



Exploring the Socioeconomic Issues Faced by Young Offenders on Probation in Peshawar

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Abstract:

Young offenders on probation face numerous socioeconomic challenges that can significantly impact their lives. These concerns are particularly prominent in Peshawar, Pakistan, which requires comprehensive investigation to understand and effectively resolve them. This study aimed to identify the socioeconomic issues faced by young offenders on probation and explore their impact on the rehabilitation process of young offenders. The research questions were: What are the primary socioeconomic issues faced by young offenders on probation in Peshawar? How are these socioeconomic issues affecting the rehabilitation process? This study used a qualitative research method, focusing on gathering insights through interviews with 20 young probationers, from the District Probation Office in Peshawar. Respondents were selected using the purposive sampling technique. The data was analyzed by thematic analysis, and ethical measures were taken to maintain the respondent's anonymity. This research was conducted on a small selected sample of male young offenders in Peshawar, so it cannot be generalized to all young offenders in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The study found that young offenders on probation encounter socioeconomic challenges that hinder their rehabilitation and reintegration. The presence of stigma, feelings of isolation, and strained family relationships inhibit their ability to develop a positive identity and receive the necessary support. Community acceptance plays a vital role in ensuring that individuals on probation can reintegrate into society. The financial challenges associated with probation can affect job stability, handling of debts, and overall quality of life. Therefore, specific initiatives are necessary to improve probation services and ensure positive reintegration outcomes.

Keywords: Young offenders, Probation, Socioeconomic issues, Rehabilitation, Peshawar.



1. Introduction:

Young offenders on probation face numerous socioeconomic challenges that can significantly impact their lives. These concerns are particularly prominent in Peshawar, Pakistan, which requires comprehensive investigation to understand and effectively resolve them. The socioeconomic issues affecting young offenders under probation in Peshawar include influence from peers, family challenges, education, social image, and job opportunities. These social issues may even worsen the economic challenges of these individuals including; low chances of getting a job, unemployment, and restricted access to other resources. Knowledge of the underlying causes of the mentioned socioeconomic problems is necessary to create relevant prevention and treatment measures for young prisoners' reintegration into society.

To analyze the socioeconomic circumstances affecting young offenders on probation in Peshawar it is essential to discuss how the process of transformation of the juvenile probation services into a more victimological-oriented. Such change also elevates the impact of the victim-offender relationship in addressing social and economic problems among youthful offenders. Furthermore, findings from O'Meara et al. (2020) have revealed the importance of relational ways of working with female offenders; hence the gender-sensitive factors that could impact young offenders on probation.

Analyzing the impact of imprisonment penalties on young unemployed Black and Hispanic male offenders as post by (Spohn & Holleran, 2000), it becomes easier to assess the economic costs of a system on the disadvantaged groups in the probation system. Furthermore, the article about hope and change by Umamaheswar, (2012) in which both the concepts of optimism and social psychology have been discussed in the context of the problem of crime and juvenile delinquency presents several recommendations for intervention with young offenders.

In the systematic review, Talbot et al. (2015) indicated the importance of focusing on the basic psychological disorders that could lead to economic challenges in juvenile offenders. Attention is paid to the effectiveness of work skills programs for this group of clients in the course of the review. Moreover, Goldhill (2019) explored the qualitative consideration of the gendered violence management of probation agencies, and it opens different viewpoints on the management of young female offenders' vulnerabilities in the justice system settings.

Hence, Eryalçin & Duyan (2020) stress the importance of perceived social support in enhancing adversity and the youths' resilience, including juvenile delinquents and young offenders under probation services in combating socioeconomic challenges mention the importance of social networks. Furthermore, the findings by McAra and McVie (2010) on adolescent crime and justice, show that social issues and criminal activities are integrated. This has necessitated legislation promulgation of holistic approaches to addressing delinquency among youths that target the fundamental causes of the problem.

In the context of the provision of power and knowledge within the structures of probation, Robinson (2001) looks at the credibility and appropriateness of interventions that are targeted at young offenders.



To mitigate this research limitation, it is proposed that this study will review various literature and reviews that present different socio-economic issues faced by young offenders under probation in Peshawar from different views of different sources. Families of such caliber, thus play an important role in generating data for the development of evidence-based intervention and support.

2. Literature Review:

There are significant socioeconomic risk factors that young offenders under probation in Peshawar face which critically impact their reformation and future integration into the society. The reintegration into society and the probability of reoffending is something that requires special attention. Reef et al. (2023) and Orlando et al. (2021) reveal that empathy levels significantly influence the likelihood of reoffending. Youth justice conferencing has been established to be useful in preventing recidivism, especially for Indigenous youths who are more likely to become involved with juvenile courts (Stewart et al., 2008).

Knowledge of adolescent delinquency is crucial because it reveals factors contributing to the offending behavior among young people (Kiriakidis, 2007). The reported psychopathological conditions seen in young terrorist offenders increase the need for psychological treatment and are associated with radical ideological beliefs (Duits et al., 2022). Also, on the aspect of emotional behavior, one has to understand that for effective management of an offender's characteristics, treatment plans have to be based on the psychological aspects that should be considered when working with young offenders (Clarbour et al., 2009).

