

Developments in Forensic Psychology: A Content Analysis

Nitin Nishad^{1*}, Meenu Hariharan^{2*}

ABSTRACT

Forensic psychology features a long history in developing country like India and other countries too. In the three decades it's being recognized as an applied field of psychology for the detection of crime, intervention and rehabilitation of crime victims. Besides in the past three decades, technological advancements have changed the mindset of the criminal, requiring sophistication and advancement within the technology development for the detection of the crime. The areas of investigations are enlarged from lie detection to tracing bio psychosocial aspects of criminal behavior of suspects and accused involved within the offence. The current study focuses on analyzing different research papers, articles based on the developments in the field of forensic psychology.

Keywords: *Forensic psychology, Victims, Offences*

Forensic Psychology, is a subfield of psychology, involves the application of psychological knowledge and methods to both civil and criminal legal questions. [Ward, Jane (2013)]. Further, this branch of psychology supports enforcement agencies in several ways. e.g., evaluation, rehabilitation etc., explicitly for the needs of informing a legal decision. Forensic psychological assessment is emerging as the most reliable investigation option for undetected crimes and criminal identification. Recent technological advancements in the detection of deception popularizing among the people associated with enforcement agencies. In advance we follow to the legal footprints of Forensic Psychology in India, it's essential to know the justice system and which part of the puzzle the judiciary fit into forensic psychology. When a crime has been committed, the person of contact is the police who eventually collects evidence from the scene of crime and delivers it to the Forensic Science Laboratories (FSLs). Once the laboratories complete their physical examination and scientific analysis it is sent to the court of law to help in deducing who, when, where, what, why and how. [Hyderabadwalla, 2018]

Role of forensic psychologist

The police collect the evidence and transports it to the Forensic Laboratory of the Jurisdiction where experts scientifically examine it. The role of a forensic psychologist would preferably begin when they are called upon by the police, lawyers or summoned by the judges to interview and assess the offenders. The formal interview and assessment are

¹II M.Sc Forensic Psychology, SFSRM, Rashtriya Raksha University, India

²II M.Sc Forensic Science, SFSRM, Rashtriya Raksha University, India

*Responding Author

Received: February 22, 2021; Revision Received: March 27, 2021; Accepted: March 31, 2021

Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis

then used as corroborative evidence within the court of law to oblige to execute justice effectively. A Forensic Psychologist also can continue to work towards rehabilitation of a criminal or a victim under court mandate during a medico-legal ward.

According to the Indian Evidence Act 1872, Section 45 states: " Opinions of experts. — When the Court has to form an opinion upon some extent of foreign law or of science or art, or on identity of handwriting 35[or finger impressions], the opinions upon that time of persons specially skilled in such foreign law, science or art, 36 [or in questions on identity of handwriting] 35 [or finger impressions] are relevant facts. Such persons are called experts." As per the above clause, a forensic psychologist assists the judiciary to execute the law in a just manner by presenting facts. These facts are based on the reports of in-depth interviews and thorough assessments of the suspects in question. It must be taken under consideration that a forensic psychologist acts as an expert who imparts his knowledge and expertise to the courtroom, which acts as a corroborative evidence. At no point, the expert has the ultimate verdict in dispensing justice, which shall only be executed by the judge. Those that plead guilty may claim to have committed the criminal offense under the influence of a substance abuse or to be unaware that they were manipulated to be engaged in the crime. This enables the defense to plead for lesser punishment or to procrastinate the ultimate verdict of the judge. In such cases, experts step in and assimilate a radical forensic interview and assessment to gauge how true the individual's statement is. This helps the judge execute a verdict, which is fair and in light of the security of the society and the individual. [Hyderabadwalla,2018].

Law Enforcement Consultations may take the shape of serving with criminal profiling, developing hiring procedures and methods, governing the psychological fitness of returning officers, or just lending expertise on certain criminal behaviors. [Louw, Dap (2015)] As mentioned above, criminal profiling may be a very appealing aspect of psychology to prospective forensic psychologists despite the very fact that it is not very widely used within the sector. There are several methods and approaches related to criminal profiling, but there's still tons of skepticism about the efficiency and accuracy of criminal profiling generally. [Louw, Dap, 2015].

Trial Consultants are psychologists who work with legal professionals, like attorneys, to assist just in case preparation. This includes jury selection, development of case strategy, and witness preparation. [Wrightsmann, & Fulero, 2005] Forensic psychologists working as trial consultants rely heavily on research so as to best advise the individuals they're working with. As trial consultants are often hired by one specific side during a trial, these psychologists are faced with many ethical issues. It's the responsibility of the psychologist to stay neutral when consulting—in other words, the consultant must not choose a side to support and consequentially omit or create information that might be beneficial to at least one side or the other. Before accepting a case to figure on, it's important that the forensic psychologist weigh the responsibilities of consulting the case with the moral guidelines put in situ for the sector of forensic psychology. [Louw, Dap, 2015].

