Chapter VI

FIELD WORK IN INSTITUTIONS, COMMISSIONS, AND REHABILITATION

The earlier chapter discussed field work in the core sectors of the criminal justice system that is Police, Court and Prison. This chapter discusses field work in Institutions, Commissions and Rehabilitation settings. These are agencies that emerged as sites of field work practice within the larger domain of Criminology and Justice. They include institutions with a mandate of protection and rehabilitation, commissions as an alternate space for justice and rehabilitation oriented initiatives.

Field Work in Institutions

This quote aptly describes the role of the social worker in Institutions.

‘Spending time with them allows them to clear their doubts as well as express their feelings. At the end of the day they didn’t want me to leave saying that talking to me helps them get beyond the four walls of the institution.’ Student placed for field work at the Special Home.

In the Indian context, in the 20th Century, work with adult offenders and juvenile delinquents was mostly limited to institutions. Juvenile corrections meant special institutions, reformatory schools, focusing on education and vocational training (Panakal 1967). Since the understanding of Corrections itself at that point in time meant institutions, this emerged as another area of work by itself. Thus, institutions have been a traditional placement with the Centre. These institutions have been mainly for women and children and are government bodies. The issues that these institutions are working with are; rehabilitation of women in distress, women and girls rescued from commercial sexual exploitation and children in conflict with the law. In the early 19th century the presence of the government was strong within the welfare sector; and a response to people or populations that no longer were a part of traditional places like families, was to house them in family like situations, so children and women were seen with a certain element of vulnerability of not being able to survive alone and so needed to be put away into a closed group living setting. Thus, institutions have been a typical approach by the government to deal with different kinds of issues and it was the State’s way of looking after certain populations. This was also the time when NGOs had not yet emerged and so there were not many options for these women and
children other than the State institutions. Ramchandran (1968) reiterates this element of institutions having existed in a study of four cities to understand why people chose social work as a profession where the specialisation itself has been called *correctional and institutional administration*. (Italics mine) Thus emphasizing the role institutions have played in this field of practice, that is Criminology and Justice.

During the period of the study, in all there were seven student placements in six Institutions, two in a women’s institution and four pertaining to children’s institutions. The details of these agencies are as follows.

**Table 6.1**

*Agencies in Institutions*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No.</th>
<th>Name of Agency</th>
<th>Nature of the Agency</th>
<th>Other details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>A home for women rescued from commercial sexual exploitation.</td>
<td>Women are to be housed here for a certain period of time.</td>
<td>It is a government Institution, mainly care taking staff with others like literacy, recreation teachers. The PO plays an important role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>A home for women in distress.</td>
<td>Women are kept here for a certain period of time, after which they are either sent back home, handed over to relatives or rehabilitated into society.</td>
<td>Similar as above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>A home for children under the Juvenile Justice Act</td>
<td>A home for children housing all kinds of children being processed under the JJ Act and awaiting a decision on their case.</td>
<td>Similar to above, there is a team of POs here since there are huge numbers of cases and there is a constant movement of children in and out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Juvenile Justice Board</td>
<td>Processing cases of juveniles in conflict with the law.(JCL)</td>
<td>A special body that reviews and processes the JCL cases legally. Two social workers sit on the bench with a Magistrate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Special home / Minor home.</td>
<td>For minors rescued from commercial sexual exploitation.</td>
<td>It is a government Institution, mainly care taking staff, with others like literacy, recreation teachers. PO plays an important role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>FAP 2</td>
<td>An FAP of the Centre which does direct intervention, research and advocacy for juvenile justice issues.</td>
<td>Identical to serial number 3.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6.1 depicts the agencies in Institutions. Only the Observation Home was a direct placement, all the rest were through the FAP who apart from starting work in prisons initially on the issue of rights of under trials and then rehabilitation had moved on to looking at the issue of women and girls being trafficked and their rehabilitation. FAP 2 is also a field action project of the Centre.

Of total placements in the decade (2000-2009) chosen for this study, twenty-one Institution placements were made out of 147 total placements that is fourteen per cent across different institutional settings. Social work in Institutions is not new, this has been one of the settings that has been around. Documentation about the early days of the Centre mentions placements in institutions, both adult and children. By the late 19th century due to the focus on social welfare diminishing… the field of criminology and corrections became limited to intervention in institutions for women and children, in terms of field work (Raghavan, cited in Singh 2013:266).

Institution as a sub-sector generated 1339 codes in Atlas-ti. Client related activity was the highest and then interaction with officials and staff. Negative experiences were documented a little more than positive experiences. Case work was mentioned most, it could be that keeping the nature of field work with its time constraints, case work becomes an easy entry point of practice and the other methods need a period of time to be developed.

**Student Activities**

With regard to tasks that were agency related, the following were activities that students commonly did in field work. First an orientation was done by the FAP, since the placement was through them. Then they visit the agency and meet the Superintendent. These are closed institutions not allowing access to any outsiders; and though the student’s access is based on a permission from higher authorities, that is, the Department of Women and Child Development, it is the Superintendent who allows entry into the Institution. They interact with the social work staff of the agency, usually it is a probation officer who is the trained social worker in institutions, meet other staff and the inmates. This seems to have been largely similarly done across all institutions and is indicative of the students initial days of settling down in the agency.
The next set of activities were direct work related to the inmates; so talking to new admissions, playing and interacting with the inmates and observing case interactions by the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) or the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB). Some activities that were unique to a particular agency were, for example in the observation home, students were filling out face sheets of new girls which also meant interviewing them and orienting them about the process of their custody and case. This depicts a deeper degree of involvement of the student social worker in the agency’s role and since these are real agencies with real cases it is a good opportunity for the student to actually contribute to the agency’s functioning. Also often these institutions are overcrowded and understaffed so the student becomes like an extra helping hand in the day to day functioning of the agency. Another reason perhaps could be that this is a very old placement; with students being placed there from the Institute for over five-six decades, and it is well versed with the identity and role of the social worker itself and so is able to induct the student into certain tasks. Another different kind of activity was seen in the special court where the student was escorting girls to court or for a police visit. The reason for this again could be the institution being short staffed and so not being able to spare a staff member whose whole day of work will be over in being with one girl at the cost of so many others whose needs are also demanding attention. There have been some discussions in the field, in institutions, in NGO networks about the legality of involving the student in certain tasks. While there is clarity on some of the things that should not be done, like not being able to sign any legal documents or not being able to officially represent the client, and on the other hand on things that can be done, like being able to take sessions with the girls and helping out in some aspects of case management. There are some that fall in the grey area and the task of escorting girls for various things could be one such example. What happens in the event that a girl absconds or gets hurt while en route; the question that arises is, whose responsibility is it eventually, since the student is not ‘technically’ a part of the institution staff. The Superintendent or the concerned official is responsible for all tasks done by the student so when one is analysing the kind of things that students do or are given to do, this aspect needs to be kept in mind.
Some of the other activities done were documentation, developing a proposal for a workshop and filling case sheets. Here again one can see ‘some in the background’ support kind of tasks that the students were involved in. Reading and reference specific to the agency’s issues was also something commonly done. Another thing the students also routinely did was to organise programs; like fund raising for a sports meet and helped organising a medical camp.

Field work in an Institution setting is about maintaining a balance between learning, agency related work, and direct work with girls and women. Apart from understanding the agency and learning how a government closed institution functions, it is a good opportunity to work with women and the girls directly. By a closed institution here it means a gated community, with strict restrictions of movement in and out, only with the permission of authorities, so while there is an element of protection, there is also an element of control.

This brings us to the role of the social worker. It ranges from representing the client to being a counsellor for the individual and their family. Ajita at the Institution writes about the role of the social worker as representing the client in a hospital for medical attention, talking on behalf of the woman and asserting for her rights in terms of medical services to be provided.

In Institutions another role was that of a counsellor as in counselling girls about their cases, and also orienting new girls about the institution, its role, rules and norms. All of these seem to be ‘light’ tasks that can be given to the student without much damage. Here it is important to be able to differentiate between the social worker and the student social worker; there may be some tasks that may not necessarily be interchangeable among the two for example one time tasks like escorting a girl for a health check-up or a training course may be given to the student social worker but she has only a limited and time bound role to play in a particular case, because of the peculiarity of the nature of field work itself. In an institution it is the space for the inmate to talk and to be heard that emerges as important and often just listening to people is such an important part of the rehabilitation process.

The case worker had existed in residential institutions and probation departments for adults and juveniles (BATSW and Prayas, 2006) and this is what also emerged from the students recordings. Thus the role of the social worker in this sub-sector has been largely contained within the designation of the probation officer (PO). Reviewing a little in depth about what the students actually do brings us to the realisation that within the context of institutions
being understaffed and over worked, students become a helping hand. They play a support role to the PO and they do some preparatory work and plan for new programs. One of the key roles is of direct work with the inmates. The PO is not able to give enough attention to all the inmates and the students interacting with them share a bit of that responsibility. Institutions are familiar with the role of the social worker so various tasks are given to the students easily. Thus students seem to blend into a role of being a helper, an assistant, additional support especially for special tasks like inter-agency coordination, exploring community resources or documentation skills.

The challenges of field work in institutions bear a certain commonality of being exposed to numerous problems in the institution itself which causes a sense of frustration and helplessness for the students. Situations like there being no medical care or insensitivity in the way the PO handled cases or the staff being rude and abusive and no one doing anything about it; or health problems of the inmates being ignored and the general hygiene practices of the institution did emerge as challenges that confronted the students. Additionally being exposed to incidents of corruption even if indirectly through an inmate sharing or hearing it among staff discussions or, inmate conflicts where there are incidents of anger and fights breaking out among inmates either due to power, authority conflict of being an ‘old-timer’ versus a new comer or personality clashes or due to a non-consensus about chores that need to be done and difficult clients wherein an inmate is being uncooperative or non-responsive so getting across to her, getting her to trust and open up to the student also emerged as a challenge. Involuntary clients are another peculiar category by themselves where they are not only just non-cooperative or difficult but reject the students’ social worker and her attempts to even interact.

Other challenges in this setting included exposure to corruption and the superintendent being very authoritative and autocratic. Then there was ‘red-tapism’ in bureaucracy in the form of, ‘Today also the SSW didn’t get the permission letter from the department because of which she couldn’t go for field work.’(Suchitra at Minor Home).The permission letter at the beginning of the academic year came late so the student was not allowed to enter the agency this in spite of field work placements being a regular feature in Institutions over the years and so permissions have always been routinely given. It is almost as if the system is choosing to function in a manner that is non-cooperative.
Challenges were also in connection with the profile of the client group. That this is a ‘difficult’ group is often talked about and so doing any activity with them or interacting with them is perceived as a challenge. This is actually a position taken and it is coming either from long years of not so successful experiences or a general disillusionment of how reformation is more a theoretical myth than a practical reality. The entire genesis of this work is based on the ideology of reformation and change; and yet when the officials themselves voice a disbelief in it, for a young social work student just stepping into this profession it can be confusing and de-moralising. ‘The Superintendent got agitated and said that the SSWs are not supposed to poke into the matters of administration of the institution and they should remain within the boundaries.’ Situations like this in a way curb the creativity or ability of the student to function freely in a setting. The fact that there has to be a strong sense of compliance and that the authority is watching the student and can pull her up for anything is not a ‘facilitative for learning’ kind of environment. As a supervisor one almost turns this around to say it is exactly this peculiarity which will toughen up the student to then face challenges at work in any setting in the future since their field work experience has been trying. Whether this hardship is peculiar only to criminal justice settings, and whether it is a catalyst for learning can both be debated. Sometimes students just get demotivated with this maze of permissions and restrictions and lose interest in wanting to do anything new at all.

