenges, including stigmatization, invalidation, and exclusion. The study employs qualitative methods, including in-depth interviews and case studies, gathering data from 23 bisexual women in higher education. Findings reveal pervasive harassment, including verbal harassments (23), cyber harassments (2), physical harassments (8), sexual harassments (3), and mental harassments (23) forms, both within educational settings and at part-time jobs or social gatherings.The research highlights the importance of inclusive policies and support systems in higher education to foster safer and more accepting environments for bisexual women. The implications are significant for policymakers, educators, and social work professionals, calling for a deeper understanding of bisexuality and the challenges faced by bisexual women in academic contexts.

Key Words:- Bisexual Women, Biphobia, Harassment, Higher Education, Social Work

Exploring Perceptions of Community-Dwelling Older Adults' on Social Support Systems: A qualitative inquiry

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Introduction: The world demographics is changing over time, with a profound increase in the number of ageing populations. This change is characterised by a number of opportunities as well as challenges. Ageing, being considered only as a deterioration of biopsychosocial capabilities, has now been transformed with a more positive outlook, giving significance to 'healthy' and 'successful' ageing. However, the existing structures that support older adults to live healthy and cope with ageing related challenges are inadequate, especially in developing countries like India. The system here faces uncertainties in implementing comprehensive support and care for the geriatric population. Effective service implementation requires a bottom-up approach, emphasising the importance of understanding the needs and perceptions of the older adults who use these services.

Objective: This study is an in-depth exploration of the perceptions of community-dwelling older adults regarding their social support systems in Kerala, India.

Methodology: In this qualitative study, 20 community-dwelling older adults were purposefully selected for in depth interviews covering various domains to comprehensively understand their social support systems using a semi structured interview guide. Thematic data analysis was done using Braun and Clark's analysis framework.

Results: This study identified three major themes: formal support systems, informal support systems, and social participation. These themes highlight the multifaceted nature of support systems crucial for the well-being and social integration of older adults in community settings.

Conclusion: Understanding the support systems of community-dwelling older adults is essential to developing comprehensive policies and interventions that promote their well-being and social security. By fostering robust support networks that cater to both practical and emotional needs, societies can empower older adults to maintain active roles within their communities and lead fulfilling lives.

Keywords: Qualitative study, community-dwelling older adults, social support system

Elephant-Human Conflict and Rural Political Power Structures

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The reconciliation process of elephant-human conflict is complex. Government officials play a crucial role in addressing and mitigating these conflicts through strategic interventions, balancing the needs of local communities with wildlife conservation efforts. The role and nature of the bureaucracy involved in this process are varied and multifaceted. As human populations grow, especially amid habitat loss and fragmentation, they often encroach on elephant habitats, leading to increased competition for resources such as food and water. This encroachment results in conflicts between humans and elephants, including the destruction of crops and damage to farms and livelihoods. Consequently, the killing of elephants by humans becomes a situational conflict factor. To promote elephant-human co-existence, various strategies are employed, such as elephant fences, early warning systems, and elephant safety trenches, all aimed at reducing conflicts. This study examines the reconciliation process of elephant-human conflict and the nature of state bureaucracy involved.

A survey method was used, employing a questionnaire schedule and semi-structured interviews to collect quantitative data. The sample included all families within the study area, selected through a non-zero random sampling method based on family size, resulting in 186 respondents. The field of study was the Karuwalagaswewa Grama Niladhari Division, part of the Galgamuwa Divisional Secretariat Division in the Kurunegala District. Prominent and pervasive factors in the conflict include the disruption of social security, domestic violence, breakdown of family welfare, and limited opportunities for social mobility. The establishment of transnational cultures in rural society and adaptation to these new cultures has created an adaptive social background in the study area.

A macro political power structure exerts pressure on the rural political system, and political activism often fails to align with human needs, creating artificial factors in the conflict. The conflict has become a protracted social conflict due to wildlife policies and sanctuary policies clashing with the political system, and the lack of continuous implementation of intersectional institutional relationships.