Expert Testimony about issues concerning brain research is furthermore an area in which scientific clinicians play an important role.[Fulero, Solomon M, 2009] Unlike fact witnesses, who are limited to testifying about what they know or have observed, expert witnesses have the power to precise further knowledge of a situation or topic because, as their name suggests, they're presumed to be "experts" of a certain topic and possess specialized knowledge about it. [Blau, Theodore, 2001] Expert witnesses in forensic psychology are

Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis

called upon to testify on matters of psychological state (clinical expertise) or other areas of experience like social, experimental, cognitive, or developmental. The role of being a witness isn't primary and it's usually performed in conjunction with another role like that of a researcher, academic, evaluator, or psychotherapist. Within the past, expert witnesses primarily served the court instead of the litigants. However, nowadays that rarely happens and most of the recruitment for witness is completed by trial attorneys. But no matter who calls for the expert, it's the judge who determines whether or not the witness is going to be accepted. [Louw, Dap, 2015].

Contribution of India in the field of forensic psychology

A contribution made by Prof. C.R. Mukundan, Professor at NIMHANS in 2003, a professor of psychology who had a keen interest in neuroscience discovered the technique of Brain Electrical Oscillation Signature (BEOS). This system taps into the experiential memory stored of a suspect and not conceptual memory. It assists in deducing whether a suspect was a witness to the crime or a part of the crime supporting scientific facts. As generations' progress and new advances are made in this world, criminals became stealthier. Due to the advancement in technology, the routine of the typical criminal has become cleverer with his interaction at the crime scene. Currently, lesser and lesser physical evidence is found at the crime scene.

As courts now need to rely more on oral or documentary evidence, information collected with the assistance of BEOS from suspects has become an important tool in crime investigation. This technique, however, has been targeted with tons of criticism. As BEOS is predicated on understanding brain wave readings of EEG's observe tons of 'noise' during the procedure, which may deduce the accuracy of the tool. Further, opponents of the tactic believe that "experiential" and conceptual knowledge do not fall under the categories of memory. this system though accepted more openly within the courtroom does require tons more of peer reviewing and defend its infallible nature [Hyderabadwalla,2018].

METHODOLOGY

To gain a more qualitative understanding of Developments in the field of Forensic Psychology, an internet-based information search was conducted which provides full papers, articles etc. The tool used was content analysis. Data as well as information were collected from different sources such as journals, websites, etc. Each study was analyzed and discussed qualitatively.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

First of all, the selected Research Papers and Articles were arranged in a tabular form according to the year of Publishing (2007-2019), then the extracted major information was discussed qualitatively.

Table 1: Selected research articles are given in which the details of the author(s), year of publishing with the topic is given.

SN	Author(S)	Year of Publishing	Topic
1	Gisli H Gudjonsson and Susan Young	2007	The role and scope of forensic clinical psychology in secure unit provisions: A proposed service model for psychological therapies
2.	David DeMatteo, Geoffrey Marczyk,	2009	Educational and Training Models in Forensic Psychology

Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis

SN	Author(S)	Year of Publishing	Topic
	Daniel A Krauss and Jeffrey Burl		
3.	Kirk Heilbrun and Stephanie Brooks	2010	Forensic Psychology and Forensic Science: A Proposed Agenda for the next Decade
4.	Dr. S.L Vaya	2015	Forensic Psychology in India
5.	Emily Greene- Colozzi and Elizabeth L Jeglic	2018	Advances in Forensic Psychology
6.	Gino A Cabrera, Argel B Masanda, Mary Grace L Daliva and Alyana Fae R. Balbuena	2019	Exploring the Practices, Trends and future directions of Forensic Psychology in the Philippines: A Preliminary study
7.	Anthony L Pillay, W Neil Gowensmith and Jahasan M Banks S	2019	Towards the development of a forensic psychology training curriculum in South Africa

Gudjonsson and Young (2007) has conducted a study on the topic “The role and scope of forensic clinical psychology in secure unit provisions: A proposed service model for psychological therapies”. This article was made to review the role and scope of forensic clinical psychology in forensic services and to develop a service model for psychological treatments in secure unit settings. The findings of this article analyze of a one-year audit of the Southwark Forensic Psychology Service between April 2004 and March 2005, completed in order to determine the clinical activities provided by the services. It was found that 67 % of working time was spent by engaging in patient – related work (i.e., in direct or indirect patient contact), and an additional 11% in supervision of this work. The remainder time was spent in consultations and meetings and in activities relating to recruitment, research, teaching etc. the audit findings were used to produce a strength-based service model, which is based on current philosophy regarding the most effective way to integrate psychology into a multi-disciplinary team. DeMatteo, Marczyk, et.al., (2009), has conducted a study on the topic “Educational and Training Models in Forensic Psychology”. The present article summarizes the existing educational and training models in forensic psychology programs and then identifies a core set of competencies that should be considered for inclusion in doctoral – level forensic psychology training curricula to adequately, prepare students for the increasing various roles assumed by the forensic psychologists. Specialization in particular areas of forensic psychology seems to be achieved in postdoctoral level after the candidates has obtained a core set of competencies.