Being faced with corruption, the SSW placed at the JJB write about how there seems to be a nexus between the lawyers, police and the Board. This is almost a classic perennial situation that students confront in various parts of the CJS and it bothers them. For one their youthful enthusiasm and idealistic thinking gets disturbed with this exposure and it becomes difficult for them to find their own bearings in situations like this since they are there as learners and outsiders to the system.

When officials had a negative view towards NGOs and because there is a strong association between NGOs and social workers, indirectly there is some tension about social workers and it does not help then having students of social work coming to train in the same agency as the negativity in attitude just comes through. It requires a highly motivated student to navigate through this and still maintain their passion about social work. This was the first time work was initiated in the Observation Home through the FAP 2 so the student was trying to build relations with the key persons there; and yet trying to do things in the way
they were supposed to be done without offending them. This is a commonality of all government offices; but a lot of the work in this setting is either within the government or with the government, so dealing with situations like this is a challenge. The entire field of practice is located within or is closely connected to a closed, legal, and bureaucratic government framework within which social work is defined.

Thus, of all these it was the interaction with the staff and officials that seems to have been the most difficult to handle. This could be seen in this light that work in this sector is already challenging because of the profile of the client group and the related issues; adding to that experiencing unwelcoming, non-cooperative, disinterested staff only takes away energy from having to engage with the issue instead.

Sometimes during the course of work, students experienced situations which lead to dilemmas and value conflicts. It has happened in all settings and in this one too. Adya at an Institution talked about a discomfort of being forced by the authority to ‘toe the line’. This becomes a little tricky, as the student is not able to counter authority or take a stand for herself, especially if it is against what is being suggested by those in authority, here the Superintendent, especially for an issue as complex and sensitive as giving up a baby for adoption. There was a case of a women with no support system being ‘counselled’ by the Superintendent to hand over her new-born baby to the child welfare authorities so that she will be taken care of better than what the Superintendent thought the mother could provide for her. Also in terms of her being difficult vis a vis admission for new women, and not giving admission easily in cases that she does not wish to entertain. Often institutions fall back on some rule to disallow a certain kind of population whose need is not in doubt in fact the need is very evident, but the institution does not want to take the strain of what they perceive as an additional burden or a nuisance. For the student it is frustrating not being able to really influence such incorrect decisions and being caught in between the way things should be and the way they are.

The client’s expectations of the students also causes a disturbance for the students. The student is not able to handle client expectations or explain the limitations of their role as a student. The inmates often see the student as being accessible, friendly, helpful and maybe even efficient as compared to the institution staff; so they begin to steer towards the students in terms of their case and needs and the student is not able to fully explain or convince them that they, as students, do not have any authority and cannot really take decisions about their
cases like the institution staff. In dealing with authority, there was a feeling of not being involved or not being taken seriously at times. The whole work ethic is different because of the power dynamics and this leads to a value conflict. The trivialising of the student’s work and inputs can be upsetting and demoralizing. Thus value conflicts here were largely related to dealing with authority and feeling restricted by the rules and regulations of the institution.

Innovations were mainly tasks that students did that were different and off the ordinary. Largely they have come from supervisors’ suggestions or sometimes from the students own identification of a need. They have ranged from organising a picnic for the inmates and staff, marketing products made by the inmates, organising an alumni meet and a workshop for teachers. Students bring an element of enthusiasm, new ideas and creativity into their field work. They are at stage of life where they look at everything with awe and a sense of idealism. Most of these ideas remain as one-off things done by the student as the institution rarely takes it up and if it is continued that onus is on the NGO working in the institution.

The aspect of self is often written about as an important component of field work for example, the negativity reflected in the students own frustration when something is not moving in a pace that it should, and then having to explain and handle the backlash of it. This also needs to be understood in the light of, for the woman or girl and the student, it is one case or a micro focus, whereas the system itself operates at a macro level. This dynamic between an individual, micro focus and an issue, macro focus is an old debate ongoing in social work but when the student confronts it, it has a negative impact on them. There are discussion within social work academic circles about the positioning of social work itself where a value is perceived differently in work done with individual and compared to that with issues and each has their followers and proponents. Being exposed to the attitude of government staff was another negative experience. ‘The talk with the PO was rather discouraging. He felt that if they come from dysfunctional family backgrounds, there is no chance of reformation at all. The cynical attitude of PO will affect his work also.’(Jenifer at OH). Conversations like this are disturbing for the students because it in a way questions the very foundation of the basis of one’s work and it is demoralizing for a young student just stepping into the profession.

Positive experiences for the student were especially with regard to relationships built with the girls and as Srija at FAP 2 writes, ‘I would like to say that this field work setting has
given me a lot of exposure on various aspects of CJS. This field work has also helped me identify my focus of work.’ Thus it is gratifying to see a student find their interest in a particular issue or in social work itself deepening which they then take up in the future in terms of a choice being made of researching that area or working in it. The field work experience thus becomes the foundation for that career journey.

**Agency and field work**

There was a mention in the students’ field work recordings of each of the methods with some being more often written about than the others. In institutions it also seems that the POs largely use only the case work method since that is the way they have been functioning over a period of time. With each case being unique this becomes the most practical way of working with the inmates. The researcher sees the methods framework as an easy entry point for field work as it also becomes a simple starting point to work and to explain about one’s work.

Working with individuals was commonly written about across all institutions and in detail. It has been in the form of; talking to girls, interacting with new girls, escorting a girl to the hospital, court, exploring employment options, working on emotional problems, home visits, and counselling girls. Some other work done within this was; establishing family contact in cases of child whose mother is in institution, connecting them with CWC, and follow up post release. Girls approaching wanting to talk to the students is very similar to what came up in prisons, as mentioned earlier. There is this element of needing anyone who can pay individual attention to them and listen to them since within either the CJS or institutions, there is a loss of one’s identity. Thus where there is inmate population there is a lot of scope for working with individuals.

Group work was also talked about in the recordings. For Ajita at Institution it was conducting sessions with new girls and sessions on information about health and hygiene. Adya at Institution 2 mentions group work as being used to handle issues of group living, quarrels and space constraints. So group work was of two types both input sessions and a space for resolving conflicts. For Srija at JJB it was in the form of group sessions for three types of categories of newcomers, repeaters and old timers and with girls of all age groups to improve interactions. Each method of social work demands a different energy and skill and it is
possible that not everyone is comfortable with all types of methods. This could be one of the reason for the choice of methods by the students.

Adya at a women’s institution generally writing about the social work methods and linking it to the method of community organisation (CO) states, ‘Community perspective was brought in while understanding the role of the larger community in the process of rehabilitation of women. There are various biases existing against women living without their families and even the process of repatriation becomes a difficult task for them.’ It is possible that the aspect of CO needs to be emphasised more in the classroom since the students have not written about it much. Do students especially those placed in institutional settings bring in examples from the field to classroom discussions and vice versa? Do the CO teachers talk about this aspect specifically, of working in institutions and how this method can be applied? It cannot be left to the field to teach this. The concept has to be introduced in the class and the supervisor or agency can further demonstrate or explain it. For this topic it seems as if the classroom has to lead the field.

Suchitra at an institution mentioned research as a method, she did a demographic mapping of the state of origin where all the girls came from to understand trends in trafficking. Khushi at FAP 2 in summing up writes about the social work methods used. This was done more as a reflection during the closure time so looking back at the year that was; the student is now able to put the work she has done into a methods framework. The researcher feels that throughout the year the methods consciousness is not really visible to the student and this piece was written out, in hind sight. Methods are central to the classroom link because they are an easy starting point and the students are most familiar with this conceptualisation. It reflects the way the curriculum is also structured with the methods being taught separately and the integration between the methods of social work, fleetingly mentioned with the belief that the supervisor will anchor that part. This discussion on integration needs to be strengthened so also other frameworks or theorising introduced in field work, to be able to move beyond the methods discussion.

Thus from what the students’ experience has been in institutions, the two methods that had prominence was working with individuals and with groups. Administration was written about throughout the recordings though not as a separate mention but interspersed in the process recording as and when it came up. There is no mention of social action. There is no
attempt being made to conclude about the importance or value of each the social work methods; or even to make a comment about the hierarchy of the methods. The methods debate of whether macro is needed over micro or which is more impactful and thus of better value; has been an old and ongoing one and this research is not about furthering that debate or drawing conclusions about it. It will suffice to just state that in examining the social work methods used for institutions, case work and group work got more of a mention and was documented and not the others. Though interestingly the supervisors, especially the FAP social workers did not hold on to this view believing the whole spectrum can be practiced. It is possible that when this is looked at from a full time practitioner’s point of view whose experience is over a period of time, the reality is different from how it works for or is experienced by the student in a time bound, limited, field work space. This is what also came out of the key respondent interviews. The Institution PO Gaurav said case work and group work as methods were commonly used. The FAP supervisor Pearl said that it is possible to do research and advocacy. She also added that community organisation in institutions and in the red light area is possible but challenging; and that case work and group work especially is easily possible. It could also mean that moving into the community demands a different kind of mentoring by the supervisor and in this case since the focus of the agency was to work within the institution, this may not really have been encouraged.

**Sub-Sector and Field Work**

Khushi at FAP 2 stated that children in institutions are sometimes in a state of shock and do not know why they have been brought there. There should be someone to talk to and inform them about the institution in a simple manner. She added that there are many instances of violation of human rights among people being processed by the justice system. Thus the scope for social work in this setting has been emulating the work of the probation officers which is fair enough, as it is based on what social workers can and should do.

Looking at the social work issues identified during the course of field work gives us an idea of the range of possibilities that students encounter during the field work experience. Ajita at Institution identified mental health issues among this population and the need for specialised services for them. Also vocational training and conflict among inmates were issues that were identified. There is an element of newness to the issues that were identified
by the student and it needs to be seen if they align with the agency through which they are being placed, since each organisation defines an area of work.

Another issue that is of significance was need for staff training so that they handle the girls with more sensitivity. Khushi at FAP 2 brings up the dimension of staff who are demotivated, ‘It seems the caretakers do not get any appreciation for their work and now when it has been years that they have been doing the same job, they have started finding their job monotonous.’ In government systems, appreciation for individual contribution is often forgotten. This invisibility of individuals in the system further demotivates the staff.

The whole link with jobs, employment opportunities and working usually comes up as a mention in the recordings; especially in connection with role of the social worker or the challenges the students face, but there was no mention about this for this sub-sector. This could also be reflective of the fact that all these are government settings and though a social work degree has been added in the job requirement criteria for the post of the probation officer, vacancies are not very frequent and employment options in this are few and far apart.