Additionally, the public sector's provision of land to private businesses under the Ninety-Ninth Tax System, the sale of forest reserves based on political connections, and the allocation of forest reserves for commercial agriculture through official gazettes have contributed to a conflicting relationship between human and animal needs within the macro and rural political power structures. To reconcile these dilemmas, necessary procedures should be devised. Instead of merely preventing the conflict, measures should be taken to lead to a resolution process through mediation, with accountability assigned to the responsible parties.

Keywords: community participation, Government officials, policy implementation, , resource allocation.

Sexual Child Abuse in Sri Lanka; A Comparative factor Identification on Child and Child Abuse Perpetrators' Social Background.

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According to the NCPA Report, there were 9673 in 2023 reported child abuse cases. The objective of this paper is discussing biopsychosocial consequences of child abuse and suggest the basic components of social support network program to mitigate child abuse in Sri Lanka. This research is a comparative, descriptive study on child abuse in Sri Lanka. The study focused to analyze related background factors of both sides' that child and thechild abuse perpetrators. Research problem was to explore the risk factors and root factors that influence to child abuse from both sides' child and the perpetrators. Research was conducted with secondary and primary data. Background factors related to the abused child was revealed through randomly selected scholarly research articles. Perpetrators' background was analyzed with primary datawhich was collected from semi structured interviews of ten cases who convicted for child abuse in the prison. Social back ground of child abuse are highly related with reasons as lower educational levels of both child and the parents, low awareness on sexuality and child rights related sexual and other types of abuse, insecurity family situation with poverty, drunken fathers, parents' marriage mismatches and casual marriage relationships,and cultural acceptances and customs. Biopsychosocial symptoms of sexual child abuse can be identified from rape to death with kissing, touching and of genital areas and organs, oral sex, showing and taking pictures of sexual images,habitual sexual intercourse at home with close relatives. Most common child abuse perpetrators are biological father, stepfather, school teacher,close relative such as sisters' husband or uncles, father's friends or close nabors.Most perpetrators had negative child hood experiences, low education levels, low parental care, illicit drug use and excessive sexual desire. Social support network for mitigate the child abuse should be focused to address risk factors include family, child, youth, and reputation of all groups and interference of government and volunteer agencies.

Keywords: Biopsychosocial Symptoms, Child abuse, Child Abuse Perpetrators,Child Protection Social Support Network, Risk Factors

A SOCIAL ASPECT OF POLICY IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGERS ON ELDERS' SOCIAL PROTECTION

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Aging is an universal phenomena which present significant implications and challengers for various types of social and economic issues. Ensuring the quality of the life of the elder is the greatest challenge of them. Enabling the policy practice is the macro level intervention strategy to ensure the social protection of elders. The effectiveness of these policies is deeply rooted in the socio economic and cultural context of given society. This study aim was to examine the challenges on implementation of social policies for the elders in Sri Lanka focusing with Asian experiences. The research problem and the research question were 'What kind of policy practices are implementing for the sake of social protection of elders in their country? And What are the prevailing policy implementation gaps on social protection of the elders? This paper focused on desk research approach with systematic review. The randomly selected two research studies done based on Pakistan and Nepal in related to the policy implementation on elder's social protection. Both countries face the challenge of political instability affecting policy continuity and effectiveness. Nepal has a constitutionally mandated framework but struggles with practical implementation, while Pakistan's policies are influenced by religious traditions but lack modern comprehensive approaches. Both countries require significant improvements in governmental and administrative capacities. Nepal's challenges include bureaucratic inefficiencies and lack of trained personnel, while Pakistan needs to enhance its administrative capabilities to better implement and sustain programs. Economic vulnerability is a major challenge in both countries. Nepal faces financial constraints and infrastructure deficits, while Pakistan's elderly population struggles with severe economic insecurity. Both nations need sustainable funding solutions and improved service delivery mechanisms. Both countries have historical and cultural influences shaping their social protection policies. Nepal needs to better integrate modern applications with its cultural contexts, while Pakistan should combine religious principles with contemporary social protection frameworks for greater efficacy. The study concludes with recommending on enhancement of prevailing policies, administrative capacities, improving community engagement and long-term sustainability for optimizing the output in both countries to ensure the social justice for the elders by empowering the social protection mechanism.

