



Reintegration of Individuals with Recurring Criminal Behavior: An Investigation into Ineffectiveness of Institutional Support at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Jails in Pakistan

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Abstract: The current study was designed to explore the reintegration process of individuals with recurring criminal behavior through institutional support in Central Jails of Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. The study adopted qualitative approach with a sample size of 30 interviewees from the target population in analogy with Creswell sampling technique. Data was collected through In-depth interviews (IDIs) under the purposive sampling technique, followed by thematic analysis. The primary objective of the study was to examine the current state of institutional support in the form of rehabilitation services available to recidivists in selected lock-ups. The study reveals that the sampled prisons didn't offer enough rehabilitation programs to help the inmates reintegrate into society upon their release. Though the prisons had facilities of religious education, vocational training and counselling for jobs-gaining in the case of post-release, but being insufficient these couldn't prove helpful in blocking the way of recidivism. The study suggests that the government should provide effective support in the form of maximum programs to help the prisoners become normal and useful citizens through engaging the services of sociologists as permanent employees at jails. By this way, they would be able to go out of the vicious circle of criminality forever and stand as productive members of society in different spheres of life. Apart from it, the concerned families and communities need to have friendly and positive attitude with member individuals committing crimes time and again.

Keywords: Recidivists, institutional support through rehabilitative services and reintegration

1. Introduction

In Pakistan, the issue of reintegration of individuals with recurrent criminal behaviour is attention-deserving in the context of their re-entry into normal life. The institutional support in terms of rehabilitation services, and correctional services at jails are meant to bring about positive changes in behavioural domain of the inmates through different programmes, but the complex interplay of socio-economic, institutional and cultural factors is lookingly a serious threat to the effectiveness of such programmes which are focused on the offenders' reintegration. Regardless of various initiatives aimed at rehabilitating the inmates, the persistent return of criminal behavior following incarceration underscores significant weaknesses in the existing institutional support. In fact, the rehabilitative services help the inmates detach from criminality by engaging them in income generation activities and resultant respectable standing in the community. It is worth-underscoring that rehabilitative services, as mentioned above, stand under the cover of institutional support. There are so many definitions of institutional support but the most suitable is that, it is a clique of different programs, services and policies executed by the

government and non-government organizations to support the post-released criminals in their journey back to reintegration in social, economic, and psychological spheres. The mechanisms evolved under the spirit of support are meant to lower the post-release hurdles to the ex-convicts, containing joblessness, familial disruption, and restricted opportunity of availing educational and health-related facilities beside condemnation by the local community which are tantamount to sabotage their effective capacity of reintegration in society.

This research seeks to unpack the complexities in the process of reintegration of individuals having habitual criminal tendencies, with a particular glance on the role of institutional support through rehabilitation services existent within the jails of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The general observation of such situation detrimental to the effectiveness of these programs hints at multiple challenges like systemic deficiencies, socio-cultural dynamics and other restraints hindering the successful reintegration of recidivists, which ultimately results in shooting up of recidivism rate in the region.

This investigation-based study is basically tuned to surface the institutional in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa jails in terms of sufficiency or insufficiency. It will prove an important endeavor in identifying the areas of improvement besides providing a benchmark for the development of more effective rehabilitation frameworks. Sociologically speaking, any activity related to human beings is associated with the positive or negative role of societal structure which is meant by the respective social norms, values, customary ways and other social properties. If these societal ingredients are supportive to the reintegration process of individuals with recurrent criminal behavior, that would be more helpful in successful implications of correctional services. The current study is further expected to contribute in formulation of policy recommendations and resultant effective delivery of services of rehabilitation programs in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa jails. Besides, this study will be helpful in addressing the identified gaps and in proposing the evidence-substantiated strategies for improvement. The foregoing will prove with a landmark appearance in the form of countdown of recidivist occurrences over time in the area.