One hears about jobs being not available in this field of practice; while a part of that is true, there is another dimension of students not being enamoured to work in government settings anymore; for whatever reason, whether the salary being low or it being too frustrating. Hence, becoming a PO in an institution is not on the aspiration list of most students. While students were appreciative of the learning this setting provided in terms of anchoring field work, they very rarely go back to work in these institutions as professionals, the reason for this is varied and already explained above. This remains a grouse that institutions have against the students and social work education, the feeling of being partners during the learning process but not considered as a work option or for a potential job.

What to call the social worker working in the CJS system has been a question that has been around for some time now. This keeps coming up in the context of what the identity of this social worker is, how the system is seeing it, and in terms of where to locate this social worker. The title denotes the way the role is being perceived and what the expectations are. The PO of a government institution Gaurav suggested ‘Rehabilitation Officer’, as rehabilitation is their main focus. The Superintendent Shobana said she could not think of an appropriate title, this could be reflective of what they may be thinking about the social worker or about the profession. Or perhaps because they already have a role decided for the
social worker in that of a probation officer and they are not able to see beyond that. The title of PO emerged from the correctional legislation of the Probation of Offenders Act. The PO was supposed to be a guide, mentor and help people re-settle into society. This was a very important task though limited within the semantics of the Act. Something broader like rehabilitation officer (the government system needs to add this suffix to connote some hierarchy) since it adds a certain value and acceptability within and outside the system may be more reflective of the social workers’ role. These statements reflect the non-clarity that exists in terms of where to locate the social worker in this setting. This confusion is real and needs a deeper discussion among all the stakeholders.

When one is talking about the emergence and growth of a sub-sector it is also implicitly understood that it may require specialised skills to be able to function in that. The PO Gaurav felt that counselling was a very important skill, as some people for six months do not even tell their name, motivation to get them to talk, and to reveal information is a skill the social worker should have. The Superintendent Shobana added patience as a skill as this is a group that will manipulate, they are difficult and one should have that capacity to challenge the criminal part of the person. It is interesting to note that the skills mentioned like patience and counselling were generic and can be applicable to any sub-sector and not particularly to working in Institutions.

Thus overall it seems that work in Institutions had a lot of potential for various reasons; like having an inmate population to engage with, the staff being over worked and hence the student social workers being able to contribute in small tasks as a way of support to them. Also acceptance of the social workers role was not so much a challenge in this setting since it traditionally has seen social workers operate within it. An over-arching concern connected to work in this sector is the need for an equal emphasis on institutional and non-institutional programs, both prevention and rehabilitation (Sinha 2012:95). Thus even if community based rehabilitation is the future and grows this setting has had an important role to play and will continue to do so. Institutions are here to stay and one segment of people will always find their way here.
Field Work in Commissions

‘I have definitely seen the value of a social worker in the Commission, most important when it comes to facilitating the interaction between the complainants and the rest of the Commission’. SSW placed at the Commission.

Work with Commissions or allied systems is the newest addition as an organised sub-sector of work within Criminology and Justice. It refers to placements in bodies dealing with issues of access to justice and victim’s rights. The Commissions have a theme specific focus like; women, human rights, children and these are off-shoots of international treaties that India has been a signatory of, with regard to a rights orientation. They are quasi legal bodies whose purpose is to be an alternate place of Justice to come to; if the existing systems have not been facilitative. They are almost like a watchdog over the functioning of the existing systems, and a space for grievances to be made, if people feel they have not been heard or treated well. Their larger focus is to also highlight issues of macro and policy level relevance. Giroux (1997) with his contribution to critical pedagogy states that learning is not about processing received knowledge but actually transforming it as part of a more expansive struggle for individual rights and social justice. This sub-sector deals with exactly this, the issue of access to justice and an alternate space for justice.

There were four Commission placements in all, two in the Human Rights Commission and two at the Women’s Commission. Both of these were direct placements. The former focuses on human rights violations by public servants and the latter on issues related to women. Both also work on research, documentation, sensitization training and awareness programs. While the former conducts court like hearings the latter handles individual cases. There is no social worker in the former and the social workers play the role of a counsellor in the latter.

Work with Commission was the least in terms of total placements in the decade (2000-2009) chosen for this study, fourteen Commission placements were made out of 147 total placements that is ten per cent, across different Commission settings. This is indicative of a phase where exploration was being done of Commission and the scope of social work intervention there.
Commissions as a sub-sector generated 548 codes in Atlas-ti. The activity done highest by the students was documentation then followed by interaction with officials and staff. The challenges most commonly written about were agency related problem that is something that is peculiar to that setting itself. There were no value conflicts in this may be because the work itself was still at a superficial level.

**Student activities**

The common activities that the four students did across the two Commissions can be categorised and defined as follows.

**Table 6.2**

**Student Activities in Commissions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr No.</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Preparatory work of organising a program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Agency related</td>
<td>Interaction with staff and meeting officials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Reading and Reference</td>
<td>Agency or issue specific reading, mainly for some use for the agency itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>Office based and administrative kind of activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Visits</td>
<td>Trying to network with other services in society thus in some way trying to connect the agency with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Client Related</td>
<td>Direct work with victims</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Research</td>
<td>Field based studies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2 depicts the activities that students did in Commissions. Explained below is how each of these above listed activities look in the two agencies.

1. **Program**- Sumitab at the human rights commission mentioned activities pertaining to developing a proposal for a human rights awareness program in colleges, working on a budget, preparatory work, visiting colleges and writing letters to be sent for the program. At the women’s commission Tina conducted the first ever Domestic Violence (DV) Act Protection Officers orientation training program. Sonia tried to do a public relations activity in the form of an essay competition. Students somehow gravitate towards conducting programs perhaps because it is a stand-alone activity that they can initiate and complete by themselves.
2. **Agency related**- Field placement at the Women’s Commission was first explored with Tina. The idea being since work was going on in the human rights commission, could a role for the student social worker be explored here too. She initiated meetings of lawyers and counsellors. For Priti, it included being briefed about procedures and processes in the agency and attending internal meetings. This component is commonly done across any setting or sub-sector since it is basically about getting oriented to, familiar with and finding one’s own space in the agency. And yet how it actually happens in each agency is different.

3. **Reading and reference**- For Sonia tasks under this category included reading annual reports and a training module on human rights education. For Tina tasks included going through case files, reading up on the issue rape and laws relating to women.

4. **Documentation**- This involvement in office based, administrative kind of activities could also indicate that work is still being explored at this setting and the starting point is locating oneself in indirect work. It is also a way of getting oriented to the system and demonstrating small examples of productivity on the part of the student. Sumitab wrote a paper on an overview of Human Rights and the Commission and developed content for the website. For Tina it included consolidating the database of a resource directory and making monthly reports.

5. **Visits**- For Priti, tasks here were visits to NGOs as part of a study to map resources available for women. Somehow it is the students who felt the need for this or came up with ideas pertaining to this and not the agency. The social work orientation is constantly encouraging networking and referrals and this emerges from that orientation.

6. **Client related**- This aspect indicates direct work and is a good starting point to demonstrate the potential of what the social worker can do in this setting. For Priti, it was about handling cases and general interaction with women complainants. At the Commission the first case under DV Act was followed up on by Tina. She also handled a lot of cases and wrote reflections continuously about links to themes of oppression. Sonia spent time interacting with complainants. Finally this is where the student should move towards establishing themselves, as their training as social workers is about people skills and it is meant exactly for this profile.
7. Research- Sumitab did a research study on an analysis of cases registered. Priti visited ten other organisations for a study on shelter services for women.

The Commission was a new setting with indirect work, where students were still exploring the role of the social worker. The student identified awareness in the community as a starting point, it was neutral, non-threatening work and yet showed some visibility for the agency. Documentation though necessary was likely to be a weak link here because the internal systems in the agency to support documentation were not in place so getting any data was very difficult. Direct work with clients, in this case complainants, that is victims was less as work in these settings was still about trying to demonstrate the role of the social workers so the students had not yet got an independent hold of themselves in this sitting vis a vis client interaction. It would take some more concentrated effort and time before the system also warms up to the idea of a student social worker playing a significant role. This agency had no social worker employed in it and the only designation where social work was part of the criteria was the post of a research officer which was empty for a large part of the duration of this study and was subsequently filled with a person with no social work background.

At Commission 2, this was the first year of field work placement so the student invested time in understanding the agency and exploring the role of the social worker. She did a lot of work in documentation, writing reports and consolidated the database of case files handled by the Commission in the past, this was particularly relevant for old cases coming up for follow-up visits.

A senior academician Arjun who was attached to the Centre prior to the re-structuring in 2006, talked about how students participated in ongoing programs and being involved in awareness work outside with different stakeholders was a regular feature of work in the Commission. It perhaps maybe also because directly connecting to the complainants did take time in this setting and the system is so structured that it almost functions like a court, so the student can access the complainant only when they visit in the initial stage or during their hearing dates.

Describing the role of the social worker, Sumitab said that in the human rights Commission it was contributing to fair processes and giving information to complainants. In the Women’s Commission the role was to support the work of the existing counsellors, to see beyond the
existing way of functioning, to go into the community for resources that can be tapped and to go back to the family to understand the case situation from a ground reality.

Sonia clearly described the role of the social worker as, ‘All the complainants I have ever interacted with have been very open and appear happy and relieved to have someone who is not a formal part of the process to talk about their feelings. Personally I feel this is where a social worker has a huge role to play.’ Thus the role of the social worker has been talking to complainants, clearing their doubts and explaining about procedures in the system. This really has been a big lacunae in the Commission currently; where on the one hand it is set up for relief for this profile of persons and yet on the contrary the complainant is treated like a legal case is, akin the judiciary, and the human touch is missing. It is clear that justice here is interpreted only in terms of the outcome of the case or complaint filed and not in terms of relating to the individual, soothing frayed nerves or giving some kind of sensitive hearing and moral support.

Students are often faced with challenges in the course of their field work. For Sumitab it has been in terms of non-clarity of role. Being a new placement this is probably reflecting the initial years in the agency and the student still trying to figure out what their work should be. The advantage of the non-clarity at this stage is also a potential to explore various tasks because with clarity comes an element of boundary being defined. For example in the Commission the role of the social worker was conceptualized only in the space of the research officer which is an indirect role whereas the social workers’ core skill is supposed to be direct work with people.

Being able to cope with disinterested staff was another challenge, it is a latent issue in the sense of overtly committing to support but at a day to day level, of not actually doing anything. At the Supervisor’s level and administratively all the right things are done as expected of field work requirements but at the student level there is a gap seen in the response by the field contact when it comes to day to day nurturing, giving tasks to do and facilitating. It perhaps has to also do with the perception of the field work experience itself, academically it is designed as being intense with a lot of actual involvement wherever possible but in the field, at the agency level, sometimes it is perceived as being an observer and doing a few tasks just for name sake. Sometimes students have had experiences where the agency staff and this is especially in government settings and not NGOs, would suggest
that work for the day was over and that the student could leave early and the supervisors would keep insisting that the student remain in the agency for the whole prescribed time since their visibility is also important and eventually tasks will get assigned just by the virtue of the student being around.

