

Psychological Assessment Of Investigating Officers In Criminal Investigation

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Abstract- Forensic Psychological Assessment (FPA) is an important application of psychology, which is used as assistance in criminal investigation to find facts related to crime. FPA is also conducted to provide insight into and predict criminal behaviour with an aim of preventing future criminality. Investigating Officer (IO) plays a prodigious role in crime investigation as they confer the facts and evidence of the case to the Forensic Expert for necessary evaluation and analysis. In criminal proceedings, the Police Report given by IO is a strong evidence of the incidence. But in many cases, reports provided by the IO are defective and false which reflects their intention to favour the accused or influence of corruption. Due to this, victims are being deprived of getting justice. The present article deals with the role of Investigating Officer in crime investigation to help legal system in fair decision and different obstacles as they face during investigation which may affect victims in criminal proceedings. In regard to this, Psychological Assessment of IO is needed to be done which would be helpful for them to understand their duties and role in criminal justice system.

Keywords: Forensic Psychological Assessment, Investigating Officer, criminal investigation, Forensic Expert.

INTRODUCTION

The Investigating Officer is a corporeal witness because he investigates different types of cases, goes to the crime spot to find evidence, records the statement of the culprits, victims, witnesses, makes the case diary, collects the documents related to the case during investigation and after gathering the relevant evidence he submits them to the Forensic Science Laboratories for their analysis and evaluation. Therefore, the role of Investigating Officer is very important in criminal investigation. When the IO submits the exhibits in Forensic Science Laboratory for its examination, he also provides all the related documents for briefing the case to the Forensic Expert.

In Forensic Psychology Division, the live human subjects who are involved in a particular crime either as suspects, victims or eye witnesses

are studied and examined with the help of scientific tools and technology to find their role in crime and their motive behind committing that crime. The Forensic Psychology Expert assesses the subjects to understand their personality traits and behaviour through psychological assessment and finds whether the subjects are deceptive or truthful in regard to their statements with the help of Lie-Detection or Polygraph technique. The Forensic Psychologist discusses the case with the IO before conducting the psychological examination of subject in order to understand the facts related to that particular case. The IO presents the briefing of incidence and the role of subjects in crime, provides copy of FIR, other relevant documents, statements of all the persons brought for examination and need to conduct their examination. The role of IO can be understood as the substantial witness who relates

the crime with the criminal. The Forensic Psychologist usually assess the IO during discussion which reflects their intention (biased or unbiased) with respect to the proceedings. And it is sometimes required to counsel the IO to understand their duty because they sometimes try to influence the experts to formulate the opinions according to their desire.

THE ROLE OF INVESTIGATION OFFICER IN CRIMINAL PROCEEDING

The IO plays very important role in criminal proceeding as Officer in charge of an investigation. IO has the insight into the incidence as he visits the crime spot, collects relevant evidence from the spot, records statements of the persons involved in the crime, and prepares the report. Therefore, IO must have moral obligation for fair investigation to fight against crime and to serve the country with integrity. When an accused or suspect is arrested in a crime, the criminal investigating officer interrogates or cross-examines him/her to disclose more facts about the specific case. He also interrogates witnesses and other persons who possess the knowledge about the crime scene. The IO has to present his case findings or report before the Court as a skilled witness. This is why it is said that tremendously substantial duty lies upon the Investigating Officer in selecting a method of investigation and submitted impartial report about the commission of crime and discovered materials evidence through investigation.

PROBLEMS FACED BY IO DURING INVESTIGATION

In criminal proceedings, it is the duty of IO to provide appropriate and unbiased investigation report, but they usually face many problems which can be discussed as follows:

- **Different Kinds of Pressure**

Most of the IO faces countless pressures not to give appropriate investigation report in a criminal proceeding such as political pressure, pressures of influential people, threat of opposite party. Sometimes informant and accused offer them bribe for giving false report, or they may have load of work etc. But there are also those IOs who do not let any type of pressure to hinder their duties.

- **Lack of proper training facilities for the investigation in different Investigating Officer**

Most of IOs are not given proper training to investigate the crime which may hinder their proceedings resulting in failure to collect relevant evidence, record statements of the persons involved in a particular crime, presentation of case facts to the experts for further examination and evaluation and finally in court where they fail to present appropriate report.

