A medico-judicial framework for rehabilitation of forensic psychiatric patients in Zimbabwe

Virgininia Dube
Ingutsheni central hospital, Zimbabwe

Purpose: The purpose of the study was to develop a medico-judicial framework for rehabilitation of forensic psychiatric patients in Zimbabwe.

Design/methodology: The study used the grounded theory approach utilizing a mixed sequential dominant status design. Purposive sampling of key stakeholders was the primary method and theoretical sampling became necessary as the study evolved. Pierre Bourdieu's conceptual canon of field, habitus and capital was utilised as a theoretical point of departure by the research study.

Findings and results: Findings and results showed dislocation and dissonance between and within the habitus of social fields of health, the judiciary and the prison systems with an ensuing hysteretic effect that negatively affected the outcome of forensic psychiatric rehabilitation in special institutions in Zimbabwe. Forensic psychiatric patients were caught up in a double bind situation of aligning to both of the contradictory functions of the medical and the prison systems. The result of this hysteretic scenario seemed to breed some kind of rehabilitative schizophrenia. It would seem like forensic psychiatric practice has all along been and is still drinking forensic psychiatric rehabilitation water from a cracked cistern of prison system supremacy which does not slacken the thirst of comprehensive rehabilitation.

Discussion: The developed medico-judicial framework is projected to transform the libido dominandi of the present into a widened scope of therapeutic jurisprudence. The medico-judicial framework is forwarding the forensic psychiatric practitioner to a new address since it has changed its residence from the special institution to the forensic hospital. It is inviting the person involved with forensic psychiatric rehabilitation to begin again, inciting him or her to be open to the possibilities of mapping a path through the tangled growth of current realities into an increased width and depth of comprehensive forensic psychiatric practice that follows an empowering legislative prescript.

virgydube@gmail.com