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VISION AND MISSION

- Contribute to building a new social order based on human dignity and social justice.
- Work with a preferential option for the vulnerable and exploited, both locally and globally.
- Build cadre of young, competent professionals having a global perspective and a strong value base of compassion, personal integrity, moderation, tolerance and self-respect.

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Contents

Editorial

1. The Vanguards of Veracity: Capacitating Campus Journalists for Reshaping the Sphere of Higher Education 01
   - Dr. Pandurang Vitthal Barkale

2. A Qualitative Study on the Role of Education in the Social Mobility of Narikkuravar Youth in Karamadai, Coimbatore 19
   - Ayana M , Dr. S. Emelda Mary

3. Beliefs & Practices During Pregnancy and Post-Partum Period Among Warli Women in Maharashtra: A Convergent Design 35
   - Dr. Roshni Alphanso

4. Identity, Marginalization, and Health Consequences in Tea Gardens of Assam 57
   - Balaka Chattaraj

5. Reframing CKD Care in India: An Application of Segmented Multisectoral Medical Social Work Approach 70
   - Ms. Sharvari Pawar

6. Understanding Disability at the Grassroots: A Needs Assessment in Rural Gujrat 99
   - Prof. (Dr.) Lidwin Dias , Dr. Kalyani Talvelkar

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *Perspectives in Social Work* brings together six insightful articles that engage with critical questions of ethics, education, health, disability, marginalization, identity, and social justice in contemporary India. The contributions collectively foreground the lived realities of marginalized communities and vulnerable populations while emphasizing the importance of inclusive, rights-based, and socially responsive interventions. Drawing upon qualitative, mixed-method, and field-based research approaches, the articles contribute significantly to social work scholarship and practice by centering voices that are often unheard within mainstream discourse.

The first article by Dr. Pandurang Vitthal Barkale examines the evolving role of campus journalists in higher education institutions. The article positions campus journalists as ethical storytellers, guardians of truth, and catalysts for positive social transformation. In an era increasingly marked by misinformation and disinformation, the paper highlights the responsibility of student journalists to uphold integrity, fairness, and transparency while fostering critical thinking and democratic engagement among students. It further explores emerging trends in storytelling and ethical journalism practices that can equip campus journalists to address contemporary challenges within university spaces and beyond.

The second article by Ayana Madhavan explores the role of education in enabling social mobility among Narikkuravar youth in Karamadai, Coimbatore. Focusing on a community that continues to experience deep-rooted marginalization despite its recent recognition as a Scheduled Tribe, the study critically examines how young people perceive education as a pathway to empowerment and social advancement. The findings reveal that although education is highly valued, structural inequalities, caste-based stigma, poverty, and cultural alienation continue to impede meaningful mobility. The article emphasizes the need for

culturally responsive educational frameworks, vocational opportunities, and collaborative support from social workers and civil society organizations to ensure equitable access and transformative outcomes.

The third article by Dr. Roshni Alphanso focuses on the health and nutritional challenges faced by Warli women in the Palghar district of Maharashtra. Using a convergent mixed-method design, the study highlights the complex interplay between poverty, tribal identity, cultural beliefs, and maternal health practices. The research reveals how harmful traditional practices and nutritional deficiencies adversely affect women during prenatal and postnatal stages. The article proposes several community-based interventions, including nutrition education, food security initiatives such as grain banks, and food-for-work programmes, while emphasizing the importance of stakeholder collaboration in addressing health inequities and advancing the goal of zero hunger among tribal communities.

The fourth article by Balaka Chattaraj critically examines the historical and ongoing marginalization of Adivasi tea plantation labourers in Assam. The paper traces the exploitative conditions under which Adivasi communities were forcefully migrated during the colonial period and highlights the persistence of poor living conditions, underpayment, identity exclusion, and health vulnerabilities even after legislative reforms. Based on primary data collected through in-depth interviews, the study sheds light on the structural inequalities and social neglect experienced by plantation workers. The article calls attention to the urgent need for policy reforms and social protection measures that uphold the dignity, health, and rights of tea plantation labourers.

The fifth article by Sharvari Pawar discusses Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD) as a growing public health concern in India and highlights the critical role of medical social work in supporting patients and caregivers. Using a mixed-method research design situated within the socio-ecological model of health, the study

explores the multidimensional challenges associated with chronic illness management. The findings reveal the emotional, financial, and psychosocial burdens experienced not only by patients undergoing dialysis but also by caregivers, who often remain invisible within healthcare systems. The article advocates for stronger psychosocial support systems, streamlined welfare and funding mechanisms, and comprehensive interventions that recognize caregivers as integral stakeholders in patient care.

The sixth article by Dr. Lidwin Dias and Dr. Kalyani Talvelkar addresses disability as both a human rights and development concern, emphasizing how social and environmental barriers restrict the equal participation of persons with disabilities (PwDs). Drawing on a survey conducted with support from the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), the study examined the health, educational, livelihood, and psychosocial support needs of 300 persons with disabilities across 13 villages in Dholka Taluka. The findings reveal significant challenges related to access to healthcare, rehabilitation services, assistive devices, and livelihood opportunities, often compounded by financial constraints, lack of awareness, and delayed diagnosis of disabilities. The study further highlights the socio-demographic profile of respondents, many of whom belonged to marginalized communities and lived in joint family settings. By identifying critical gaps in service delivery and inclusion, the article advocates for strengthened disability-responsive policies, accessible healthcare and education systems, enhanced livelihood opportunities, and community-based awareness initiatives to promote empowerment, dignity, and social inclusion for persons with disabilities in rural areas.

Collectively, the articles in this issue reflect the enduring commitment of social work scholarship to engage with questions of equity, dignity, participation, and social transformation. They illuminate how systemic inequalities intersect with education, health, labour, media, and identity, while also offering grounded recommendations for practice, policy, and research. The issue

reinforces the importance of ethical engagement, participatory approaches, and interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing complex social realities and advancing inclusive development.

We hope this edition offers valuable insights to researchers, practitioners, educators, students, and policymakers engaged in the pursuit of social justice and human well-being. The reflections and findings presented in these articles aim to strengthen critical understanding, informed practice, and transformative interventions across diverse social contexts.

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