It establishes that the personality characteristics of police officers do matter concerning the youth, and more so, the police officers' empathy and positive attitudes create fewer punishing measures and enhanced relationships between police and the youth (Parker et al., 2004). The post-traumatic cognitive and emotional experiences include the coping modes, self-efficacy, and affective response of young offenders about trauma-related intrusive thoughts with stress on psychological interventions (McBride & Ireland, 2016).

About referral orders in the English youth justice system, it should be noted that such restorative programs as referral orders mean the punishment of a young offender and enable him or her to grasp the suffering of a victim (Newbury, 2011). It is vital therefore to conduct structured risk assessments to identify and understand the strengths and threats of recidivism to fix the right interventions (Ortega-Campos et al., 2020).

Risk and protective factors are therefore seen as useful predictors of violent offending amongst youths and thus the need for assessment tools within Juvenile Justice Systems (Hemphill et al., 2016). As writing, reading, speaking, and understanding are linked with this type of offending behavior, one can understand that communication disorders should not be excluded, as Hopkins et al. (2017) mentioned. Those factors also include the subjects' socioeconomic aspects such as their income levels, or their



marital status, which also assists in the understanding of the offending behaviors and, consequently, the possible methods of their prevention (Widdowson et al., 2021).

Some young offenders benefit from housing, education, vocational training, and recreational activities since can cause low rates of recidivism. The nature of the young offender fathers suggests the need for programs and services that can effectively respond to this special population of clients (Ladlow & Neale, 2015). Discovering the history and risk factors related to young persons who get involved in sexual offending should be useful in the improvement of the pinned treatment approaches that should be administered to such individuals (Sandvik et al., 2017).

One basic fact marking the young offenders on probation in Peshawar is that they belong to the low socioeconomic bracket meaning that legal measures require thinking psychological, social, and economic. The principles of evidence-based practice including empathy as well as a special attitude towards these persons can be regarded to create perspective to reintegration of such people into society. The probation officers are the central figure in the management and support of young offenders and their families in the change process and the improvement of their compliance with the terms and conditions of probation (Vidal & Woolard, 2016). Such challenges coupled with other factors like mental health and reintegration into society make it necessary for rural offenders to have specialized support networks (Ward & Merlo, 2015). The evaluation of criminogenic risks/needs in probation has been identified as useful in probation as it helps in preventing the offenders from reoffending as established by Luong & Wormith (2011).

This also indicates that there can be a challenge in moving from youth to adult probation services and therefore the issue of concern that must be provided with consideration by other programs regarding young offenders (Price, 2020). A study by Bonta et al., (2011) focuses on the impact of training probation officers on the tested and proven principles of community supervision and confirmed that it helped to guarantee the adherence to correctional principles, which in turn improved youth outcomes. Juvenile waiver programs and boot camps also have other measures which according to Steiner and Giacomazzi (2007) are effective in reducing the recidivism rate.

There is therefore a need to focus on suicidal risk areas of youthful offenders and staff mental health features in shaping probation conditions that will boost on well-being of personnel (Cook & Borrill, 2013). Special emphasis needs to be placed on residential treatment programs since these are important rehabilitation support structures that play a pivotal role in enhancing low relapse rates (Chui, 1999), thus, the experiences of the stakeholders also require determination of the challenges and facilitators of young offenders with disability reentry process (Unruh et al., 2019).

Subjective social support has a very important function in the social rehabilitation and reintegration of juvenile delinquents, young offenders, and probationers. It was also established that through the use of a promotive communication system in juvenile probation, the perception and the actions of the youth are changed and this prevents the likelihood of recidivism (Nijnatten & Elk, 2013). Removal of Social



Exclusion and poverty will allow enhancement of the well-being of social inclusions hence reducing the re-offending rates as pointed out by Smith & Stewart 1997.

Parole approaches that entail assisting the offenders in not engaging in criminal activities are very important, especially to young adults; Methods that focus on the development of working relationships between the staff and the offenders are widely used in probation practice. Perhaps probation discussions might assist in juvenilizing the offenders while at the same time engaging the youths into making a change for the right decision (Nijnatten, 2011). Some of the key events and risks that are typical for adolescents must be well understood to develop an adequate youth justice framework (McAra & McVie, 2010).

To eradicate socioeconomic issues for the young offenders in Peshawar on probation, it is required to analyze the problem from psychological, social as well as criminological points of view. Strategies that promote rehabilitation and reintegration should include; best practices, support structures, and positive youth development. This is because there are prospects for the application of case management interventions in the processes of combating radicalization and other related violence among young offenders. The supervision and evaluation of the probationers or parolees in the community after their release can therefore, at times be a complicated process since clients have non-socialized regarding appropriate behaviors in the society. External factors are in contrast to strictly controlled conditions in clinical, research, and teaching laboratories (Lewis, 2024). Comparing the effectiveness of supervision programs for the offenders involved in gang-related offenses with general principles of the intensive supervision probation system will also give useful data regarding the impact of the system on recidivism (Boots et al., 2018).

