This book addresses the relative lack of academic and professional literature in the area of Criminal Justice Social Work. This compilation explores the scope of responsibilities undertaken by social workers in the field of criminal law in India when dealing with clients who are either offenders or victims of crime. It provides an in-depth understanding of the socio-structural, legal and practical challenges faced by Indian criminal justice social workers.

The book encourages social work professionals and students to consider three major areas: encouraging education and training in this subject; protecting the human rights of offenders and victims of crime; and addressing mental illness within the criminal justice system. It hopes to demystify social work in the area of criminal justice, particularly because of the stigma attached to it, given the potentially coercive enforcement of criminal law vis-à-vis the traditional ethos of social work being primarily about ‘caring’, ‘empathy’ and ‘empowerment’.

Mark David Chong is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies at the College of Arts, Society and Education, James Cook University, Australia.

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DEMYSTIFYING CRIMINAL JUSTICE SOCIAL WORK IN INDIA

EDITED BY
MARK DAVID CHONG
ABRAHAM P. FRANCIS

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Foreword

I am delighted indeed to write a foreword for the book edited by Dr Mark David Chong and Dr Abraham P. Francis titled *Demystifying Criminal Justice Social Work in India*. This book is the result of a collaboration between two scholars (the former being a criminologist and a lawyer, and the latter, a social work academic) which will help social work students, practitioners, researchers and educators in their various endeavours with the criminal justice system (CJS) in India. In doing so, they have attracted scholars from various universities, colleges and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India to contribute and share their experiences and expertise with the readers. Thus, this book offers a critical insight into criminal justice social work (CJSW) based on their research, practice, reflections and clinical expertise.

As we know, the application of social work in the CJS is an important area of practice in India. It is one that requires culturally appropriate research, innovation and relevant practice frameworks. The academic discourses, debates and ideas presented in this book reveal an excellent academic rigour and showcase robust thinking in this field. It demands serious thinking, prompts the reader to revisit the often taken-for-granted concepts and supports them to develop a practice framework that is grounded in research. This will hopefully inspire the readers to advocate for changes in their own practice contexts.

The book additionally initiates some relevant contemporary and evidence-based discussions on various matters related to the Indian CJS. I find the title *Demystifying Criminal Justice Social Work in India* particularly interesting and fascinating as it talks about demystifying some of the often misunderstood or mistaken notions around this subject, thereby bringing greater clarity to this important theme. In fact, it is a path-breaking research project that will not only inspire social work students in shaping the
way they perceive the world, but will also be an impetus to further research, collaboration and publications to enrich the field of CJSW in India.

What do social workers do? This is a question very often asked by people both from practice and the academia. Social workers are employed in a variety of contexts and work towards promoting social justice and human rights. In July 2014, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) as well as the International Association of Schools of Social Work defined ‘social work’ as:

[A] practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing. (IFSW, n.d.)

Rapp and Sullivan (2014) stated that ‘[t]he importance of recognizing and exploiting strengths in the natural environment is vitally important to social work, and is one clear area that distinguishes this discipline from others in the helping professions’ (p. 137). Not content with the critical analysis of the existing issues that plague the CJS, this book offers a glimpse of how criminal justice social workers can address these challenges in new and exciting ways. Here, the editors extol the virtues of utilising a strengths-based practice to mitigate the coercive and stigmatising elements of the CJS. That said, this approach does not simply discount the obvious problems or weaknesses of the offenders or of the victims of crime, but rather concentrates on offering possibilities, promises and hope to those who often lack such optimism in life (Francis, 2014, p. 27). To that end, Francis and Chong (2015) proposed the embedding of three ‘C’s into the CJS that represent a strengths-based practice (SBP), which can be utilised alongside the existing and necessary fundamental aims of control and compliance. These three ‘C’s are as follows: climate, compassion and commitment (Francis & Chong, 2015, p. 95). Without going into detail here, suffice it to say that social workers
employing such a perspective will view their clients (whether offenders or victims), not just as problems or symptoms of some social malaise but as human beings—imperfect but not without redeemable qualities that can be leveraged upon to encourage reformation. Such an approach would dovetail ideally into the social workers’ existing professional principles of recovery, social justice and fight against stigmatisation, discrimination and violations of human rights (AASW Code of Ethics, 2010, p. 12; AASW Practice Standards, 2013, p. 7; AASW Practice Standards for Mental Health Social Workers, 2014, pp. 6, 8). The SBP will certainly bolster a criminal justice social worker’s efforts to address powerlessness, marginality, stigma and socio-economic disadvantage at a time when a punitive and custodial approach is gaining an upper hand over the reformative, humane and rehabilitative approach in the legislatures, bureaucracies and the public after the Nirbhaya case in India. This has led to the amendment of law for trying juveniles as adults in cases of grievous crimes, which is regressive in my view.