Keywords: community engagement, elderly people, policy practice, social protection, social aspect

A comprehensive study on the discontinuity of primary school education of children in the gypsy community (With Special Reference to A/ Siyanbalagaswewa Primary School in the Mihinthale Divisional Education Sector)

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The Gypsy Community in Sri Lanka has its own set of customs, rituals, and believes that have been passed down through the generations. Despite the fact that Gypsies also receive a modern, structured school education, gypsy education should be a crucial issue for contemporary society. The largest challenge that gypsy students have during their entire educational carriers is that they don't keep a regular attendance schedule as an individual at school. The main objective of this research study to investigate on the discontinuity of primary school education of children in gypsy community and one of the secondary objective of the study is to investigate the school social worker's intervention. The study utilized qualitative method. The overall sample size of this study is 30. The 30 participants which includes 12 gypsy students, 03 parents, 02 villages, 02 chieftains, and 11 key informants. The key data collection method for this research study were interviews, focus group discussions and case studies.Theresearch area was the primary students of Siyanbalagaswewa Pre-School. According to the research findings poverty, racism and prejudice, unsupportive family background and children's health which affect both cognitively and physically, it was also found that the school community, including the instructors and the principals, put a lot of work for seeking regular attendance of gypsy children. A model was developed as the research last phase for responding the challenges that has been identified.

Key words – Gypsy students, Gypsy community, Primary –education, Discontinuity of school

Influence Factors contributing to Effeteness of the Field Orientation Programme.

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Feedback is mechanism for predicting the outcomes of a programme. Receiving feedback from participants allows you to check that the programme objective are being met. A side from that, it ensures participant satisfaction, accountability and quality, National Institute of Social Development is higher education institution that provides a professional degree in social work. It is typical for students studying at this institute to be assigned to a field agency to perform field practice. This is how second year bachelor of social work students are led through their first orientation even to better understand case work and group work.

Obtaining feedback from participants can identify shortcomings in event coordination, deficiencies in class room deficiencies instructional material and deficiencies in class room learning. As result, the purpose of this study is to Evaluate of student satisfaction level with an Field orientation programme of BSW Second year students. The study is qualitative, with data collected through observation as Primary data stratified sampling through semi-structured questionnaires from 50 participants and 4 resource persons and coordinators on a purposive sampling basis. Secondary data were subjected to thematic analysis. Class room teaching technique, Class room pedagogy, student involvement, resource person personality duration of orientation session, orientation strategy and so on were found to have an impact in providing on orientation events.

Key words: Orientation Programme, Case work, Group Work, Influence Factors.

Exploring Cyber Violence and Vulnerability Among Young Women in Matale: A Social Media Perspective

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Cyber violence is an escalating global issue, and women face disproportionate risks online compared to men. According to the UN Broadband Commission (2015), women are more likely to be victims of cyber violence, with those aged 18 to 24 being particularly vulnerable. A Pew Research Center (2021) report indicates that 75% of online harassment occurs on social media platforms, highlighting the critical need for effective strategies to combat this growing problem. This study focuses on the experiences of young women in Matale, Sri Lanka, who encounter cyber violence on social media. Despite limited research on this specific topic within the Sri Lankan context, available data shows a high frequency of cyber violence against women, underlining the need for targeted interventions. The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the specific types of cyber violence young women face, identify factors contributing to their vulnerability, and examine their help-seeking behaviors and available support measures. Data has collected using semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of young women aged 18 to 24. Thematic analysis has employed to categorize and interpret the complex qualitative data, providing a clearer understanding of the types and prevalence of cyber violence experienced by these women. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants who can provide the most relevant insights into the issue. The vulnerability to cyber violence differs across age groups and there is no single age group that can be considered universally vulnerable. However, it is important to note that certain age groups are more vulnerable to specific types of cyber violence. As cyber violence is currently an increasing and evolving issue which can actually lead to severe consequences, social workers on the other hand has an essential role in combating cyber violence against women and, making this research vital for developing effective intervention strategies and educational programs.

Keywords: cyber violence, social media, women, vulnerability, help-seeking behaviors, support measure, role of social worker

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