



Educational and Practices in India on Criminal Justices Social Work – An Analysis

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Abstract :

In India education on criminal justices has taken a backseat though the social work has been existing for more than five decades. There is no significant development or emphasis on criminal Justice Social work for years together. Only the offenders and prevention group persists in the field. This article describes the progressive withdrawal of social work from the area of criminal justice because of the narrowing conceptualization. It further elaborates on the curricular requirements to develop a robust program for criminal justices social work enumerating the challenges that could be faced.

Keywords : Criminal Justice System, curricular aspects, criminology.

Introduction:

The Indian judicial system has remained unchanged over the decades and independent subsystems operates within a stipulated set of rules. The juvenile justice system is separate from the adult justice system. It operates at different levels including district, state and national level. Every government changes the sets of constraints on legal institutions which ultimately fails to meet the democratic ideals of equality, openness and fairness. There is no accountability of officials to the law and people. Criminal law is not being applied equally to all classes of society. This surmounts to weaker class being prosecuted, tried and punished in large members. In this article an attempt is made to understand the status of criminal justice social work education in India. It further gather the essential criteria for the curricular requirements for developing a robust program for CJSW and the challenges encountered in establishing it as a district discipline in India.

Criminology studies in India :

In India criminology has been a part of different discipline rather than being a single one. Before 1950 this subject was present only as a mere 2% in the entire gamete of educational curriculum. Between 1970 to 1974 the presence was extended to 35% in allied disciplines like sociology, psychology, social work and Law. This is due to the UGC proposal on the need to includes teaching this subject at the University level. The proposal sent to Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Education laid the foundation for University education in the field of criminology. Then MHA established the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) and the Indian Society of Criminology which paved way for interactions and deliberations on the future of criminology. The establishment of the Institute of Criminology and forensic sciences in 1971 and National Institute of Social Defense (NISD) were significant developments for Criminology. In 1981 there was a sudden spurt in the conduct of criminology courses with 105 Universities in India and 25 schools or

departments of social work. In spite of all of these still the expansion of criminology is struggling to retain its independent disciplinary identity due to various structural confusions regarding the scope, boundaries, thrust area, methodology and application. The major problem is the lack of a social climate conducive to work with the system, the offender and the victim. It is time and again proved by many foreign countries that there is a need for social workers in the justice system to act as a liaison between the two. Social workers can assist prisoners through proper guidance and counseling. This helps both the citizen and the administration to reduce case – load through diversion and increase the ability of individuals to resolve problems.

CJSW Curriculum:

Social work education in the field of criminal justice though in existence for over 7 decades has failed to contribute to the inclusion of diversity and criminal content in the curriculum. Some universities offer only diploma and certificate courses which cover only very few aspects of CJSW. In order that CJSW reaches its fullest potential it is absolutely essential to offer academic training with field based education and research. The curricula for CJSW should focus on, criminality, society's reactions and structures of oppression. Also it is required to include daily operations of police, courts and corrections. The curriculum should be able to strike a balance between the CJ inputs and social justices. The curriculum should comprise of 10% of foundation courses, 40% of core social work courses, 10% of research courses and the balance should cover field practices with some agency. The relevance of education on the field of work should narrow the gap with the practice in the field. The courses should equip the students with knowledge on the method, skill and practice to interface with justice personnel. Students are expected to have the following learning outcome

1. Should realize that criminal justice operations understanding requires ideology shaping the behavior of CJS
2. Should be able to debunk myths of crime
3. Should be able to facilitate critical thinking to address issues of power, ideology, politics and lobbying.
4. Will learn to question whether the processes of delivering justice and reducing crime is the most effective solution.
5. Should learn the criminal justice policy and philosophical underpinnings.
6. Should be able to assess the Implications of crime as a social and political construct.
7. Should be able to understand the various meanings of justice.

The course curriculum should thus comprise of criminal justice theory and policy, criminology theory, history of law, nature of law making, theory and philosophy of punishment, ethics, inequality, victimology, human rights, political ideology and certain skill courses.

Research in CJSW

There is lack of reliable data on crimes and poor communication among the stake holders namely police, magistrates, judges, prison staff. Hence there is very less research studies happening on intervention with a lack of necessary tools to assess the efficacy of the initiatives. Therefore research needs to be developed in the areas of policy making studies, Mapping studies, Implementation studies, Intervention studies, Mechanism studies and Victimization studies. It is of paramount importance to take research fundings to protect individual rights as well as maintain confidentiality. Research enables to discuss the challenges confronting the practitioners.

Fieldwork in CJSW

Fieldwork in CJSW is of vital importance to include in the CJS curricula to prepare the CJSW for competent holistic practice. Fieldwork systems include police, prisons, courts, NGOs, custodial justice, legal aid, rehabilitation custodial/ remedial institutions, beggars homes, residential homes for women and children.

Students are encouraged to follow the vision to work with individuals, communities etc. They also develop skills to work with resistant, fatalistic and traumatized groups. Fieldwork provides an opportunity to work in real life situations. They get a firsthand experience about justice systems, social work, legal ethics, political processes and social change.

The program should be so designed such that students are motivated to analyse CJS systems formed of people and procedure; develop skills to assess the performance in order to suggest alternative system design; capable of educating and influencing the public.

Conclusion

CJSW education in India has failed and limited the scope of practice. It has failed to link justice with social work. This important field needs to be developed and strengthened. There are many challenges faced by CJSW in India and a holistic curriculum needs to develop focusing on core aspects, foundation courses, research inclination and fieldwork methodology.

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