There is no doubt that social work practice in the CJS can be challenging (Patterson 2012, p. 129). Sadly, institutional support for CJSW in India has not progressed as much as it has in the United States, Scotland or Canada. While social workers undergo a rigorous training both in the field and classroom, there has always been much debate around specialisations in social work education, particularly at the undergraduate level. Unfortunately, CJSW modules do not feature very prominently in most undergraduate social work programmes in the country. This is something that should be reviewed as social workers definitely require specialised training to practice in the CJS as it requires significant knowledge and skills in other disciplines/subjects such as criminology, criminal law and procedure, as well as criminal psychology, to name just a few. As Patterson argued, ‘[e]fforts to challenge social injustice and racial disparities will require that social work collaborate with other disciplines’ (2012, p. 175). Consequently, developing relevant interdisciplinary expertise is essential to social work practice in the CJS. It is indeed unfortunate that institutions such as National Institute of Social Defence, Directorates of Social Welfare/Corrections have over the years been headed
by administrators rather than professional social workers who preceded them.

Given the rapid social changes occurring in India, as well as the ever-changing landscape of professional practice, we cannot remain silent spectators but need to adequately respond to the challenges confronting society with conviction, determination and sensitivity. Social workers are called upon to respond to or intervene in these contexts not only by demonstrating their competence and confidence in practice but also by being compassionate and innovative in their approach (Francis, 2015). This book offers readers an opportunity to not only analyse these challenges from a critical point of view, but also provides guidance on how to meet them head-on with research-based knowledge, robust practical experience and hope.

I, therefore, congratulate the editors and chapter authors for making a significant contribution to the social work literature in this challenging field and wish the readers that they will engage as practitioners in the CJS. I hope this book will inspire them to become involved in more research, to build collaborative ventures and to move beyond the contents of this book to positively touch the lives of offenders and victims of crime, and thereby become messengers of possibility, promise and hope to those who are often the most socially marginalised groups.

Delhi
30 June 2016

Professor R. R. Singh
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References


About the Editors and Contributors

Editors

Mark David Chong is currently a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies as well as the Criminology Major Coordinator for the Bachelor of Arts programme at the College of Arts, Society and Education, James Cook University (JCU), Australia. He was also formerly the Director of Research Education for the School of Arts and Social Sciences, JCU, from 2012 to January 2015. In 2015, he was recognised for his ‘exceptional support for students with a disability’ through the university’s Inclusive Practice Award. He was thereafter invited by the Vice Chancellor and the Students Association to deliver JCU’s annual public ‘Last Lecture for 2015’, entitled ‘A Humanistic Approach to Educating our Next Generation of Crime Fighters’. He is also an external assessor (grant applications) for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

He graduated with a PhD in law from the University of Sydney, where he received his Law School’s Longworth Scholarship (2003), the Cooke, Cooke, Coghlan, Godfrey and Littlejohn Scholarship (2004), the Longworth Scholarship for Academic Merit (2006) and the Longworth Scholarship once again in 2007. He was initially trained as a criminal defence lawyer and later secured an LLM (Merit) in Criminology and Criminal Justice from Queen Mary, University of London. Thereafter, he was appointed as a Judicial Referee by the President of the Republic of Singapore on the recommendation of the Chief Justice to the Small Claims Tribunals’ bench. However, given his deep interest
in criminal justice issues, Mark subsequently taught the Singapore Police Force and the Central Narcotics Bureau at Temasek Polytechnic, Singapore, under a joint academic programme with Queensland University of Technology, Australia. He was also an adjunct lecturer and tutor at SIM University, Singapore, where he designed a criminology subject specifically for students from the Singapore Police Force. Of late, Mark has begun to develop expertise in converging criminology and social work through the specialisation of criminal justice social work in India. In this regard, he has published works that pertain to human rights, mental illness and strengths-based practice.

Abraham P. Francis is an Associate Professor in Social Work and Human Services at the College of Arts, Society and Education, JCU. With international exposure and extensive experience in community development and mental health, he taught social work at the University of Delhi in India and also worked as a senior mental health social worker with Country Health in South Australia, before moving to Townsville to join JCU. He held a stint in Queensland Health as Assistant Director of Social Work. He is associated with many voluntary organisations, associations, professional bodies and developmental projects, both in Australia and India. He has established international partnerships and research collaborations with universities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Asia. He is passionate about working and researching in strengths-based practice in mental health. His other research interests are in the field of communities, criminal justice, international social work and gerontological social work.

His excellence in teaching has likewise been recognised on a number of occasions. For example, in 2010, he was a recipient of JCU’s Inclusive Practice Award for his ‘exceptional support for students with a disability’. More recently, in 2016, he received the university’s ‘Citation for Outstanding Contributions to Student Learning’ for his ‘leadership and expertise in social work education in mental health that inspires and nurtures students to be competent, confident and compassionate practitioners’.
Contributors

Sanjai Bhatt is presently the senior most Professor at Department of Social Work, University of Delhi and President of National Association of Professional Social Workers in India. He joined the University of Delhi after serving the University of Lucknow; Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi; Kurukshetra University and Chitrakoot Gramodaya Vishwavidyalaya.