Reproduced below is what the student documented after one of her meetings with her supervisor. This piece was from the fourth semester to indicate some relationship between the two has been established. It is an interesting piece indicating the variety of issues that get discussed between the student and the supervisor.

‘Matters discussed during the individual conference.

1. We discussed a case and Ma’am gave me important points to remember the next time I come across such a case.

2. We also discussed how to go about the interviews for the study on Vishaka guidelines and other resources.

3. We discussed Mr ABC and about how maybe i should consider him as a client. He obviously has a need to reach out to people and through his constant talking about himself his need to validate himself comes out very strongly. Which is why i always try and be patient with him but lately it has been increasingly difficult. But Ma’am helped me gain some perspective on the matter, and i now will approach him in a different way.

4. Ma’am also encouraged me to spend more time with the staff working in administration, to see the “human” side of the work being done there. I had been telling her how I feel one of my biggest achievements has been to become friendly with everyone in the administrative section. There was one lady who was particularly hostile and now we get along really well.

5. We spoke about personal problems I have been having. I really like the methodical way she looks at every problem and breaks it down and that makes it so much easier to deal with. She also said something poignant, that I allow things to affect me, I have control over whether or not to let that happen I really wish we could talk more about that since I more often than not feel like I don’t have control over how I feel when something happens in my life.
6. She also said something that led to a BIG light bulb moment for me. She said I am very task oriented, very end oriented. Which is so true, and also why sometimes I get so frustrated at field work! Right at the beginning of the third semester our faculty had stressed on the fact that CCJ field work is process oriented and end-oriented, which I had totally overlooked in my quest to get as many “tasks” done as I could. I always measure everything by the tangible outcome it has. Learning during field work has been immense, I have gained so much and have grown as a person but at the same time I feel this sense of uselessness and frustration at times when I don’t have big tasks I can tick off as having done. And this made me realize one of the biggest problems I was having during concurrent field work. I did not see the value of small things, in the learning gained by letting things take their natural course. I did not give myself time to settle down, or to understand the setting.

I did those things no doubt, but it was always marred by a sense of underachievement, like those things were a given, any fool can do those things, where is the WORK? I was really frenzied and scared because I didn’t feel like I was doing any “big” or important tasks so what would I show to Ma’am or to myself at the end of the day? This led to a vicious cycle where I could not work at all, because each week I would think I have to compensate for the previous week, and obviously expectations from myself were too high and I would feel like a failure, like a lousy useless person. So when she made this comment during the IC, so many things suddenly fell into place for me!

We discussed plans for the remaining part of field work.’

For Priti, the challenge was, ‘As an official body the Commission has very little interaction with other state bodies which is proving to be detrimental to the functioning of social workers in the Commission.’ Networking is an important aspect of social work, as social workers one is comfortable with the concept of referrals and resource sharing, perhaps it comes from a belief in being non-hierarchical. At the Commission there is no practice of working together with other NGOs or support systems in the community maybe because being a State body they want to maintain a distance or it is also a subtle statement of power and authority and not wanting to align with anyone.
For Sonia not knowing the local language and being placed in offices of the State Government where most documentation is likely to be in the local language was the challenge faced. This is a fairly common problem since more than half of the students who study at this Institute belong to places outside of the city and so they may not be acquainted with the local language and in all government bodies the local language is used.

The students sometimes feel pressurized by expectations of them. The agency sometimes sees students as representatives of a reputed Institute rather than as student learners so they expect the students to perform without realising they are still learning. Often there is a realization how limited the role of the agency is actually, either because of its own nature or because of the lack of a will to do anything beyond what is routinely done and this sometimes becomes a value conflict for the young student who is essentially seeing things in a realistic ‘eagerly wanting to contribute to change’ way. Value conflicts also stem from an interplay between the agency’s demands and the student’s personality, it could also stem from curricular inputs that the student has been exposed to, for example when ethics and principles are talked about in one of the methods courses, the attempt to apply it to the field situation sometimes leads to a value conflict.

In trying to do something new, Sumitab conducted a public program for youth in colleges on human rights to build awareness and a study to understand the cases coming to the Commission. Tina writes, ‘The SSW intends to make a couple of charts in Marathi specifying these requirements to clients that come to the Commission.’ Information displayed to public regarding procedures becomes really helpful for visitors. This is something small but it took an outsider, the student, to think of this and then work on it. Many of the innovations are simple tasks that could easily be done within the existing time and resources. Often it needed a new or fresh perspective to be able to identify these tasks.

Priti conducted a study and a workshop for counsellors, both to enhance the existing services of the Commission. The student also talked about the resource book itself as her innovative idea. She had compiled this for the Commission counsellors and staff to use for referrals and resources and it had different sections on employment, shelter homes and legal aid. It was detailed and it had listed criteria, profile and admission details for ten shelter homes. All of the above were small examples that the researcher gleaned from the students’ recordings.
Sumitab did not write about himself much. There was no mention about learnings or growth and no feelings were written about. His writing style was also activity or external task based as compared to what was happening to him within in terms of feelings and learnings. For Priti, the element of reflections was what was missing in her recordings. She had a background in journalism and yet her writing was not at all descriptive. For Sonia there was a strong self-connect, breakthroughs of bias and self-issues were experienced. This was handled in the meeting with the supervisor and she also wrote about it. She used humour in her writing and had good writing skills. Reproduced below are some excerpts of her writing.

‘Most of the time she is giving me random tasks just to keep me busy. Like once she asked me to prepare another chapter for the annual report and to make it really long. How am I supposed to make it long? I can’t cook up stories on my own, she has no data that I can work with and instead she expects me to use fancy language and long sentences just to take up space. Last week she made me read a document she had apparently written. It was totally copied from some text book. It was 3 pages long with large font!

Today’s meeting was….i don’t know what to call it but a gigantic waste of time. He started talking about human rights, then talked about a case, then asked me if I thought human rights violations were because of fate, I said no. Then he went on to all kinds of random things, he narrated a story by Tolstoy, he spoke about even more random things including malaria, the guy who discovered penicillin, how penicillin was actually a fungi and just when I thought this was done the other official wanted to narrate a story about Churchill’s father having malaria. At the end of it, it was decided that human rights violations are partly due to fate, acts of God and because of human beings themselves. Enlightening!

There he opened the cupboard with all the files and papers that need sorting and pointed to it...and then it occurred to me there is no MIS (management information system). I asked him the same and he said no there is no MIS. I asked him why it said so on the website and he said we should let bygones be bygones, what!?
He then told me how he meditates and how he has crossed the first three stages of consciousness, sub conscious and is now on the brink of divine consciousness, good for him, only I was on the verge of becoming unconscious with annoyance and boredom!!’

And these are about three different people in the agency and not one person, which could have been explained as being of a certain personality!! They also indicate the kind of interactions some staff members have with the students, either because they are ‘outsiders’ and so a certain freedom of sharing can happen or that they just felt comfortable or were put at ease by the student.

Positive experience was in the form of relationships that have been built, ‘The students went out for lunch with the constable to the BMC canteen which was sponsored by the constables. The students were touched by this gesture and left the Commission not only with a lot of hope but with a lot of good memories.’ This happened towards the end of the placement and the students see it as a way of them being accepted and recognized by the agency. It is often these simple gestures of acknowledgement that one is looking for and it is these that then make the struggles seem not so difficult or challenging at the end.

An overall looking back at the placement itself with a sense of satisfaction for the learning involved was written like this, ‘I have learnt so very much in my time with the Commission. I cannot remember the last time I have had a strong sense of clarity about something and I am now even firmer in my resolve that I want to work on Human Rights and related issues, my love for the subject has become stronger and I have been able to see a different side of the practical reality of this issue. I am convinced that this experience will hold me in good stead when I finally start working as a professional social worker in the field.’ In the end when one sees a piece of writing like this there is a sense of satisfaction one feels for the student and it is statements like this that sum up what the entire field experience must have been like for the student. It is not about having a good agency or a facilitative field contact or a long list of interesting tasks. It could be none of the above and a mature supervisor who is able to anchor and hold the student through this entire journey that sometimes makes all the difference. And this is especially so in agencies that are newly being explored for field work.
Both these settings were challenging in their own way and a burden of that fell on the supervisor to mentor the student more systematically and rigorously. In spite of the nature of the agency the learning experience can still be meaningful as can be seen from the comments listed above, here it was about learning to work independently, becoming more confident about oneself, in dealing with client groups, negotiating with authority and developing an interest in the issue of human rights.

Discussing the use of social work methods; research and case work were actively used. The client profile was individuals visiting the Women’s Commissions for help with their cases and the work of going beyond into the community was in the form of research studies, training programs and awareness sessions. For Sumitab it was in the form of a research on an analysis of cases registered. Working with individuals was the core focus of work here so Tina was able to do a wide variety and volume of cases. She observed counsellors handling cases, handled a case, guided first time clients coming to office, accompanied a client to DWCD and to court for a case under the Domestic Violence Act, conducted joint meetings, discussed with counsellors, updated case histories in files, spoke to complainants, gave information, explained their order and just listened to them. The organisation itself addresses individual cases of women as victims so the student got a chance to work with women. No group work was possible here as it is a diverse, unconnected population. It is interesting to see the range of work being done with individuals, having been a case work teacher herself at one point in time, instances like this reaffirm the researcher’s own interest and belief in the method.

Sumitab mentioned that scope was there in the form of the need to network with NGOs, to promote human rights in society and to create awareness and sensitization of the role of the Commission. For Tina, scope was in doing research and internal studies to determine client and issue profiles. And this point was earlier identified as a gap in the challenges too, of the agency not being aware of its own impact or what type of people it has been able to cater to or what is being reflected as the most common human rights violations that are being complained against.
Regarding social work issues identified, need for awareness and sensitization about human rights was the most common issue. For Priti issues were about the realization that an important agency like the Women’s Commission is not connected to others working in the field so there is an element of distancing or not being involved in the issue of women’s rights which otherwise could have been brought on a common platform and resulted in a bigger impact.

Commenting on the jobs situation the Commission Official Matin said, ‘There is a desperate need for social workers. Not sure if jobs are available but need is there.’ On the one hand this is at least a first step in acknowledging the need for social workers. This is definitely an area that needs to be worked on but the question is; by whom between academics and field practitioners. Academics could explore a field or the field can ask for a social worker. The other aspect is of understanding whether the people in need will voice the value of this role. Often why is it that one question leads to many more and the answers seem elusive.

The student Priti commenting on the title of the social worker in this sub-sector felt that, ‘It is a very niche sector. The problem with the word Criminology is that it automatically labels the group. Like we did away with delinquent and deviance we should do away with Criminology, look at rights violation. It pertains to right to life of a person. Call it some activist, rights activist.’ This thought is possibly coming from the work being based within a rights framework as in both the Commissions, rights was the core focus.

