

Climate change and vulnerable groups in Zimbabwe: Implications for social work practice

Sunungurayi Charamba, Mildred Mushunje, Kudzai Mwapaura, Tapiwanashe G. Simango and Netsai Risinamhodzi

Abstract

Social work is a practical profession that aims to improve problem-solving skills and social functioning, particularly for disadvantaged and marginalised vulnerable groups. The ongoing climate change is worsening the global social work burden since it increases the frequency of occurrence, magnitude, and duration of disaster events such as droughts, heat waves, diseases, tropical cyclones, and floods that negatively impact human beings. Specifically, children, people with disabilities, women, and the elderly are especially vulnerable, as they are often unable to move quickly and may have existing health conditions that make escaping from disasters difficult—meanwhile, the human rights perspective advocates for the inclusivity of all people in the disaster management process. The study used qualitative literature review analysis to explore social work-based strategies for managing the impacts of climate change in Zimbabwe while ensuring the participation of vulnerable groups in co-creating the strategy. The research involved a scoping literature review using African Journals Online, Google Scholar, and ProQuest Central search engines. The study followed specific steps, including formulating the research problem, developing and validating the reviewing protocol, searching for relevant literature using key search terms, screening for inclusion, assessing the relevance, extracting data, analysing and synthesising data, and reporting the findings. Conclusions and recommendations were based on the gaps and inconsistencies identified in the literature review.

Keywords: climate change social work vulnerable groups disasters