His areas of interest are social work education, social development, social security, occupational social work, climate change and corporate social responsibility (CSR). He has authored/edited eight books, namely Social Work Education in India: A Resource Book; Social Work Practice: The Changing Context; Social Justice and Social Work Profession in India: Challenging Responses and Responding Challenges; Social Work Education and Practice Engagement; Social Work Response to Environment and Disasters; Social Work Response to Social Realities; Patterns of Mobility, Migration and HIV Risk in India; and Democracy in Trade Unions. He has contributed a dozen book chapters and around 80 research papers on various themes. His thesis ‘4 W’s (Water, Work, Waste and Women) in Development Paradigm’ is widely accepted in academic fraternity. He has conducted varied research/consultancy work which includes benchmark survey, social assessment, need assessment, desk review, organisational review, programme evaluation, capacity building, programme designing, human resource management, manpower planning, team building, participatory research and so on. He has initiated many innovative projects such as the University for Development Action and Integrated Learning (UDAI-I) for rehabilitation of earthquake-affected persons in Bhuj, Gujarat (2001), and UDAI-II for relief and rehabilitation of flood-affected people in Supaul, Bihar (2008). He is a member of various government committees, including Bureau of Police Research and Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Delhi Urban Slum Improvement Board, Juvenile Justice Board, 12th Five-Year Plan for Social Justice and so on, and is in Board of many NGOs and CSR Foundations. He has been part of campaigns such as Chipko Movement, Voters’ Education Movement, Child Right, Reform in International Financial Institutions, and has founded an advocacy group PAIRVI.
Jamie Fellows is currently a Lecturer of Law at JCU (2009–present). He lectures and researches in the areas of public law, including public international law, administrative law, legal ethics, criminal law, Australian legal history, governance, sovereignty and colonialism. He has had extensive industry and professional experience in Australia and North East Asia, where he held several roles in finance and commercial property. Prior to entering academia, he worked as a Compliance Analyst with the Australian Securities and Investments Commission in Sydney and later as a Director with CB Richard Ellis in Tokyo, where he was responsible for corporate compliance, acquisition/disposition of foreign assets and commercial leasing. He holds undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from James Cook University (LLB Hons, BA), University of Sydney (MA), Australian National University (Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice) and University of New South Wales (Graduate Diploma in Education). He is currently pursuing a PhD from JCU.

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Katherine Hoffensetz was selected as the inaugural JCU-Queensland Victim Assist Intern in 2014 and graduated from JCU with a Bachelor of Psychosocial Science in 2015, with a heavy focus on criminology and the plight of victims. Currently, she is working in the domestic violence sector, whereby she helps empower victims of domestic violence to build new lives with security and support. Through the work at Sera's, women are provided with counselling, guidance, information as well as emotional and practical support to engender opportunities to break the cycle of domestic violence.

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Venkat Pulla is a TISS alumnus and a Tata Dorabji Scholar, 1976–77. He has been the founding Head of the Social Work Discipline in the Northern Territory University (1992–95) and is currently the coordinator of Social Work Discipline at the Australian Catholic University, Brisbane. He has previously taught at the Charles Sturt and the Sunshine Coast universities in Australia. In India, he taught at the College of Social Work, Hyderabad, and offered urban development training through British aid (DFID)-funded projects for metropolitan cities in India through the Regional Centre for Urban and Environmental Studies (RCUES), Osmania University. In India, he founded the Centre for Environment Concerns in Hyderabad, as a reflective sequel to the Bhopal tragedy and initiated the first-ever written Citizen’s Report on the City of Hyderabad and Its Physical Environment. In Australia, he founded the Brisbane Institute of Strengths Based Practice and the Impetus Global, Brisbane, that offer training in strengths-based strategies for human services and the corporate sector. He writes on green social work, spirituality, coping resilience and building hope. His research interests include poverty interventions, health rights and transition countries.

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Atul Pratap Singh is presently working as Assistant Professor (Senior Scale) at the Department of Social Work, Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, University of Delhi. He has 20 authored/co-authored/editied/co-edited books, about 60 research papers/articles/book chapters/columns to his credit including third *Encyclopedia of Social Work in India*, journals of international and national repute/books/newspapers/magazines. He has presented more than two dozen papers in international and national seminar/conferences which have been widely appreciated for their contents and analysis. He has also acted as Convener and Co-convener in two national seminars, respectively. He has served various positions in 20 different international, national and state-level research/consultancy/quality evaluation projects which include programme evaluation, social assessment, need assessment, KAP (Knowledge, Attitude and Practices) analysis and so on. Besides, he was invited as resource person/guest speaker/visiting faculty on more than 50 occasions. He is a committed and devoted teacher as well as a researcher. He received 'Best/Meritorious Teacher Award' from Government of NCT of Delhi in 2012 and prestigious 'Jan Jagriti Samman' from renowned freelance journalists and writer's organisation 'Akhil Bhartiya
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