Regarding the human rights commission there was no social worker in the agency and yet the students found a way to perform and be innovative. This was largely because there were two faculty supervisors here in the duration of the study, and both were actively involved in the field with the student so a lot of direction came from the supervisors themselves. Thus, the ideas for work to be done became the focal point and the student largely just went ahead with those inputs. Agencies when fieldwork is new need a push and anchoring by the faculty supervisor, and the style of supervision as mentioned above was more hands on, full of ideas and nurturing; so the students got their energy and motivation from the supervisory space. The researcher herself has supervised students in the commissions and recollects the intense, systematic style of the supervisory experience.
Commissions are organisations that have a clear ‘receiving complaints’ kind of mandate. While largely it is a policy, macro issue based focus, it does have an element of a micro connection. Thus because it is dealing with people with a grievance or having been wronged, there is definitely a need for sensitive handling and people skills. The mandate of the two Commissions are specific and like any government bureaucratic setting they tend to limit themselves minimally within that, it is here that the social worker with their larger orientation of being able to network and draw on community resources can divert, refer or handle the case even if it is beyond the Commission’s scope thus ensuring a sense of peace and closure.

Students who are independent functioning, with leadership skills, who can negotiate their way around an either disinterested dull tired system or a hostile confrontational environment, will do well in this setting. A genuine interest in the related themes of human rights or women would also propel the student to navigate around obstacles and identify potential and potential is a lot of. Since access to any system in the community for general awareness is available for the commission, any institution whether educational or custodial organisations, bodies so on and so forth can be identified, visited for monitoring and oriented about human rights. And that itself has a huge potential to influence and change. There is an assumption that is also being made here as one does not know which student got what they asked for as a choice of the field work agency itself so the interest element may be affected by this. Largely leadership, emotional maturity and genuine interest seem to be common requirements for students to work in this sector.

Thus work in Commissions as a sub-sector seems to be at a nascent stage. Some initiation has been done but it seems that more in-roads need to be made for the identity of the social worker to be established. This is a growing field and it is very likely that this is where the social worker will be most required in the future within the framework of a rights orientation and looking at access to justice.
Field Work in Rehabilitation

‘Rehabilitation has to be presented as an intense field. As social workers, we understand resource and network, we need to build on that.’ A senior faculty member who previously belonged to the Centre.

‘We have not been just to the legacy we inherited and the resources we had.’ A senior social work academician.

The comments above indicate two sides of the coin where rehabilitation is concerned; one the potential, positive, future looking and the other a reflection, a critique, looking back at the way things were handled. It is the drawing from the past experience that will help re-define the future thrust.

Rehabilitation is an overarching term that includes within it corrections, the former being wider and encompassing more aspects of an individual’s life rather than just the conflict with the law part or some parts of behaviour which needs to be ‘corrected’. It was around the fifties that corrections as a specialization of study emerged Kendall (1955). When one reads through the historical evolution of social work in the USA, it is interesting to note that as special field of practice, probation and corrections is mentioned along with child welfare, medical social work and psychiatric social work (Stintson 1966). This focus on probation and corrections is what marks the beginning of the sector of Criminology itself as a field of practice in social work.

There were five placements dealing with issues of Rehabilitation. There were two at FAP Aftercare (P ACW) and one at FAP Youth Development Centre (PYDC), focusing on women and male young adult offenders respectively. An NGO working on Probation and an NGO working on addictions. Thus two settings were of the FAP and the other two were NGOs. The agencies here have been involved with post release work from prison, also known as aftercare wherein the ‘after’ implies after institutionalisation so this would also look at persons moving out of institutions. There is also an element of prevention and community based correction as in the probation setting and work in probation dates very long back in history in this sector. Finally it was at looking at addictions as a form of deviance and seeing the scope of social work intervention there.
Work in Rehabilitation was the second highest in terms of total placements in the decade (2000-2009) chosen for this study, twenty-four rehabilitation placements were made out of 147 total placements that is sixteen per cent across different settings. The placements through the FAP continue even today but the probation and aftercare placement and the addictions placement have been discontinued. The former agency itself shut down and in addictions though there is tremendous scope to look at it with the CJS lens, the experience the students were getting was more of a therapeutic nature and that was becoming a bit of a disconnect with the curriculum and the specialisation conceptualisation so the placement there was discontinued. The agency was not able to explore other aspects of mutual interest like community work, for awareness and prevention. Work in Rehabilitation is about change and reintegration and this forms the core of what social work in the CJS itself is about. It is evident from the depth of writings that this sub-sector was rich in experiences for the students and it is interesting how many facets of direct work with people was evident in the writings.

Rehabilitation as a sub-sector generated 978 codes in Atlas-ti. The most common activities that students did were visits, may be to explore community resources for clients and client related and planning; all indicating work being done in terms of the clients reintegration into society, post institutionalization. The most important challenge was difficult clients followed by address tracing problems. Value conflict was largely student related in terms of relating to clients.

The activities of the students can be broadly classified into three main categories; client related, agency related, and visits. As is reflective of the ethos of this setting; direct work with clients, inmates, and people forms the core of the work. Then it is agency based work which is common across the entire sector and common to the nature of field work itself, of doing tasks in terms of understanding and becoming a part of the agency through which one is placed. This allows for an administrative understanding of the setting, of the policies, staff structure, funding pattern, vision, and decision making patterns of the agency.
Table 6.3

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<tr>
<th>Sr No</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Additional Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sophia P AC W</td>
<td>Did a lot of work with individuals, one task was following up on women clients of the after care unit who had dropped out of the vocational training course, two intense long term cases were done, one was an HIV/AIDS case, second was a disability and livelihood case. Explored other NGOs for referrals, was an escort for hospital and job visits.</td>
<td>This was a direct social work setting. This is an old placement so it was familiar with students and the field work expectations. The main focus was working with individuals and so all the tasks assigned were such. This was about work in prison with rehabilitation as a focus.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Shaina P AC W</td>
<td>Exploring community resources and government entitlements for this population and so it was almost like an issue based focus. Direct work with prison inmates though the focus was on post release support and rehabilitation. The student went to other organizations in an attempt to see what resources are available in the community to support these women with their post release and reintegration needs.</td>
<td>It is interesting how the definition was emerging as different from that of prison work. Aftercare was emerging as a post release rehabilitation work.</td>
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Thus the above two placements give a fairly clear idea about the scope of and the strategy to be used in this kind of work.
3. **Deb MPAA**  
Focus was on identifying potential cases of probation from prison and then following up on cases where probation had been granted, thus leading to supervision in the community.  
This is closely linked to the concept of re-integration meaning being with the person as they re-settle back into society.

4. **Rana NGO**  
Did five cases, two in-depth with 4-5 sessions. For groups, he did a few sessions, not a sustained group work activity as it is commonly understood. He got to explore community based preventive work with children but that did not take off much though for various reason one of which was his inability to manage his time and tasks between two office locations.  
The agency believed in an ideology of peer counsellors and did not really see the role of professionals in their work. Though it was a peer counsellor based model the student got a deep orientation into addictions and its challenges.

5. **Suneet P YDC**  
He was trying to explore work with boys just released from prison or on bail and within rehabilitation he looked at education and computer training as two focus areas. He did four long term cases and some group work, explored resources and coordinated with other NGOs. He also did prison visits to identify new cases.  
In the FAP students are not mere accessories but play an important role in the agency’s journey itself.

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Table 6.3 describes the various activities the students did in this sub-sector.
Table 6.4

Agency Related Activities in Rehabilitation

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<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Deb MPAA</td>
<td>Orientation to the agency, to Probation and Aftercare units, attended meetings, understood case handling, documentation formats and discussed with agency officials. He made a plan of action table of tasks which allowed a tabular synopsis of all work done over a period of time.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Shaina P AC W</td>
<td>Orientation, prison visits, attending meetings with FC for work discussions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Rana NGO</td>
<td>Attended input sessions and sharing sessions, attending family therapy sessions, discussion with counsellors and interaction with FC.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Suneet P YDC</td>
<td>Met workers, visited the units of the agency and accompanied clients for NGO exposure visits.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Sophia P AC W</td>
<td>The agency gave her a lot of tasks, participated in meetings and case consultations.</td>
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Table 6.4 depicts the agency related activities that students did in Rehabilitation. Looking at Sophia at the FAP Aftercare Women (P ACW), it comes across that the student’s work was not just a part of her learning but also contributing to the agency’s work as the student is given a space in the organisation. This can be seen from her participation in meetings, case consultations and the lines of communication vis a vis information sharing. This corresponds to what Lawrence (1993) states that a first requirement for effective learning is that the learner must have a stake in the outcome thus implying that learning is enhanced when the learner is able to engage with the learning environment as a doer rather than a receiver of information and knowledge.

3. Visits -For Deb at the NGO, visits were made to the aftercare hostel for boys and girls, court visits and prison visits for cases. Shaina at the aftercare for women centre through the FAP visited NGO shelter homes to explore admission for women post release, explored organisations working with women for jobs and skill training.
MPAA is an NGO working closely with the CJS on the issue of probation with a social work mandate clear in its ideology and role yet the core work done by the student here was agency based, so getting to understand its functioning. The aftercare hostels were seen as potential sites for work since inmates were there and that opened up scope for direct work. The students went for some jail visits to identify potential cases and interacted with a few probationers though more energy was invested in organising a program.

The aftercare work was in the FAP that works with women prisoners where the entire focus was about working with individuals, following up on cases and handling few cases on a long term basis, so being able to see the impact of one’s intervention and the various dimensions of the case. Rehabilitation for addiction was another issue that was looked at and a large focus there was on the agency and understanding its program of an intense addiction related therapy so a lot of time was spent in understanding the concept and theories of addiction. Students did some direct work with both adult males in the therapeutic community and with children as part of community preventive work. Some exposure to the patient community was given in terms a few cases and group sessions.

Writing about the role of the social worker in aftercare Sophia said that it was in accompanying the client. For individuals out of prison and institutions, who are now slowly getting acquainted to systems and the ways of society it is almost like re-learning and there is a subtle nervousness that bothers them about their past and so having a known trusted person just to be with them as they face new experiences is another role the social worker can play.

In prison aftercare work with women, the role of the social worker involved making phone calls and home visits made to establish family contact with women, emotional support, handling individual cases and giving options for alternative livelihoods. Rana at the NGO describes that the role of the social worker in addictions was to help with individual cases, counselling on a range of issues from understanding the program, settling into it, fears of post release and helping with the challenges of rehabilitation.

Work in Rehabilitation has been defined as intervention required while the individual is in institutional care, immediately on release from prison and after release. The role of the social worker could be in emergency assistance on release, temporary accommodation and assistance in securing housing, employment, family support, counselling, guidance, legal
aid and protection from police harassment (Model Prison Manual 2003, GOI: 278). This can be seen in what the students have also documented as the role of the social worker in this sub-sector as that of follow up of cases, accompanying clients for services and coordinating with various resources in the community as they settle down.

Each setting throws up challenges and there have been a few peculiar to this one too. For Sophia, where there have been opportunities to handle clients independently to some extent and subsequently with regard to home visits, one recurring challenge has been the issue of tracing addresses of the clients. Either they were incorrect, incomplete or no one by that name resided there any longer. This could also be reflective of the profile of the group landing up and remaining in prison and those that social workers work with in this sector.

