

TOPIC

**EXPLORING THE RELEVANCE OF SOCIAL WORK IN HELPING  
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN ALICE TOWN IN THE EASTERN  
CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

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# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY



- Historically, people with disabilities experienced stigma, discrimination, attitudinal and environmental barriers.
- According to (Lombard, 2008) most legislations, policies and practices have regarded people with disabilities as sick and functionally limited.
- South Africa adopted a developmental policy for social welfare in the form of a White Paper for Welfare in 1997.
- This was a response to address the historical injustices in the service delivery system.
- Furthermore, the White Paper sought to embrace a social welfare system that is based on equity, equality, participation, and relevant in meeting the needs of all South Africans (Patel, 2005).

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# INTRO. & BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY CONT'D



- According to the Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper (1997), the failure to integrate disability into mainstream government statistical processes is mainly caused by a serious lack of reliable information on the nature and prevalence of disability in South Africa.
- The lack of reliable information led to confusion in the definition of disability, more time is spent in theorising disability than solving the problem.
- These confusions created misconceptions in helping people with disabilities, thus creating permanent vulnerability on the situation of people with disabilities.



# AIM OF THE STUDY

- The aim of our study is to explore the relevance of social work profession in helping People With Disability in Alice Town in the Eastern Cape province , South Africa.



# OBJECTIVES

To achieve the aim of our study we utilised the following objectives:

- To explore relevance of social work profession in helping people with disabilities
- To determine the roles performed by social workers in helping people with disabilities.
- To ascertain social work approaches in helping people with disabilities.





## PROBLEM STATEMENT

- The South African Constitution stipulates that every one is equal before the law, and no one should be discriminated against based on disability, gender, race, colour, culture, religion, just to mention but a few.
- Subscribing from the South African Constitution through the Department of Social Development (DSD) social work profession is mandated to help the vulnerable populace, specifically people with disabilities.
- However, people with disabilities, particularly in Alice Town, remain vulnerable as their lives are associated with socioeconomic and political exclusion. Hence, researchers of current study questions the relevance of social work profession in helping people with disabilities with particular reference to Alice Town.

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## PROBLEM STATEMENT CONTI'D

- Among the significant vulnerabilities of people with disabilities in Alice Town include the lack of facilities and infrastructures.
- The lack creates a significant vacuum between policies and people with disabilities.
- The vacuum contributes to a poor social work service delivery environment in assisting people with disabilities in Alice Town.
- In addition the shortage of social workers in Alice Town result in poor social work service delivery (Integrated National Disability Strategy White Paper, 1997).

# RESEARCH METHODOLOGY



- The study was conducted in Alice Town in the Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. The study used qualitative research design for collecting data. Using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions the study targeted five social workers, and twenty nine people living with disabilities.
- The study used in-depth interviews for Social Workers, and four focus group discussion. Two groups were aware about disability and two groups were not aware about disability.
- Therefore, the study was exploratory in nature acquiring insights on the relevance of social work in helping people with disabilities.

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# ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- This study was informed by the following ethical consideration:
- Avoidance of harm
- Confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Avoidance of plagiarism



# PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

- The findings of the study indicated that social work profession is relevant in helping people with disabilities. However, social work profession in its practice is guided by ethics, values, and principles that makes social work to help people with disabilities holistically with those reflections, critical thinking skills.
- The study also indicated that social work profession through Department of Social Development give first preference to people living with disabilities.
- The findings of the study indicated that social workers with the Department of Social Development designed policies that gives first preferance to people living



## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS CONT'D

with disabilities. They are researchers we have them right now here.

- The study established that social work is championing for user friendly environment for people living with disabilities in Alice Town.
- The study findings indicated that social workers and DSD designed policies, for example disability grants that first preference are people living with disabilities.
- The study findings indicated that social workers has specific roles that they perform in assisting people living with disabilities. However the study established that social workers are incapacitated to fully execute their duties in assisting people living with



# PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS CONTINUE

- disabilities.
- The study find out that Social Workers do not have adequate educational training in assisting people living with disabilities.
- The study finding indicated that there is uneven proportional ratio of social workers in helping people with disabilities.
- The study established that social workers are incapacitated in terms of resources that include human resources, financial resources, and infrastructural resources.
- The study findings indicated that social work education does not have specific approach although it uses remedial, and developmental approaches.
- The study findings indicated that remedial approach is more conventional and does not necessarily address problems of people living with disabilities.



# PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS CONTINUE

- The study finding indicated that, unlike remedial approach developmental approach is developmental in nature to accommodate everyone.
- It seeks to address imbalance of the past, it is interdisciplinary in the sense that it works hand in hand with other disciplines.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need for the use of foreign based(Western) knowledge together with local based (Traditional) knowledge in order to expand fully the scope of social work as problem solving approach.
- Indigenous social welfare and social work practice model can only evolve through indigenous documentation and analysis of different practice modes and their appropriateness to the local and regional situation.
- Better communication networks should be well developed to link the rural sector with the main resource centres to broaden service delivery mechanism.



# RECOMMENDATIONS CONT'D

- Existing policies should be well implemented before adopting new policies in order to promote human dignity.
- Social work training should be consistent continuously followed.



# SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- The study findings are significant in forming alternative source of information concerning disability services in Alice Town.
- The study findings are significant as they bring clarity and knowledge regarding confusion in the definition of disability. In doing so, will provide sustainable help for people with disabilities in Alice Town.
- The findings of the study would also benefit non-governmental organizations (NGO) working with disability.
- Department of Social Development benefits from the findings as there are so many programs and intervention strategies used to assist or work with people with disabilities





THE END



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

