Research Paper Social Science

A Study on Policy Statement in Field Work and its Relevance in Social Work Education

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ABSTRACT

Policy making is a cornerstone of educational planning; these policies serve as guidelines and reflectthe common interests of all parties involved in practicum. The main aim of the study is to identify the facts and realities of various schools of social work with regard to the implementation of polices of practicum in postgraduate social work education in Karnataka.The study was conducted considering responses of 24 HOD's and 606 students of social work department in post-graduation. The study was descriptive in nature with purposive sampling.The finding indicates that majority of departments don't have policy statements, in case of having, the students are not satisfied with the policy statements. In some departments they have statements but students are not aware of it, in some cases students say that there is a statement but in reality departments don't have statements.

KEYWORDS Social Work, Field Work, Policy and Professional Development.

Introduction:
The experience of each individual learner is therefore decisively shaped by the wider policy environment. However, there is often an underdeveloped understanding of how education policy is formed, what drives it and how it impacts on schools and colleges.In some cases policy advocates argue from their findings toward a particular conclusion, which is offered as a recommendation. In other cases, where a very strong commitment to a particular course of action predates the research, whatever analysis was conducted may have been designed, consciously or unconsciously, to support the case to be argued (Gordon et al. 1997: 5).Blakemore (2003: 10), for example, presents a definition of policies as '. . . aims or goals, or statements of what ought to happen'. This distinction between objectives and 'statements of what ought to happen' echoes a similar distinction identified by Harman (1984) between policies as statements of intent, and those that represent plans or programmes of work. Hence, Harman argues policy is: . . . the implicit or explicit specification of courses of purposive action being followed, or to be followed in dealing with a recognized problem or matter of concern, and directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. Policy can also be thought of as a position or stance developed in response to a problem or issue of conflict, and directed towards a particular objective. (Harman 1984: 13)

For Harman, therefore, it is important to recognize that policy is systematic rather than random. It is goal-oriented and it is complex – it is the co-ordination of several courses of action, and not one discrete activity. However, in both Blakemore's and Harman's argument the emphasis is on policy as a product – as an outcome

Policies for schools are created at the local, state and federal levels. Educational policies are rules that are intended to help schools teach students efficiently, fairly and safely. These rules determine how students are taught, what they are taught, and how schools manage students and school personnel. Educational policies can also help keep students in colleges to perform and show their excellence in academics.As students of social work undertake learning within the reality of agency life, a vehicle is established whereby use of theory and conceptual frameworks acquired through class room is applied, skills are developed and refined and attitudes and values are examined so policy frame in practicum is one which can direct students to implement theory in agency or place where they are placed.

Objective:
To discuss the policies of practicum in social work education

Methodology
Research Design
The main aim of the study is to identify the facts and realities of various schools of social work with regard to the implementation of practicum policies in postgraduate social work education in Karnataka. It also tries to describe how it affects students in the professional development.Thisstudy isdescriptive in nature.

Universe of the Study
The universe of the study constitute of head of the departmentsand students of schools of social work in Karnataka.

Sampling:
Social work research by and large, calls for non-probability sampling (Das, 2008); convenience sampling method was adopted to select 24 HOD's and 606 students as a sample for the study.

Data analysis and interpretation
Factor Analysis using Varimax rotation has been used in order to identify most influencing policy factorsof practicum. The study identified six factors comprising twenty one items. The present study would be beneficial for educational institutes in designing policies and programmes for effective implementation of practicum.

Results and Discussions:
Heads of the departments are academic leaders in their disciplines. They promote the interest and reputation of the department within the university and externally. The samples of HODs who are considered for the study consists of 66.7% of HODs are from department having specialization in social work and 33.3% of

Table No.1

HODs are from department having generic course in social work. Though majority of social workers are women the administrative enclave in many social work agencies and educational institutions has been disproportionately male.For this study 606students are considered as respondents, out of this 355(58.6%) are from departments with specialization and 251 (41.4%) are from departments with generic type of course.

Policy Statements on Practicum in departments of Social Work

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Administration of the practicum			.814			
Selection of a practicum agency			.814			
Practicum Placements for students			.702			
Criteria for Work Site Practicum Placement					.510	
Learning agreement					.756	
Application of Code of Ethics in practicum	.790					
Practicum hours						.811
Scheduling Vacations and Absences						.651
Accommodation for differently abled students in practicum				.929		
Malpractice in practicum					.685	
Practicum seminar	.579					
Professional dress for students during practicum		.695				
Changing practicum placements				.923		
Sexual harassment in practicum		.870				
Student grievance redress in practicum	.810					
Submission of written reports of practicum		.856				
Criteria for agency participation in academic activities of the institution		.862				
Personal Safety and security for students in practicum	.904					
Supervision of practicum	.904					
Termination of practicum	.699					
Evaluation of practicum				.467		