The other challenge was regarding what the student is supposed to do when confronted with the client’s illegal activities. There have been a few cases when the client during the phase of rehabilitation were still in touch with old associates and were still indulging in some kind of deviant or illegal activities like selling drugs for example. Another challenge was not being able to balance or maintain a boundary with regard to working with the client especially when one compares the excitement and enthusiasm of the student with the practical reality of having a defined time to work within and under a certain pressure to perform. And the result being the client becoming more demanding since the student had quickened the pace of response in one individual case.

Yet another challenge was expectations and pressure from the client group in terms of seeing the students different from prison staff and more like the social workers visiting the prison and yet not understanding they are students and so have limitations in terms of what they can do. Often students bear the brunt of suppressed frustration that inmates have as they are unable to express themselves in front of the authorities and the comfort the prisoners/inmates experience with the social workers or student social workers become the space to ventilate and sometimes brings out that negativity.

One important purpose of social work in prison is to help address the issue of rehabilitation for persons who wish to move away from crime as a way. An ongoing challenge faced by the students in prison work was of trying to explain to the women the role of the aftercare worker in contrast to the prison social worker; so routine family contact and legal aid could be handled by the prison worker, and post release follow up could be handled by the after
care worker. This was compounded by the fact that another set of student social workers from another Centre (health and mental health) would also visit prison but with a focus on mental health issues. While these specialisations are clear at the curriculum-academic level, at the agency-sector level it often confuses people because the same Institute was sending different social work students.

There were instances of being confronted with realities of attitude towards the CJS personnel, this negativity towards the system and system personnel becomes difficult to handle and sometimes as it puts the student in an awkward position where they cannot take sides. Another value conflict that was client related that came up was in terms of not being able to manage boundaries within the helping relationship in this case with regard to money, ‘Once again he asked for some money from the SSW who refused him politely and explained the reason why she couldn’t give him.’ These are real experiences that everyone who starts working in this field of practice goes through and it is through this that one learns about how to handle such things in the future.

Shaina at the FAP aftercare for women placement lied to a woman who asked for a pen to write a letter and this disturbed her. She said she did not have a pen mainly because she did not know if she was allowed to give her one inside prison. And since prison entry is governed by strict rules there is always a sense of caution with which students function in prison.

A senior Centre faculty member Vasu describing his own value conflict added how in the last few years, he was increasingly finding that he was not able to relate to students. A sense of impatience was there in him that he felt was getting communicated to the students. One of his problems with increasing age was that he has become very solution oriented which is not good for a student who is learning and exploring. He feels he is very good with on field support, giving ideas, but the fun of the student to discover at their own pace was getting denied because of his hurry to get on. He added, ‘I think after 20 years of field work supervision, maybe one should not do direct supervision and just be an advisor.’ This is also an interesting piece about a senior supervisor critically reflecting on the challenges of supervision with students and over a period of time losing patience to move at the pace of the students.
The researcher from the work done by students identified certain tasks that seemed new, out of the ordinary and these are what were called innovations just to indicate that within the same context there are possibilities and often one just needs to think creatively. For Deb, some documentation, organising a unique program and a seminar were some examples of innovative work done.

The dimension of self was seen in most recordings in its various forms. This aspect of self has been categorised on the basis of learning something new in the field, reflecting on learnings which is a deeper level of engagement, positive and negative experiences as they are what has affected the person and not necessary the external environment itself. So two students may react differently to the same situation and finally learning something about one’s own being, either a strength, a weakness or something new which came out because of the field work experience. For Sophia, reflective thinking included being overwhelmed by a client’s behaviour and the student getting irritated about it. Students go through a lot of ‘firsts’ during field work, a home visit, meeting a police officer, talking to a magistrate, discussing with a senior official or bureaucrat, getting a successful job, shelter, sponsorship or admission for clients, the list is endless and like all firsts the memory of these linger.

For Shaina, self-awareness was written as, ‘I thought about my previous visit to jail where this lady told me that if I couldn’t do anything for them, then there was no use of coming and merely looking at them. This time again I was unable to give them what they wanted. The fact that I’ll have to go there again and like they said “simply look at them is quite sad for me.” CJS settings can be tough and the people in it can be harsh. This is an example of just that where a women must have commented on the student social worker not being efficient and thus of no use. The level of stress in prison and institutions is so high for the prisoners that when the student social worker goes as the outsider often she is the only hope these inmates hold on to in terms of some progress in their case and so the feedback one gets is instant. If you have been able to do something with a positive result, word goes around that you are reliable and lucky too but the reverse is also true. The student is constantly balancing two identities; of being the learner and being the doer, or balancing between in what situation should they interfere, and when not to. There is a chance of not getting it right all the time.
This setting seems to have generated a lot of thinking and questioning in the students, various aspects of self were documented here with examples and in depth. It is interesting to see how the field work experience facilitates this kind of reflection. Sophia wrote about the term ‘aftercare’, ‘A lot of debate and discussion had taken place over the term ‘aftercare’ wondering whether after ten years of work it is appropriate to use it in order to describe that kind of work. This need to change the name from aftercare unit to prevention unit arose from an identification of the kind of cases that approach or are referred for assistance and the fact that today they not only receive cases from prison but from various other avenues as well.’ This setting actually generated the most discussion on definitions on what this kind of work should include. It is a good example of students contributing to developing an understanding of an issue.

Regarding the social work methods used; case work has been commonly used and some group sessions were conducted. Because of the nature of work, a lot of detailed descriptions were written about the work done. Sophia writes about home visits done, spending a day with a client, in-depth case handling and follow up of old cases. For Suneet, work was similar to what Sophia did but this was with male youth. This work was aftercare or post release support so there was a lot of individual based work.

For Deb at an NGO, case work was home visits, home enquiry reports and probation cases. They did a few case related tasks like interview with probationers and group sessions with inmates in the aftercare hostels. Rana at an NGO where work was with addictions writes about group work as sessions with children and with adults. The agency itself follows a group therapy model so the student did some sessions with groups too. In this setting, case work and group work seems to have been explored the most.

Reviewing the scope for social work, it was in handling individual issues with a focus on health, job, individual and community based prevention. Research was an assessment of various cases to further strengthen the agency’s intervention. In addictions work, it was largely working with children and their parents for preventive work, group sessions and individual cases and awareness programs in the community. Currently changes in the social work profession in the US has diminished its role in corrections (Gumz, 2004, cited in Singh 2012: 290). And this is similarly true in India too, especially with regard to probation; but with the other systems it has probably not even been explored enough or even accepted in the first place.
An example closer to home is in the UGC distance learning certificate course in social work and criminal justice system, it describes the need for social workers as being able to help bridge the gap between law and policy and the gaps in implementation of the same. And work is conceptualized as social and legal services in correctional settings (IGNOU 2010:8).

For Shaina scope for social work was well documented, ‘*There should be some sort of reformation programs within prison for the prisoners. Aftercare services for prisoners are aimed essentially at preventing the released prisoner from going back into a life of crime thereby providing them services which would help them to lead respectable lives resulting in re-integration with the society. The reason why the FAP was working was because the individual needs to be re-integrated into society in such a manner that she will not be vulnerable to any criminal behaviour in the future. For this purpose alone, it is important to work with not just the individual or the client but also with the client’s family.*’ In prison work, the importance of focusing on reformation and reintegration was highlighted.

Social work education furthermore plays a major role in socializing new social workers to different areas of practice but few schools of social work offer coursework specific to criminal offenders…..with few social workers practicing in this area, it is unlikely faculty are covering much material on this population practicing in this area as observed by Lowe and Bohon (2008:294). In the light of this reality the few field work experiences in this sub-sector gain more importance. Thus scope for social work emerged well in the students’ writings in the form of rehabilitation being stated as the core issue of work either in prison or in institutions, similarly with the focus on after-care as post-release support and the dimension of preventive work in addictions.

The objective of reformation and rehabilitation of offenders has been formally recognized in correctional legislation, for example in the Probation of Offender’s Act, Juvenile Justice Act, Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, Prevention of Begging Act, Borstal Schools Act and Habitual Offenders Act. Posts of the probation officer, liaison officer, child welfare officer, prison welfare officer, case worker had existed in residential institutions and probation departments for adults and juveniles (BATSW and FAP, 2006). This was further reiterated as initiating the process of rehabilitation, reclaiming the individual’s space in society and facilitating the journey from client to citizen. The various titles used for the social worker have been prison worker, legal aid worker, court worker and aftercare worker (FAP 2012 Hand Book Series.)
Regarding some of the issues identified, this is what students wrote. For Sophia, it was health, women being ill, alone and with no support. For Shaina, the issues identified were; the need to earn and be self-sufficient that was an issue identified for women released from prison during aftercare. This is also indicative of their socio-economic reality. The issues within the larger concept of rehabilitation were apprehensions of reintegrating back into their families and in society. Persons striving to move away from crime as a way of life need some form of legal source of income to sustain themselves and their families and this becomes the most pressing need and the greatest challenge for the social worker, given the profile of the group that one comes across, in terms of a mismatch between educational qualifications, skill set available and potential employment opportunities.

It was now being accepted that correctional agencies alone cannot correct crime, as crime is rooted in social causes (Carney 1977, cited in Srivastava 1980). The National Advisory Commission, 1973 (cited in, ibid) talked about limitations of correctional institutions saying that they brought about more negative change and made successful reintegration back into the community less likely. By the seventies, community based corrections was emerging in USA as the future. It meant getting the community involved in the prevention and treatment of crime. Thus rehabilitation was seen to be the joint effort of the offender, the professional worker and the community. In the Indian context, it was pointed out that since one was struggling with even a basic sense of security, community based corrections was a long way off. There were very few who supported the progressive strides of modern Criminology (ibid). Critics also accept that the scope is in rehabilitation of first time offenders and so suggested to widen the probation net, liberalise parole procedures, de-institutionalise juvenile corrections. It is within this domain of community based corrections that one can also position the role of the social worker, whose main aim would be to help an individual make his journey back to society into a web of meaningful relationships away from a life of crime.

Hence, overall Rehabilitation was the one that generated a lot of discussion in terms of having a strong historical connect to having the potential to further develop into an area where the future of work can be based. For various reasons this sub-sector is what defined the scope for social work intervention itself. The entire focus of the CJS is both justice and reformation. It is this aspect of reformation that is the core of what this sub-sector is about. It is overarching, deeply rooted in human change and can be connected to growth of people, beyond their deviances and criminal behaviour to achieving full potential of themselves.
Features of Institution, Commission and Rehabilitation

What is common across the three sub sectors is that they all focus on rehabilitation and justice. After having said this which is more overarching there are things which are unique to each.

