


**SpringerBriefs in Social Work**

Social Work and Social Change

Muhammed Jabir · Anoop C. Choolayil



# **Social Work with Populations Vulnerable to Neglected Tropical Diseases**

Evidence and Insights  
from India



**Springer**

SpringerBriefs in Social Work

## **SpringerBriefs in Social Work and Social Change**

### **Series Editors**

Rajendra Baikady, Department of Social Work  
Central University of Kerala  
Kasargod, Kerala, India

Jaroslav Przeperski, Centre for Family Research  
Nicolaus Copernicus University  
Torun, Poland

S. M. Sajid, Department of Social Work  
Jamia Millia Islamia  
New Delhi, India

*SpringerBriefs in Social Work and Social Change* is a compact book series of authored and edited briefs on the state-of-the-art literature on social work and social change as well as globalization and social change, neoliberalism and social change, and societal response to social change, with special reference to social work education, research and practice.

The principal aim of the Series is to examine social change in a constantly changing world with new economic, political and social orders and how social work as a human service profession responds to these changes. Contributions in this Series go beyond accepting change as an inevitable force and reflect on our power in influencing, redirecting and contemplating social change. It is with this principal aim that we call upon academia, policy-makers, researchers and educators in social work, at all levels of their career stage, to explore the positive part of social change; i.e., what can we learn from social change while revisiting its negativity and impact.

Volumes published in this Series approach social change at different levels of society (whether local, regional, national, transnational, or at the macro, meso and micro levels). The Series identifies and defines the concept of social change within the social work context and its impact on human development at various national and international scopes.

Featuring compact volumes of 55 to 125 pages, *SpringerBriefs in Social Work and Social Change* is a comprehensive collection of high-quality literature on social change, with a primary focus on social work, contributed by educators, researchers, and practitioners across the globe. Both solicited and unsolicited manuscripts are considered for publication in this Series.

Muhammed Jabir • Anoop C. Choolayil

# Social Work with Populations Vulnerable to Neglected Tropical Diseases

Evidence and Insights from India

 Springer

Muhammed Jabir  
Epidemiology and Operational Research  
ICMR-Vector Control Research Centre  
Puducherry, India

Anoop C. Choolayil  
One Health  
ICMR-Vector Control Research Centre  
Puducherry, India

ISSN 2195-3104  
SpringerBriefs in Social Work  
ISSN 2731-0760  
SpringerBriefs in Social Work and Social Change  
ISBN 978-3-031-68996-3  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-68997-0>

ISSN 2195-3112 (electronic)  
ISSN 2731-0779  
ISBN 978-3-031-68997-0 (eBook)

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2024

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG  
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

If disposing of this product, please recycle the paper.

# Foreword

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG 3) aims to achieve health and wellbeing for all by 2030. However, health services, health systems and healthcare facilities in most countries are becoming expensive despite advancements in science and technology, new innovations and paradigm shifts in medical systems. In the midst of growing inequality and disparity across nations and population groups, safeguarding minimum basic welfare, such as good health and wellbeing, is imperative to any country in its way towards development. Our global society experienced the worst public health challenge, namely COVID-19, which the World Health Organization declared a pandemic in March 2020. During the time of the pandemic, most countries in the world came to understand the shortcomings in their healthcare facilities and healthcare management. The COVID-19 pandemic also worsened the already existing global health inequality, in which countries in the Global South were experiencing the most difficult challenges due to their resource and leadership deficits. The pandemic provided an opportunity for policy makers and administrators to understand that the investment in public health and the wellbeing of people should not go unnoticed.

This book, written by Muhammed Jabir and Anoop C. Choolayil, brings fresh discussion on aspects related to social work practices with populations vulnerable to neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). It consists of five chapters that outline the current situation of NTDs in India. The authors open the discussion with a global overview of NTDs, the challenges in addressing NTDs and the role of social work in controlling and eliminating NTDs. The discussion in Chap. 2 provides more detail related to India and offers an understanding to readers on the social dimensions of health and illness. Furthermore, the authors also discuss health equality and the impact of health inequality in Indian society, with special reference to populations vulnerable to NTDs. While NTDs are common in developing and less developed countries, their impact on vulnerable population groups in India cannot be neglected. With limited health facilities and poor access to clean water and basic sanitation, housing and nutrition for most vulnerable population groups, addressing the impact of NTDs on the overall wellbeing of these groups in India is timely and important.

As the authors highlight in their book, social work intervention with populations vulnerable to NTDs is important for achieving a just and equal society where no one is left behind. Furthermore, social justice and human dignity are the core principles on which the social work profession is established and practised across the globe. Social workers, as human service professionals, strive to ensure access to equal, meaningful and participatory opportunities for all sections of society. Social work provides a range of services in both the physical and mental health areas. However, in our contemporary society, the role of social work is not well recognized and respected in several countries. In India, even 87 years after its birth, social work is unable to achieve professional status; nevertheless, through various forms, the profession is profoundly impacting millions of people who are marginalized and vulnerable in contemporary India.