Heilbrun and Brooks (2010), has conducted a study titled “Forensic Psychology and Forensic Science: A proposed agenda for the next decade. This article first reviews progress of the discipline in the past 3 decades and the extent to which identified priorities have met, then it analyzes a recent multidisciplinary report addressing the current state of forensic science in the United States (National Research Council, 2009), finally it identifies important priorities for the field of forensic psychology for the next decade. In the current study, from several analyzes over the past 3 decades, the field seems to have a substantial progress in research, education and practice. It’s found that there is a strong potential for increasing the extent to which research is foundational, and practice is evidence based.

Dr. S.L. Vaya (2015), has conducted a study on the topic “Forensic Psychology in India”. The present study attempted to highlight the landmarks, developments, its utility in the areas of crime investigation, in prevention and detection of crime in India. Thus, the study also

Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis

focuses on the research areas of the present work with the need for publication and awareness for the growth and improvisation of the field.

Colozzi and Jeglic (2018), has conducted a study on the topic “Advances in Forensic Psychology research”. This study reviews research advances in two of the areas of Forensic Psychology, (1) Forensic assessment and (2) Therapeutic intervention. Forensic clinician performing evaluation and administrating treatment to individuals involved criminal justice system, advancements in diagnostic tools, testing scales and treatment programs. This study also discusses the empirical advances in the context of violence risk assessment, sex offender risk assessment, personality assessment and treatment of offenders. The study is concluded by expressing the advancements in the psycho-legal arena.

Cabrera, Masanda, et.al., (2019), has conducted a study on the topic “Exploring the Practices, Trends and future directions of Forensic Psychology in the Philippines: A Preliminary study”. In the current it sees that Forensic Psychology is an emerging field in Philippines. The study investigated the common qualifications and credentials of working professionals in forensic psychology in the country. This is a descriptive study. A total of 35 professionals from diverse background engaged in forensic psychological practice participated in the present study. Majority (42.43%) were holding Master’s degree with 1 to 5 years (51.43%). Twelve of them were registered social workers, five registered counselors, nine were psychologists and another nine were psychometrician. The current study reveals the psychological testing skills, clinical strengths, and ethical uprightness are the necessary skills for forensic psychological practice.

The word forensic is derived from the Latin word forensic, which means “form”, which refers to the place where trials were done in Roman times. There is no perfect definition for forensic psychology but there are many which exists. Thus, the analyzes reveals that the scope of forensic psychology is gradually increasing as the time goes. Also, its advancement in education system, professional life etc. are gradually increasing. As we see into the future with the help of psycho-legal methods in the judicial system is getting high as well as with the help of forensic psychological assessments many crimes have been solved and also it will be helpful in future to solve many cases.

CONCLUSION

From past few years in India, educational institutions have started to provide forensic psychology as a specialization in their post graduate studies as well as training in forensic science laboratories etc. Recent advances in this field may include the use of neuropsychology and neuroscience to understand the criminal minds. Thus, forensic psychology is a developing field with more scope for research to find different methods and assessment techniques that can help the law enforcement agencies to catch hold of the offender as well as to ensure public safety.

REFERENCES

- Heilbrun. Kirk, Brooks. Stephine (2010), “*Forensic Psychology and Forensic Science: A Proposed Agenda for the Next Decade*” Psychology, Public Policy, and Law 2010, Vol.16, No.3,219-253, DIP: 1076-897/10/\$12.00, DOI: 10.1037/a0019138.
- DeMatteo. David, Marczyk. Geoffrey, Krauss.A. Daniel and Burl Jeffrey (2009), “*Educational and Training Models in Forensic Psychology*” training and education in professional psychology,2009, Vol.3, No.3, 184-191. DIP: 1931-3918/09/\$12.00, DOP: 10.1037/a0014582

Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis

- Gudjonsson, G.H., Young, S. (2007). "The role and scope of forensic clinical psychology in secure unit provisions: A proposed service model for psychological therapies". *The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry & Psychology*, 18:4, 534-556. DOI: 10.1080/14789940701592649
- Gino A Cabrera, Argel B Masanda, Mary Grace L Daliva and Alyana Fae R. Balbuena (2019). "Exploring the Practices, Trends and future directions of Forensic Psychology in the Philippines: A Preliminary study". *Asia Pacific Journal of Social and Behavioral Science*. Vol (16)
- Emily Greene-Colozzi and Elizabeth L Jeglic (2018). "Advances in Forensic Psychology". Vaya.S.L (2015) "Forensic Psychology in India". *International Journal on Police Science*.
- Ward, Jane (September 2013). "What is Forensic Psychology". American Psychological Association.
- Wrightsmann, L. & Fulero, S.M. (2005), *Forensic Psychology* (2nd ed.), Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth
- David, S. and Kleiner, B.H. (2001), "New developments in forensic psychology", *Managerial Law*, Vol. 43 No. 1/2, pp. 44-49.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/03090550110770309>

Acknowledgement

The author appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Nishad N. & Hariharan M. (2021). Developments in forensic psychology: a content analysis. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 9(1), 1860-1865. DIP:18.01.196/20210901, DOI:10.25215/0901.196