2. Literature Cited

Researchers are in constant struggle through their research work to understand the effectiveness of the role of the prison-based rehabilitation programs in minimizing the inmates' discomforts/risks. Some studies found that small range programs are worthy to reduce the future re-offending while White et al. (2012) found little or no effect in this regard. Andrews (2021) has referred to offenders' rehabilitation assessment in terms of recidivism risk, their criminogenic needs and responsiveness in view of variety of reasons behind recommitment of crime, which can address biopsychosocial status and other related problems. De Soet et al. (2023) have fingered at ineffective programs as a dynamic of failure to address the individual needs properly, whereas Axelsson, Eriksson & Grip (2023) have observed the role of correctional institutions more important in tackling the matter of rehabilitation of individuals. Herviv & Hasisi (2019) looked forward to the role of institutional support through the effective rehabilitation as a major source to put blockage to crime occurrence. In future, while (Ziolinski et al. (2023); Khan, Shah & Kanwel (2023) apprehended the incomplete programs as a source of escalated recidivism risk. However, follow-up programs can stand useful in lowering the ambit of recidivism (White et al., 2012). Risk identification tools are decisive in unearthing the criminogenic needs besides imparting guidance in the sphere of rehabilitation programs (Farrokh, 2021; Prins and Reich, 2021). Interventions envisioned with rehabilitation activity can play important role in reducing frequent happening of offence (Salmen, 2022; Duwe & Henry-Niekie, 2021). Whereas, Zielinski et al. (2022) have seen comprehensive treatment and support as less likely supportive in re-offence. Applegarin, Lewis & Riet (2023) have predicted risk assessment tools helpful in recidivism mitigation and rehabilitation guidance. Some criminologists have pointed to some culturally-embedded negative attitudes of the local people, prompting the recidivist behaviour.

3. Research Methodology

This study was conducted by adopting a constructivist research paradigm and qualitative research approach. Bryman (2012) proceeded with 560 qualitative research studies in his academic career which had 31 as sample size. A renowned statistician, Roscoe (1975), stressed on 30 as a minimum sample size in qualitative study. In analogy to that, information was collected from 30 recidivists in the selected jails (Central Jails of Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Primary data was collected through In-depth interviews under the shadow of purposive sampling technique. The data contributors were approached for face-to-face interview with the help of interview guide as a tool of data collection. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis after having gone through the required processual stages. To maintain confidentiality of the study participants, their pseudo names

were used throughout the data projection.

4. Results and Discussions

The process of re-entry faces multiple hurdles to the individuals with repetitive criminal actions, moving from the prison environment to the complex cycle of social life. It is a general perception that the successful reintegration is conditioned to the effective availability of institutional support.

The institutional role in reintegration of incarcerated individuals begins from its latent status to the provision of essential resource guidance and encouragement to the ex-convicts. However, the effectiveness and accessibility of institutional support confront divergent issues in different environments across the world. The outcomes derived from the current study are discussed as follows:

4.1 Correctional/Rehabilitative Services

It is an established fact that rehabilitation has a significant role in recidivism mitigation and effective reintegration of recidivists but in spite of its significance, a considerable deficit was seen in the comprehensive rehabilitation programs. There are various reasons behind the non-existence of proper rehabilitation services for the betterment of ex-convicts which comprised overcrowding of inmates in jails, insufficient financial resources, and the solitary focus on punitive action rather than rehabilitative one. These shortcomings in the reformation scheme are subject to hindering the potentials of positive behavioral change on the one hand, and contributing to the perpetual cycle of criminality among incarcerated individuals after their release on the other.

When we talk about the benefits of the rehabilitation programs, it is important to mention that they encompass a chain of multiple interventions pointing to the underlying causes of criminal behavior, inspiring the human resource and life betterment-related skills, and promoting a positive mindset for constructive activities instead of criminal ones in society. Furthermore, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and relieving of substance abuse through treatment are also the contents of such interventions in lowering the criminal tendency of the recidivists. Unfortunately, sampled prisons didn't have the mentioned rehabilitative facilities under the umbrella of institutional support.

As for as the correctional system is concerned, it emphasizes on prioritized implementation of rehabilitation services, fulfilling the divergent demands and needs of ex-convicts besides ensuring a neutral access to such programs regardless of sentence period, previous criminal profile or demographic characteristics. It is noteworthy that the Prison Department's roster was empty to provide such benefits to the inmates as well.

Moreover, a collaborative programme with its constituent agents/organs like community-based organizations, governmental agencies and stakeholders from various disciplines is considered to deliver comprehensive rehabilitation services apart from allocation of reasonable funding and resources to strengthen the implementation strategy and consistent evaluation mechanism of these programs, but all these were not available in sampled jails.

The above mentioned results have been framed on the basis of narrations derived from the interviews taken from study participants which are observable in the below lines:

A participant of the study, Asghar, stated that:

Secular education for them is not available. However, religious education is imparted by the local Imams. His statement was supported by other participants, Amin and Anwar, who complained of non-availability of worldly education and even technical education. They added that appearance in examinations as private candidates was allowed to them.