Throughout this book, authors Muhammed Jabir and Anoop C. Choolayil highlighted the importance of developing innovative and impactful social work interventions and practices to address NTDs. Social workers need to understand the social conditions and economic situations that increase people's vulnerability in terms of health and wellbeing. Furthermore, their ability to understand social dimensions such as poverty, cultural practices, and social identity among different communities in India significantly influences their intervention with these population groups. Social workers play a pivotal role in strengthening societies through social work interventions and participatory social development. To address growing health and wellbeing concerns, India needs to strengthen its human services profession, such as social workers and allied health professionals.

In conclusion, I remind readers that social work as a human service profession can bring desirable and impactful change to our society when we believe in the power of human dignity, human worth and human rights. Accordingly, modern social work educational programmes and training should focus on developing professionally trained and ethically competent workforces to serve the neediest population groups of our society.

Central University of Kerala  
Kasargod, Kerala, India  
University of Johannesburg  
Johannesburg, South Africa  
York University  
Toronto, ON, Canada  
24 June 2024

Rajendra Baikady, PhD, FRSA

# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Neglected Tropical Diseases: A Brief Introduction to the Global Scenario</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1	Introduction	1
1.2	Impact of NTDs on Affected Populations	5
1.3	Neglected Tropical Diseases and the Role of Social Determinants	7
1.4	Challenges in the Control and Prevention of NTDs	10
1.5	Global Efforts in Combating Neglected Tropical Diseases	12
1.6	NTD Programmes and the Emerging Role of Social Work	13
1.7	Conclusion	14
	References	14
<b>2</b>	<b>Neglected Tropical Diseases and the Social Dimension of Illness in India</b>	<b>19</b>
2.1	Introduction	19
2.2	Towards Understanding NTDs and Social Dimension of Illness: A Conceptual Map	19
2.3	NTDs and Vicious Cycle of Poverty	21
2.4	Poverty as a Pervasive Catalyst for NTDs in India	22
2.4.1	Poor Sanitation and Substandard Housing: A Nexus to NTDs	24
2.4.2	Urbanisation and the Spread of NTDs in India	25
2.4.3	Poverty, Vulnerable Occupations and NTD Risk	25
2.4.4	Educational Attainment: A Key Determinant in NTD Prevalence	26
2.5	Social Identity in NTD Landscape in India	27
2.6	Culture: Shaping Health Belief and Treatment Decisions for NTDs	28
2.7	Behavioural Determinants in NTD Transmission	29
2.8	Healthcare Systems and NTDs	29
2.9	Conclusion	30
	References	31



<b>3</b>	<b>Social Work for the Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases</b>	<b>35</b>
3.1	Introduction	35
3.2	Positioning Social Work as a Key Profession for Eliminating NTDs	35
3.3	Towards a Social Work Model for Working with NTDs	37
3.3.1	Role of Social Workers in Epidemiological Analysis of NTDs	38
3.3.2	Social Workers in Vector Control	38
3.3.3	Integrating Social Work into Clinical and Case Management of NTD Patients	39
3.3.4	Empowering Communities: Social Worker's Role in Community Engagement and Health Education for NTD Control	39
3.3.5	Integrating Social Work Research in NTD Control	41
3.3.6	Role of Social Workers in Policy Advocacy and Logistics Management	42
3.4	Integrating Community and Clinical Models for NTD Social Work	42
3.5	Ethical Standards in Working with Communities Vulnerable to NTDs	43
3.6	Capacity Building for Social Workers in NTD	48
3.6.1	Approaches for Capacity Building for Social Workers	52
3.7	Social Work Research for the Cause of NTDs	53
3.7.1	Research Methods for Social Workers in NTD Control	56
3.8	Case Studies of NTD Programmes and the Role of Social Work	57
3.9	Conclusion	59
	References	59
<b>4</b>	<b>Towards Sustainable Impact: Future Directions in Social Work for NTD Control and Elimination</b>	<b>65</b>
4.1	Introduction	65
4.2	The Challenges in Positioning NTD Social Work as an Essential Profession	66
4.3	Future Directions in Establishing NTD Social Work as an Essential Practice	69
4.4	Theoretical Trajectories for Advancing NTD Social Work Practice	72
4.4.1	Rights-Based Approach for NTD Social Work	72
4.4.2	Systems Theory for NTD Social Work	74
4.4.3	Critical Theories for NTD Social Work	75
4.4.4	Cultural Competence Theory for NTD Social Work	76
4.4.5	Empowerment Theories for NTD Social Work	77
4.5	Conclusion	78
	References	78