- **Inadequate promotional opportunities for the Investigating Officers**

Sometimes the IOs get frustrated due to lack of support from their Senior

Officers regarding promotional opportunities which may affect their work to be done in appropriate manner with enthusiasm or zeal.

- **Overburdened investigation duty**

Many a times, the IOs are loaded with different work which let them deprived to focus on their important work which may affect their role in thorough investigation in a particular case.

- **Time limit for the investigation period**

Sometimes there is time limit for investigation either by senior authorities or court which results in failure to get into the conclusive results in the proceedings.

- **Inadequate cooperation of persons related to the case**

There is important role of all individuals involved in a particular crime who describes the facts to the IO during interrogation. Sometimes, culprits' tries to manipulate the incidence, victims get threatened not to explain the facts, or unnecessary involvement of eye witnesses to astray the IO about the crime scene. This inadequate cooperation by the suspects, victims and eye witnesses leads to inappropriate investigation.

- **Presentation of relevant facts and evidence in the Forensic Science Laboratories**

In most of the cases, IO does not provide adequate and important information, relevant evidence, documents about the case to the Forensic

Experts which results in inconclusive opinions and reports.

NEED FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF INVESTIGATING OFFICER

The Investigating Officer is a material witness in the criminal proceeding as he investigates the case or matter, records the statement of the suspects, witnesses and eye witnesses, he visits the spot immediate after the incidence for the objective findings, prepares the case diary, collects the relevant documents during investigation and after gathering the relevant evidence submits them to the Forensic Experts for scientific examination with desire for the conclusive and fruitful findings.

When IO requests the Forensic Expert for scientific examination and evaluation of the evidence, he describes the facts related to the case for which he needs the examination. Many a times, it is observed that IOs is influenced or biased as their requirement for scientific examination of evidence varies from the documents submitted. They also try to influence the Forensic Experts to give reports which is favourable to their desire. Police and criminals have a tendency to influence Police Report to fabricate those in their favour to cover up their misdeeds. Many a times, the perpetrators guilt could not be proved due to false Police Report. Most of the reports given by the Investigating Officer are defective. This reflects negative impact of their image in front of the Experts and the whole justice system.

It is therefore important to assess the Investigating Officers psychologically to understand their motive behind the inappropriate investigation in a particular case or their inability to present the case factual to the Forensic Experts and to the court or their intention to astray the justice system. The psychological assessment of Investigating Officers may also be helpful to understand whether they are proceeding the case under pressure of anyone. The main role of Investigating Agencies is to prevent occurrence of crime, to apprehend the criminals, to get justice for the victims, to provide safety and security to the public. This can only be achieved when they do their duty with honesty and moral obligation. The goal of Psychological Assessment of Investigating Officer is to obtain maximum understanding of the crime from all possible angles, so that justice can be done with innocent and the real criminal is punished. If psychological assessment or counselling of Investigating Officers would be conducted by Forensic Psychologists, this would provide fruitful results in understanding important role and duties in criminal proceeding by the Investigating Officers.

CONCLUSION

The main aim in a criminal investigation is to discover evidence for apprehending the criminals. It is important for a fruitful investigation that the Investigating Officers should understand the vital components of a particular crime which they are investigating. They should know what relevant evidence to look for which will support the investigation. In fact,

testimonials of the suspects, victims and witnesses, First Information Report (FIR), seizure lists of documents and necessary reports should be written in legible form to get understood by Experts and Court. Erroneous citations of title and sections of offence in the reports prepared by Investigating Officers may create confusion. A defective and inappropriate investigation leads to breakdown of justice system. It is worth citing that investigation is the basic bedrock upon which criminal trial is founded. It is important to get faith of public by providing them relevant facts and results in a particular case. This can be achieved when the personnel's in Investigating Agencies should understand their duties, responsibilities towards the criminal justice system despite of their powers. Therefore, it is suggested that when a particular case or matter is brought up to the Forensic Science Laboratories by the Investigating Officers for scientific investigation, first and foremost step is the assessment of IOs which should be conducted to encourage them to work hard with honesty, impartiality and moral obligation.

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