Noshad, Majid, Shaheer, Jawad and Iftikhar (participants) further added that:

No mechanisms are available for ensuring rehabilitation programs due to no or less interest of the Prison Department which is evident in the form of absence of informal education and vocational training programs in the prisons. Shaheer also declined the existence of education facility in the jail with exception of permission of participation in examinations. However, one participant named as Jawad admitted the existence of tailoring and electrical fitting only in the jails. Shahid acceded to the question that facility of religious education and recitation of the Holy Quran along with translation and memorization existed in the prisons but the duration of just one hour for these activity was insufficient. Shaheer and Noshad added that the community attitude was non-cooperative with them after their first time release from jails, even they were not

considered human beings. The communal structure didn't accept them as normal members. They complained of such inhuman behaviour of surroundings to their close family members, but owing to bad luck they also had a frigid attitude in this regard. Majority of the interviewees declined the existence of skills development opportunity in the jails. The other interviewees, whose names aren't mentioned in the above-mentioned participants, supported the given narrations.

The narrations of the study participants in the forgoing lines reflect the absence of basic needs like education, technical education, carpentry, chair canning and other trainings within the brackets of multiples skills of human resource development at jails, which are deemed imperative for behaviour correction of individuals indulged in recurrent criminal actions. The mentioned skills are proportional to promoting their economic wellbeing through initiation of micro level business or entrepreneurship after release. Prison Department is envisioned to provide such institutionalized services to inmates for their peaceful and crime-free life after release from prison but inmates didn't agree to the existence of these facilities. This is good that religious education and Quranic studies existed but alongside formal education, sufficient vocational training and counseling support within the prison were also important to exist. The study conducted by White (2002) is in line with the results of current study as the former emphasizes upon the significance of educational opportunities in correctional facilities with an argument that they have positive effects on the inmates after their release. The current study also advances with an argument that inmates who participate in educational programs in prison are more likely to secure stable employment and avoid engaging themselves in criminal activities in life ahead.

Further, the study by Hunter et al. (2016) goes as consonant as it focuses on problems faced by inmates in re-entering society after release. They emphasized on the need of specialized rehabilitation programs to set aside the risk factors for criminal behavior.

Same is the case of another research undertaken by Duwe, & Henry-Nickie (2021) which signifies the existence of multiple skills development for the betterment of ex-convicts in terms of job opportunities and curtailment of recurrent criminality. They further linked the effective improvement of life of the released inmates to receiving the multi-dimension vocational trainings.

In a nutshell, the non-availability of mentioned facilities like trainings on human resource development skills, school education and wide-ranging services under the theme of institutional support is reflected in the above mentioned studies as well.

5. Conclusions

It is summed up that insufficient and low standard facilities as well as less access to educational institutes and capacity-building opportunities disturbed the inmates' rehabilitation and recorection. Moreover, the absence of post-release support and supervision mechanisms left the released individuals awry, increasing the chances of re-offending.

The consequences of recidivism encompassed the offenders' families in terms of emotional and financial strains apart from laying down the foundation of a perpetual cycle of intergenerational criminality therein. Conversely, the family members didn't opt to have a positive behaviour with recurrent criminals. In addition to it, their relevant communities also suffered by earning a bad name to them as a whole. The attitude of community towards the recidivists remained passive and non-cooperative to bring them back into main stream society as normal members. The criminal justice system didn't come up to the set expectations regarding the recurrent criminal actions control on the part of criminals. However, the facility of religious education only existed in the prisons.

5.1 Recommendations

This study speaks for a comprehensive plan centered on the core issues like all-inclusive prison reforms, infrastructure improvement, existence of education-related facility and human resource development trainings on different programs, so as the ex-convicts could have an opportunity to rehabilitate themselves when they move from jail life to society. It is a standing responsibility of various stakeholders and policymakers to evolve cogent and worth-implementing policies compatible with the local moral fabric and social structure in addition to learning economic empowerment methods, psychological wellbeing boosting and removal of systemic deficiencies within the institution. Such strategies must take into consideration concrete measures having a start-up first to delve the root causes of recurrent criminal behavior by the offenders such as critical economic condition, joblessness, no education, unstable mental state, indulgence in intoxicating substance and disrupted family condition. To smash

down the vicious cycle of causes, it stands imperative to develop some targeted interventions that spotlight these factors with a firm conviction to reduce frequent occurrences of crimes.

It is an undeniable fact that programs focused on rehabilitation during jail life bears a positive role in mitigating the magnitude of recidivism and the concerned entities need to give a serious attention to it. Instead of inflicting punitive actions only, vocational skills to ex-convicts in prisons are necessary to be given to reintegrate them successfully in society. Socio-psychotherapy, aggression control and lifestyle development through multiple skills training are imperative for better personality growth. Besides, the community is under moral obligation to have polite, cooperative and normal behaviour with individuals indulged in a series of crimes at different times.

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