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 7 iterations.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser- Meyer- Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	0.632
Bartlett's Test of SphericityApprox.Chi-Square	621.430
df	210
sig.	0.000

Factor analysis is a statistical data-reduction technique that aims at explaining the common variance in a number of variables with one single variable called "factor."Factor analysis is performed to group, called as factors, all 21 policy components according to the importance.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin of sampling adequacy is 0.632 which is greater than .5 and Bartlett's Test of sphericity p=0.000<.01 sig shows that factor analysis can be performed on 21 policy components, so factor analysis resulted in six factors contributing 81.35% variation factors are:

Factor 1: Primary factor consists of application of code of ethics in practicum with factor loading 0.790 the study shows that 79.1% of departments have policy statements on application of code of ethics in practicum but 48.8% of students are not satisfied with the policy.Practicum seminar with factor loading 0.599 the study indicates that54.2% of departments have it but 61% of students are not satisfied with the policy.Student grievance redress in practicum with factor loading 0.810, 58.3% of departments have policy statements on it but 43.3% of students are not satisfied with the policy.Personalsafety and security for students in practicum with factor loading 0.904, 62.5% of departments have policy statements on personal safety and security for students in practicum but 39.2% of students are not satisfied. Supervision of practicum with factor loading 0.904 the study reflects 62.5% of departments have policy statements but 39.2% of students are not satisfied with the policy.58.3% of departments have policy statements on termination of practicum but 52.9% of students are not satisfied with the policywith factor loading 0.699. All these together represent the factors which are very essential for standardization of profession.

Factor 2: Consists of professional dress for students during practicum with factor loading 0.695, 37.5% of departments have policy statements on professional dress and 61% of students are satisfied.Sexualharassment in practicum with factor loading 0.870,54.9% students said that they don't have policy statement on sexual harassment in practicum. Submissionofwritten reports of practicum with factor loading0.85695.9% of students told that they have policy in which 43.3% of students are not satisfied with it and criteria for agency participation in academic activities of the institution with factor loading 0.862 Only 25% of departments have policy statements on criteria for agency participation in academic activities of the institution and 39.2% of students are not satisfied.All these represent learning factors of practicumfor students during practicum and

Factor 3: Consists of administration of the practicum with factor loading 0.814but 70.7% of students are not satisfied with the policy. Selection of a practicum agency with factor loading 0.814 but 60% of students is not satisfied with the policy.Andpracticum placements for students with factor loading0.702 but 67.1% of students are not satisfied with the policy.All theserepresent role of departments of social work in field work.

Factor 4: Consists of accommodation for differently abled students in practicum with factor loading 0.929, majority of departments (62.6%) don't have policy on accommodation for differently abled students in practicum.Changing practicum placements with factor loading 0.923 but 66.7% of departments don't have policy statements on changing practicum placementsand evaluation of practicum with factor loading

0.467 but 95.9% of departments don't have policy statements on evaluation of practicum. All thesetogether represent consideration of students'performance in practicum.

Factor 5: Consists of criteria for work site practicum placement with factor loading 0.510the study shows that 41.6% have in informal way and 38.1% of students are not satisfied with the policy.Learning agreement with factor loading 0.756 but only 29.1% of departments have policy statements and malpractice in practicum with factor loading 0.685 but 31.8% of students are not satisfied with the policy.All thesetogether represents role of faculty and agency instructors in professional development.

Factor 6: Consists of practicum hour with factor loading 0.811 but 80.1% of students are not satisfied with the policy and scheduling vacation and absences with factor loading 0.65183.8% of students told that they have among them and majority of them are satisfied. All these together represent duration of practicum.

This indicates that there are relationships between the factors with difference in importance.The field education component is the primary venue in which social work students are socialized to be the professionals (CSWE, 2008). Training and formalized education in social work became imminently necessary (Leighniger, 2000; McCrea1911).The profession code of ethics serves as a statement of its values, as a guide for professional conduct and as a form of protection for clients but till today after having nearly 1000 colleges all over India with different associations in the states we have failed to come up with our own code of ethics even though code of ethics remains same for all.

Conclusion:

Policy making is a cornerstone of educational planning; these policies serve as guidelines and reflect the common interests of all parties involved in field work. They are subject to modification as needed, but the guiding principle in their modification must be the "best educational interests of the student". The finding indicates that majority of departments don't have policy statements, in case of having, the students are not satisfied with the policy statements. In some departments they have statements but students are not aware of it, in some cases students say that there is a statement but in reality departments don't have statements. The problem is that in most the departments, the implementation of administrative matters are not transparent and systematic; so students are not able to learn about the administrative part of learning in social work profession.

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