**Institutions** was basically about institutional rehabilitation and about learning to work in a bureaucratic setting. These are government bodies overseen by correctional legislations and have a restrictive environment. The faculty supervisors played an important role here and largely this had faculty supervisors. The Superintendent is the field contact and also played a key role here as on a day to day basis he or she is the decision maker vis a vis students tasks. The student social worker’s role seems to be to fill in the gaps wherever the institution is not functioning optimally. Is scope for new work even possible in the government? The jobs here are in the government sector only. This field of practice is fairly set and yet there are new inputs that can be made available for inmates with regard to self and skill development. With society constantly changing outside there is a need to align to that reality and the social worker can do that. There is already a trend of NGOs visiting institutions to share resources and responsibility with regard to helping the inmate population rebuild their lives. It is this space where new energy and the social worker can be anchored. So while the legislation, infrastructure and overall ideology is stagnant, it is within rehabilitation as inmates are prepared to face life outside, that can be developed. And it is this, that links the sub-sector of institution to the sub-sector rehabilitation. The former is in preparation to life outside and the latter is in coping with life outside.

**In Rehabilitation**, the biggest challenge for the student here was client related indicating the student engagement with client being most here. Here the challenges are not with the system, in a way the system is not interested in this issue so the social worker are no threat to them. The lack of a legislation overseeing this issue may be the reason for this disinterest because with a legislation comes resources, administration and accountability. There is a need to develop work in this sub-sector beyond an individual case basis response that is typically done to a strategy of intervention. It seems to be there but has to now be consolidated and presented formally. Which brings us to the need to understand what the models of correction and rehabilitation are in the International and Indian context. And to understand what their theoretical bases are. There is a need to study the impact and value of
re-integration. Two key concepts that need to be focused on here are stigma, in terms of a social identity and the family unit, if it exists then the need to re-connect frayed relationships and if it does not then to find a replacement for the vacuum that not having a family brings. There seems to be an uncontested belief in society at large, of the family being the only valid basic construct. Shelter and jobs are pressing needs for this group out of institutions, so rehabilitation is about post institution work. The NGO presence is stronger here. The government presence is stronger in institutions since most institutions are set up and run by the government and it just seems that their interest and commitment stops there. Their desire to support seems to end with the institution. If prison for reformation is a clear only State responsibility then why is the State willing to compromise on the subject of rehabilitation, since it is an extended responsibility of the former. It is of concern that the government’s presence is not there in this. It is like the classic output-outcome debate or like years before the resistance to youth work in the issue of street children where people were willing to work and invest with children but not with youth little realising that the same children grow up to become youth and that work becomes the crucial missing link. This is really the crux of what the entire criminal justice system is about, a sense of justice and a chance to change. If the latter is incomplete or not done, it is taking away from the former itself.

**Commissions** are quasi-legal government bureaucratic settings. The tasks that the students did were mainly administrative and programs for awareness or sensitivity. There was non-clarity of the role of the social worker especially in the human rights commission. The role of the social worker can be conceptualized especially in the human rights commission as direct work with complainants or as a public relations officer. The curriculum had some human rights and victimology inputs. These commissions do not practice any networking and function as isolated islands. There is a gap with their NGO connections and the social worker can bridge that. There was more indirect work done in the human rights commission and direct work in the women’s commission; and as if to compensate that the field contact in the human rights commission was more supportive than the one in the women’s commission. The presence of social worker helped as in the women’s commission there was an element of acceptability towards the students. Sometimes the role of a social worker gets compartmentalised into one fixed identity like in the women’s commission it was as a counsellor. In the human rights commission the role is yet to be defined. This was a fairly new placement compared to the other two, of institutions and rehabilitation. There will be some policy level work required to establish the role of the social worker in this sub-sector
eventually. There is a need to formalise this work. In future these aspects need to be explored; how to strengthen the Commissions impact on institutions and in the community, how to build awareness in society as a watchdog to rights violations and finally how to handle a case holistically beyond the limitations of Commissions so that either justice or a closure is reached.

The details that emerged from the students recordings gives us a fairly clear idea the six sub-sectors of Social Work in Criminology and Justice of the uniqueness of each of them and the different trajectories that they have traversed over a period of time.

**Taking the Discipline and Sector forward**

From the data especially the interviews of the key respondents, various comments were made to strengthen both the discipline and the sector. These have been discussed in this section.

**Strengthening the Discipline.** The curriculum plays an equally important role in social work education. It is the curriculum that anchors and complements the field based learning through field work; so the curriculum has to be tuned in to the field and vice versa, this then translates into a wholesome learning experience. The following are points captured from the key interviews. They pertain to the student and the curriculum, which can be seen under the larger construct of the discipline.

Arjun commented on the way Criminology itself has been conceptualized and taught over the years by the Centre and felt that there is an identity crisis between Criminology and Social Work. Criminology in the Institute was seen largely as a part of Social Work. Probation, Parole, Correction have been the strength of the Centre but he felt that the foundation was not strong, the linkages, the larger scenario, the synergy was not there and the larger human rights perspective and governance reforms needed to be included.

The senior academician Anahita felt that the social work methods should be taught better and that the focus on skills needs to be more both in the classroom and in the field and that the integrated approach was missing and needs to be incorporated. Also more needs to be done to get people interested in the subject, that way more students would come to study it. This has been a problem with this specialisation of not attracting too many students.
Rhea talking about how things were during 1996-2003 said that students engaged in the core social work methods of case work, group work, and community organisation. Interface of students was across settings within the Centre. For example for the same case, different set of students would work on different aspects like it following up with the police or with the family or with the client in prison would be done by different students placed in those settings. The focus was about understanding the trajectory of the case and understanding the response of the CJS. Peer learning was consciously facilitated through group conferences. Students were more active and less geared towards the job market. They somehow treated their field work with more sincerity. And her subsequent silence implied that the same is not visible in these days and that something had changed in the student profile, the reason for which was not very clear. It almost seems as if something has altered over a period of time, either the novelty of field work since many students now come with some past work experience in NGOs or with some volunteering / intern experience.

The Centre faculty member Vasu referring to case work and group work mentioned that the students were not too happy engaging with these two methods. He reflected whether it had to do with the kind of settings. Twenty years back, going to police station, prison or court was an exciting thing; today going to mining site or naxal area is more exciting. He wondered whether it had to do with the existing methodology of going with the system and not challenging or confronting it. He felt that there is a need for a serious rethink with regard to the kind of placements the Centre has. He wondered if the Centre was being rigid about what they think is field work and that some of these things need to be thought through and actually changed.

The FAP Social Worker Varun said there is a need to document a lot of the FAP’s work as reference material. When referring to theories from other countries, the cultural context needs to be understood and that we need to develop our own theories. There is also a need to regularly have input sessions for all supervisors. This need for documentation of work done has been voiced by many respondents.

The senior academician Vanitha said that human rights has now been integrated into the courses. She finds a lot of overlap and sees the possibility of cross listing themes like work with women and children in the CJS with other Centres. The linking has to be discussed and done in some way. She also felt that we are not teaching subjects in adequate depth. New issues like HIV, addiction and homosexuality in prisons need to be taken up. This is a
concern the researcher also had and it was voiced by other faculty members too, of so many topics that seem to be just superficially introduced and not handled in depth because of a time paucity. The dilemma has always been of what to include and what to leave out.

Vanitha continued saying, ‘There is a need to understand the historical context. Institutions were an answer to deviance. That was then, today what is the reality and what is required now? We have not had that discussion of why Criminology is required and why we are sticking to Criminology. There is a need to have a thorough discussion of what is working today and what is it that needs to be worked on. There has been an uncontested understanding of working with the system, is that the only way to function in this sector?’

The Centre faculty member Vasu explained how, ‘The difference between a social work and a development studies course is not clear, the boundaries are becoming loose, what is holding us is the four methods and field work. We are teaching students to become critical thinkers but not critical doers. That will demand a certain energy on faculty also, there is a demand for writing only, if my work is only on my publications, why should I invest in the field? This is the current story, social work itself is in a crisis. The Institute on one end is in a glorious paradise, all other colleges are at the other end. It is not playing any role in bringing people together. Look at teachers of previous generation, we have been self-serving and failed them. We are just becoming social scientists now’, all of these thoughts were worrying him. This voices a concern of whether the essence of the profession itself is getting lost somewhere and then how is that resonating in the curriculum. What is core to social work training and what should remain as a non-negotiable?

Rhea talking about purpose of field work said that, ‘Earlier value was on field work first then academics but now it has changed. Field work is a way in which we indigenize the content we are teaching. The students have said, you made it very real. This realness in teaching will go away if field work reality will go away. What we have failed in is to write about field work. Field work is also reinforcement about the validity of our profession. Social work is a process and one cannot experience process as an issue.’ This pedagogy of a process has to be deeply thought through.
Talking about the curriculum Rhea explained that there was not enough time to teach everything. She also added that it is only in our work that the Social Worker is engaging with civil and political rights, the rest are looking at economic, social and cultural rights. She explained how civil and political rights where freedom gets curtailed is about work in our field so the value of this sector is very important. Rhea further elaborates, ‘Ethical issues are strongest in this sector. It is important to remember that we are only the ones who know the role of the State and can balance the State’s roles.’ She felt that there is a lack of indigenous material, overall in social work, more so in Criminology.

Rhea added, ‘The field of practice was not recognised very well. Till today it seen as an arena where no one is interested. The system sees these people as rejects of society. The volume of resources spent is less, the thought being why invest in this group of people. In other sectors there is a sense of stability. In this sector if the individual goes away, one needed to work with the agency all over again. Not enough funding for this sector impacts morale of the sector. This is the area of field practice most neglected but most required.’

Vasu states the value of field work as, ‘It is what separates social work education from any other course.’ He felt it is the soul of social work and in terms of education fifty per cent of learning is happening in the field and that even if students are not motivated they are still learning. ‘Which other education program offers you to go and do what you want to?’ Than highlighting the freedom of learning that field work actually allows and the value this has in exploring new fields of practice.

The Police Official Rameshwar talked about the Police organisation culture. He felt that the approach of social workers may change once they understand the police and their stress more. Police syllabus should include social work topics and a change in both the syllabi of police and of social work is required. A good area to work on, according to him, was the police personnel themselves. Thus there will be some aspects that will be exclusive to both the police and social workers and there will be some, where an overlap can happen and they can actually work together towards a common goal.
The FAP social worker cum supervisor Pearl felt that in all situations because of funding, work has stopped and often it is the social worker running after the system. At a formal level this issue could be opened up and she added that this will come out of better documentation. The focus of the system has shifted to administration, security and custody and there is no interest in preventive or post release work. Thus unless it is formally established as a part of the system this feeling of being an insider and yet an outsider will remain.

The senior academician Surveen talking about curriculum said that now when she looks back, she believes that social work should not be constrained as it is taught in the classroom. She felt that social development is the ultimate aim of social justice and equity and the lines between the different specialisations were very thin, inter linkages were talked about but it was not spoken about much, so each social worker functioned in their spaces. She goes on to explain what is happening in the discipline across the country today. ‘First recognition is in the form of a network that too it is as an adaption of a strategy in UK, in order to use resources in a maximum manner. Our Planning Commission saw value of that system. Social work was seen as a good pilot to show other disciplines that it is possible and feasible. If this shows value, it will influence work done.’

