Connecting African Ubuntu and Social Work Practices for Human Rights: The Value of Dignity and Worth of a Person

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Abstract : Social work profession one of its primary mission is to restore and maintain human rights where social workers recognise all humanity as equal, and so too the philosophies that have developed across the world's regions. Ubuntu means African Humanism, where realization of human rights has been a primary role for every member of community to protect other member. Before Universal declaration of human rights, African societies had a long history of embracing human rights through Ubuntu approach model. The article used Ubuntu theory to guide the review process of existing literature since Ubuntu theory since is grounded in African cultural values and ecology, and it was thought that application of Ubuntu theory was relevant to reflect reality of Ubuntu model and indigenization of social work in African context. Results have shown that in realization of human rights, Ubuntu was practiced is termed as model, philosophy, cultural values, way of life or framework originated in sub-sahara Africa and some of remarkably practice model in several African communities such as Angola, (gimuntu), Botswana (muthu), Burkina Faso (maaya), Ghana (biako ye), Malawi (umunthu), Mali (maaya/hadama de ya), Namibia (omundu), Nigeria (mutunchi/iwa/agwa), (bantu), Sierra Leonne (maaya), South Africa (ubuntu/botho) and Tanzania (utu/obuntu/bumuntu). Collective and holistic mechanism of Ubuntu is found through an Ubuntu framework that is contributed by individual, family, community and spirit that is characterised by interconnectedness of all things and beings. Each society has its own name but the practice remained the same and realization of human rights in Africa context was centred through human dignity, Ubuntu is built under cultural values of humanism that brings implications for African social worker to integrate this indigenous model into social work practice in restoring and maintain human rights. Social workers should promote policies and practices that demonstrate respect for human life, difference, support and expansion of cultural knowledge and resources, advocate for programmes and institutions that demonstrate cultural competence and promote policies that safeguard the rights and confirm equity and social justice for all people.

Keywords : African ubuntu, indigenous practice, African humanism, African human rights, social work and human rights

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