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- 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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EDITORIAL

The August 2026 issue of *Perspectives in Social Work* brings together a diverse collection of scholarly contributions addressing contemporary concerns in social work, health, well-being, social justice, poverty, indigenous communities, ageing, gender, and the evolving role of social work practice. Collectively, the articles highlight the complex relationship between individual experiences and wider social, cultural, institutional, and structural realities. The contributions draw attention to occupational stress and work–life balance among women police officers, internalized ageism among older persons, mental health challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, welfare and livelihood concerns among tribal communities, decoloniality and indigeneity in social work, multidimensional understandings of poverty, social support and psychological well-being among women living with HIV, counselling needs of caregivers in palliative care, and the continuing relevance of Gandhian trusteeship. Taken together, these articles demonstrate the importance of evidence-informed, culturally responsive, rights-based, and transformative approaches to social work education, research, policy, and practice.

The first article by Priya Antony and Dr. Jeryda Eljo examines occupational stress and work–life balance among women civil police officers in Kerala. The study highlights the operational and organizational stresses experienced by women police officers and explores their psychological well-being, including experiences of anxiety and depressive feelings. The findings point to the strong relationship between different dimensions of occupational stress and emphasize the need for supportive workplace environments. The article highlights the implications for professional social work, particularly the strengthening of mental health services and gender-responsive workplace initiatives that can promote psychological well-being and healthier work–life balance among women in the police service.

The second article by Dr. Gautam Makwana focuses on internalized ageism and self-perception of health among elderly Indians. The article brings together evidence from Indian research to examine how negative stereotypes about ageing can become internalized and influence perceptions of physical, cognitive, and emotional well-being. It further considers the influence of social and contextual factors such as gender, education, family structure, and media exposure. Drawing upon theoretical perspectives on stereotype embodiment and self-fulfilling processes, the article emphasizes the importance of strengths-based, ecological, and anti-oppressive social work approaches. It advocates interventions and policy responses that challenge age-based stigma and promote dignity and holistic well-being among older persons.

The third article by Dr. Jaimon Varghese and faculty members of CSRD Institute of Social Work and Research examines the management of mental health issues during the COVID-19 pandemic and the role of social work. The study documents the diverse challenges experienced by people during the pandemic, particularly those connected with health, loss, caregiving, transportation, stigma, social isolation, livelihood, and education. The article underscores the importance of social work in responding to psychosocial distress during public health emergencies. It highlights the potential of social workers to provide counselling and psychosocial support through online and offline platforms, while also contributing to preventive healthcare and vaccination-related initiatives.

The fourth article by Dr. Anjali Ashokan examines the health–livelihood nexus among Irula tribal communities in Attappady, Kerala. The article critically explores the effects of state welfare interventions on livelihoods, dietary practices, and healthcare access. While welfare programmes seek to address vulnerability and immediate needs, the study points to the possibility that interventions may unintentionally weaken traditional systems of self-reliance and contribute to economic

dependency. The findings also highlight the limited recognition of indigenous knowledge and cultural practices within existing health and nutrition programmes. The article calls for integrated and culturally respectful approaches that strengthen community autonomy, indigenous livelihoods, and community-led healthcare and nutrition systems.

The fifth article by Suma Perumal and Dr. Ravindra Ramesh Patil explores decoloniality and indigeneity within the social work discipline through a comparative examination of India and Canada. The article critically considers how decolonial and indigenous perspectives have been represented within social work scholarship. It highlights differences in the ways indigenous voices, lived experiences, and community perspectives are incorporated within the two contexts, while also drawing attention to shared gaps in addressing internal hierarchies within indigenous communities. The discussion is particularly significant for Indian social work, where questions of caste, power, knowledge production, and cultural context require greater engagement within decolonial debates.

The sixth article by Rohit Mutatkar, titled *Conceptualizing Poverty in Social Work*, revisits poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon rather than simply a condition of inadequate income. The article examines the conceptual and methodological challenges involved in understanding and measuring poverty and considers the social, economic, political, and cultural factors that contribute to its persistence. Importantly, it draws attention to the gap between poverty research and practical action. The article emphasizes the role of social workers in translating research knowledge into meaningful interventions, advocacy, and policy responses, while addressing the structural inequalities that sustain poverty and social exclusion.

Laisamma and Arunkumar's article seven examines the relationship between social support and psychological well-being among women living with HIV in Puducherry. The study

demonstrates the significance of social support in strengthening psychological well-being and highlights the need to develop appropriate interventions for women living with HIV. The findings reinforce the importance of supportive relationships and community-based systems in promoting emotional well-being and quality of life. The article has important implications for social workers, healthcare professionals, policymakers, and community organizations working with women living with HIV.
Article eight by Arva Shikari examines the need for counselling and perceived stress among caregivers at Sukoon Nilaya Palliative Care Centre in Mumbai. The study highlights the emotional and psychological demands experienced by caregivers while caring for their loved ones. The findings indicate a clear need for counselling and emphasize the value of individualized psychological support. The article brings attention to caregivers as an important yet often overlooked group within palliative care and underscores the role of social work in providing emotional support, strengthening coping mechanisms, and facilitating appropriate psychosocial interventions.

The final article by Dr. Arun K.V revisits Mahatma Gandhi's concept of Trusteeship and explores its contemporary applications and global implications. The article reflects on Trusteeship as an ethical approach to addressing social inequality and promoting social responsibility. It connects Gandhian principles with contemporary responses to poverty, disasters, community welfare, corporate social responsibility, and volunteerism. The discussion highlights the continuing relevance of Trusteeship and its potential contribution to social work values and practice. By emphasizing responsibility towards marginalized communities and collective well-being, the article invites renewed reflection on ethical leadership, social justice, empowerment, and sustainable social change.

We hope this edition provides readers with diverse perspectives that contribute meaningfully to social work education, research, and practice. The articles collectively reinforce the importance of

contextual understanding, critical reflection, community participation, mental health support, cultural responsiveness, and structural approaches to social problems. It is our hope that the scholarship presented in this issue will encourage social workers, educators, researchers, and practitioners to engage with emerging challenges while strengthening socially just, inclusive, and transformative social work interventions.

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