Talking about education and practice, Surveen further elaborates, ‘Education as a component of this discipline carves out its own space and its responsibility. The educationist brings that strategy of intervention, formally bringing it into the world of knowledge. For 10-15 years of the profession the educationist played a far more proactive role, practiced, taught, wrote extensively about experiments, peer sharing and making it a curricular question. After this, it started to become far more ambiguous. Maybe the field has something to do with that, the country was changing. The number of disciplines were increasing, role, shape, form of social work and expectations were changing. We grew in terms of numbers but not in terms of depth, range and scope that was feasible. There has been a lack of rigour and theorizing from the educationists in the last 30 years now. We have not consolidated it and shaped it, if educationists don’t do it who is going to do it?’ Thus it is evident from experiences and comments like this that the answer to the question whose responsibility is it to develop the field is now clear. It is largely on the academicians, the discipline and the educational institutions to do what they can in their capacity to open out the field of practice. This is not about a few number of students but about an idea that is being opened up, it is not for an immediate response to a need but as a long term answer to what should be done.
And there is no right and wrong in this, of whether a sector is to be nurtured in what space but just a comment that this is how it evolved for this sector. One of the students Sasha gave a suggestion of having a think tank on Criminology and to have lawyers and social workers participating in it.

Therefore a great deal of responsibility lies ahead for the profession. If it is to vindicate its existence in the next decades as it moves forward to a century in which it will either prove itself or finds itself increasingly become irrelevant to the people and the times with which it is confronted (Desai 1985:16)

**Building the Sector.** This section is basically developed from the key interviews and has ideas and suggestions given on how to develop the profession so it looks at the agency and the sector.

The senior faculty member Arjun felt that we need to do some empirical study on core areas so those can be identified, some dissemination of it and a little more interaction, dialogue with the CJS functionaries about what are we teaching students and their job expectations should be done. He felt there was a need to share how research can be helpful in dealing with day to day issues. He also felt that a refresher course in Criminology needs to be conducted jointly with the system14 as it will increase visibility of the subject. Reviewing the suggestions made here indicates that more communication needs to be initiated with the system in terms of explaining what the students are being taught in the curriculum and how it can be of help to the system.

The FAP social worker Pearl also felt similarly when she said, ‘*More documentation and more research needs to be done. The FAP has been more demonstrative and experimental in terms of being able to come up with a model. As field agencies, we have not documented much.*’ For example, she adds how the children of prisoners document (Forced Separation: A study on children of imprisoned mothers, 2002) has had more impact on the system than what we were saying about rehabilitation or post release. She adds that in the last few decades medical social work has got established and wonders what was the process that helped them get established there that is not working here. It was either at a different level

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14 System here refers to the criminal justice system.
or it was the setting. There is a need to examine the experiences of the Special cell\textsuperscript{15} and understand their funding. Also to reflect on experiments that have not happened in this sector. After some time consistently being with the system your role gets established but funding becomes an issue so there is a need to explore how medical social work has got incorporated into hospital budgets. There is possibly something in the areas where social work has got established that we can learn from. ‘This sector has to face the additional challenge of does rights happen or not, does reform and rehabilitation happen or not? There is a difference in resistance between both the systems. A lot of effort is required for taking it forward, it has remained on one project and on a few people. Getting together energy of other people and the other initiatives ideas like fellowships happened but that did not work. Need to brainstorm and think about this. Also there is more burn out in this sector due to frustration.’ Here the point being raised is what can we learn from the other sectors where social work was established like in the hospital setting, what worked for them that can be applied here and where does the similarity of the two stop; and thus something else needs to be done for this sector. The issue of burn out is also very real as when one is constantly utilising a part of one’s energy just to keep creating one’s space in a hostile system, it does have a negative impact.

The FAP field contact Vilas said there is a need to review what the government is doing for rehabilitation. He cited the problem of no post institutional support for children after they turn 18 years of age. Before the FAP was working in the children’s institution, the meaning of rehabilitation was understood differently. In the FAP the way the case is handled is holistic, bail has been cancelled and a child has been brought, different strategies were used and repeaters have been reduced. The FAP looked at education, vocational training and follow up but for how long the FAP can do this work, he wonders. This is an important point that is being made, firstly that a FAP having shown how something can be done is the starting point, work needs to be taken to another level now and the Government needs to take responsibility for rehabilitation more than is currently being done.

\textsuperscript{15} This was earlier a FAP of the Institute and later taken over by the Government (State level) as their project.
On the issue of employment the FAP Supervisor Shika said, ‘There are jobs. There are positions and vacancies but someone needs to lobby to ensure only MSWs take important positions.’ At the Maharashtra Public Service Commission site, for criteria for posts, it is written MSW but now they recruit just graduate or post graduate with no work experience and no MSW education is required. So the role has changed and been diluted. Thus some spaces that were sacrosanct to social work are also getting corroded and consciously work needs to be done to counter that. She adds that the groups social workers work with are socially handicapped people. She strongly feels the need that the Centre should have another FAP doing police station work. But is this really the solution? The Centre already has four FAPs and it is probably the highest any individual Centre has. FAPs have a value but they are energy consuming and it is the field that needs to open up now. Also work in police as a setting has been demonstrated through field work for over two decades now.

Vanitha the senior academician explains that for jobs resources like the Special Cell were created. (It was earlier a FAP and is now taken over by the government. It is located at district police stations to address cases of women and children). ‘Today things have changed so much, values have changed, where the social controls are? Today it has become much more challenging to deal with this sector now. We have to be very strong to work in this sector. Where are we writing and documenting our experiences?’ That this sector has its peculiarities is being reinforced here and the point that one lacunae has been of work that is being done but not being documented enough to show impact and for visibility.

The senior academician Sanjana said that, ‘For Criminology as a sector or subject, society has not been aroused. Public see them as a nuisance and so public sensitivity needs to be increased.’ Sanjana asks, ‘Where is the correction in CJS? Jail there is no correction, police station correction is not their agenda, and their role is to control. Our institutions are failing. The persons in charge are not trained social workers, there is vast scope for social workers.’ For this sector to grow criminology and correction should be in the public domain, it should be a subject that is written about so much that society should be interested in wanting to be involved and contribute.
The human rights commission official Matin suggested that a write up on employability of social workers in the Human Rights Commission should be submitted by the Centre and they will take it up with the authorities. He suggested that a meeting to deliberate about this could be called and that other social work institutes could be invited to be a part of this. There were immediate impact ideas shared with the researcher to see how jobs for social workers could be strengthened, for example with regard to the new regulations regarding CSR (corporate social responsibility) projects, whether the commission could write to the labour department requesting them to direct companies to employ trained social workers, similarly with well-established private corporates.

Surveen reflected that in the systems where social workers are secondary workers, the primary role is by another professional, they have the leadership, their training and orientation is different. ‘He runs the system, you become the outsider and you are not seen as essential. You have to see your role as ‘most essential else it will have no impact.’ Now they are encouraging social workers to enter higher studies not for academics but to get into positions of decision making, with an ability to shape social development from our perspective. If social workers remain as social workers, they do not have the gaze to transform or influence decision making. That route needs to be taken, was her view. Apart from getting society interested, opening up job opportunities, another way was to encourage those with social work training to move into positions of power so that indirectly their training and orientation could positively influence governance.

Vanitha said, ‘Why can’t we take a stand and say we will work outside the system. There are no jobs in the system. It’s not a bad idea of training for the civil services, that’s one route, that’s how they get into the system or else we will remain outsiders. ? Some of the questions she raised were, ‘Why was the FAP not up scaling its work in terms of best practice? For example like special cell upscaled itself and now the government is supporting it. We have demonstrated best practice say in rehabilitation of prisoners why can’t we demonstrate in other places similarly.’
Rhea felt a sense of dissatisfaction at not being able to give direction in the job market. Vaidehi said more NGOs should be encouraged to come forward and work with the system. In government’s recruitment policy, they should fill up the posts. The PO’s role now is just clerical, it should be counselling, follow up of cases, suggesting to court about potential cases. These suggestions are about enhancing what is already there, which is also an important strategy. Vaidehi also strongly felt that preventive work should be done and conflict handled especially for small offences. The jail experience is a negative influence on the person. The journey of community to police, to court, to jail, is long and tiring. Today everyone is tired of running to courts. She continued saying that rehabilitation is only an NGO concern and the poor are most affected. Why can’t the Government do more and why is the Government sector not responding to this?, she asks in anguish.

The senior academician Anahita felt that, ‘We should impact at the Policy level, like the case of a Child helpline. We have to work at State and Central level. We need to develop some collaborative work, training, research, to get a foot in the door, once they know you, once a relationship has been built they will come to you, they will bring their issues. We need to listen to them. We are telling them not hearing from them.’ The need to and how to upscale work at State and Central level was a resonating question. This process was an ongoing part of the work being done largely by the FAPs but also by the Centre, whether it is research studies, or participating in planning meetings that the State government calls for on issues related to probation or homelessness, or conducting vertical interaction refresher courses for Indian Police Service officers.

Sasha said that, ‘one has to work beyond institutions and go into the communities. When we talk about sociology or understanding society Criminology has become a lens for me to understand society. As a researcher or academician I see relevance in using this lens as to how society functions around me, what is acceptable, what is unacceptable behaviour, how the law can limit, it has helped me understand.’ Thus indicating the subject has been like a new perspective to seeing the world around.

There are a few common points that emerge from this discussion on strengthening the discipline and the sector. At both domains it has been shared that documentation needs to be
done, either of work being done or through empirical researches showing impact. The other aspect was of increasing visibility, which can be done by using the documentation and research to further explain and influence interest among various stakeholders. This influence would be in different forms, of attracting students to study the subject and practitioners to work in the sector; it would also make in-roads into the CJS and show society the value of this subject and field of practice. To impact at a larger policy level was also something that emerged, the need to scale up work and engage with the State and at a National level and finally along with all this to have an in-depth discussion and dialogue to get clarity on the current identity, nature and positioning of social work and social work in criminology and justice. This is how this sector currently appears to be.

**Table 6.5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Court</th>
<th>Prison</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Commission</th>
<th>Rehabilitation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This showed itself in spurs, needs to be consolidated.</td>
<td>This has been unstable.</td>
<td>Historical work was here and it grew.</td>
<td>Historical work was here. It needs to be revived, even the PO’s role.</td>
<td>Needs further exploration</td>
<td>Needs to be consolidated. Future thrust is here.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5 states how work initially started in prisons and institutions; work needs to be consolidated in police and rehabilitation; and work needs to be further explored in courts and commissions. Another way is to have an issue based focus thus identifying a new issue, highlighting it and then handing it over, for example children of prisoners is now internalised in the juvenile justice system.

The initial phase of a sector evolving is usually because it starts by filling in a gap in a need or in the way an existing service is. This is an introductory, neutral positioning but weak in the sense of identity and acceptance by the system because it is almost like an apologetic presence. Whereas a profession has to actually imprint its worth and value, by a formal presence with a certain acceptance and identity. It is like saying once presence and need is not dependent on the system but has an independent value. This field of practice has to reach that position. The way things are at present it seems that in prison, work is at the last stage in terms of demonstrating the role of the prison worker, in court it seems to be at an initial ad hoc level, in police it is at some middle level, in institutions it is in the gaps so it is already a part of the system, though consolidation is required and in the community innovation and exploration is required.