Abstract

Criminal justice social work has become an important discipline in the United States, Scotland, Canada and other industrialized countries across the globe (Chong & Francis, 2017). However, it seems to be non-existent in Ghana’s education, both at the tertiary level and professional training for criminal justice practitioners. In this era of mass incarceration and the need to improve prison conditions to encourage effective reformation and rehabilitation, it has become important for social work students and criminal justice professionals to be equipped with social work values and skills, needed to work in the criminal justice system. In most developed countries, social workers constitute an integral part of the criminal justice system, working as aftercare agents, mental health professionals and counselling inmates and other prison staff. In Ghana, social workers involvement in the criminal justice system is limited to juvenile proceedings. Nevertheless, social workers’ involvement in the adult prisons is nonexciting; with most of the country’s adult prisons operating without the services of aftercare agents, mental health officers and counsellors. Ghana’s quest to transform her prisons to correctional facilities and ensure proper welfare of inmates has make the services of social workers become not only important, but a requirement for effective rehabilitation, reformation, reintegration and welfare of inmates and correctional staff. This paper seeks to employ a narrative literature review to highlight the need for the introduction of criminal justice social work in social work and criminal justice
professional education and training. We argue that, education imparts knowledge and influences good practice. Therefore, an introduction of criminal justice social work in social work education and criminal justice practice training will improve the level of professionalism and efficiency in the criminal justice system of Ghana.