It is established that self-pity alone is highly sensitive in cases of repeat offenses, and studies conducted show that there is a lot that needs to be done regarding building empathy where offenders are concerned (Orlando et al., 2021). Such extralegal variables as young Hispanic males pointed to the need for equal sentencing (Franklin et al., 2015). Consequently, Affordable Colleges for Offenders with Mental Ill Health reform, and the enhancement of work skill programs for offenders with mental ill health is very important as it relates to policy direction toward the management of probationers with special needs beginning with antisocial personality disorder (Talbot et al., 2015).

The restorative justice practices that are, Victim Offender Mediation Practices assist the Probation setting, delivering Personal Accountability coupled with an Empathy factor to modify the negative attitudes of offender. Services in this context are available from other peers in the youth offending services promote positive outcomes that build a trauma-informed offender (Thompson & Spacey, 2023).

On balance, it is essential to offer adequate psychological treatment together with restorative justice practices and peer support to the young offenders under probation in Peshawar concerning socioeconomic challenges. Awareness of the concerns related to offender management, mental



illnesses, and concerns in the correctional process will enhance the idea of great methods of reintegration and offenders' re-socialization.

3. Discussion:

3.1 Social Issues:

Most of the young offenders who are placed under probation are faced with many social and economic issues that hamper their reformation as well as their reintegration into society. Stereotyping and social exclusion limit the ability to develop normal contacts, as well as the capacity to get the kind of help required Wood (2020). Informal social support may have some problems for the young offender reentry, which means that the role of social relations in the probation context is not only beneficial but also problematic (Martinez & Abrams, 2011). In addition, there is the aspiration of how psychopathic traits as well as other social factors influence the social experiences of young offenders; this points to the fact that there should be a form of intervention that should try to solve such issues (Castellana et al., 2014).

3.1.1 Stigma and Social Isolation:

The independent probation officer found that youth offenders on probation were usually stigmatized and ostracized which negated their chances of reintegration into society. Wood (2020) mentioned that stigma results in the limitation of positive relationship formation as well as hinders one from accessing the right kind of support. Some authors also detail the intricacies of creating and maintaining informal social support that may be instrumental in the reentry process: Martinez & Abrams (2011). Castellana et al., (2014) identified psychopathy constructs as well as the social experience of young offenders recommending individualized treatment.

Respondent 01 shared, *"The constant judgment from peers and community members makes it hard to rebuild a positive identity,"* reflecting the deep impact of stigma. Respondent 02 shared, *"I felt completely cut off from my friends and family after my probation started; they didn't understand what I was going through,"* highlighting the challenges of social isolation. Respondent 03 said, *"It's hard to keep up with friendships when people view you differently,"* and Respondent 04 shared, *"I felt like I was constantly being watched, which made me withdraw even more."*

Respondent 05 said: *"The stigma made me feel like an outsider even in familiar places."* Similarly, Ashkar & Kenny (2009) have established that poor relationships and social difficulties intensify isolation. Respondent 06 also shared, *"The general perceptions from society deter one from working on the goals and plans"* showing the effects of stigma. Respondent 07 said, *"Sometimes it was difficult to sustain the positive attitude, but the negativity of the community was always present,"* Respondent 08 said, *"The loneliness was an obstacle in attempting to establish a new life and maintain a forward-looking perspective."* Respondent 09 said, *"Dealing with the stigma was emotionally draining, and it affected my mental health significantly."* Similarly, Respondent 10 said: *"The social isolation resulting from probation impacted my performance as well as self-confidence."*

3.1.2 Relationship with Family and Friends:

Family and friends are essential in fixing the young offenders and improving their quality of life. Prosocial interactions can promote the degree of autonomy or the ability to exercise control over one's life (Smith & Stewart, 1997; Vidal & Woolard, 2016). As stated by Respondent 11, the fact that *"I had nice relatives surely helped me to concentrate on my rehabilitation, these people encouraged me a lot and without them, I would have faced a lot of hardships."* On the other hand, family relations can also be a source of stress which will worsen the situation. Respondent 12 shared, *"During the probation period, it was difficult for me to exercise close relationships, especially with my family since we always fell out frequently."* those very arguments, aggravated everything.

For instance, Respondent 13 proclaimed, *"My friends were so much of a support system during my probation, that was big!"* On the other hand, Respondent 14 said, *"I had to lean on my family a lot, which sometimes led to confrontation,"* they also got both support and stress from family. Commenting on the nature of support from the social networks, Respondent 15 said, *"The support from friends was important but it was in equal measure unpredictable."*

It was reported by Respondent 16, stated, He said, *"Family support was important but one feels suffocated by the expectations."* Likewise, Respondent 17 expressed that *"though he had a social network supporting him, that source of support was not always constant."* Respondent 18 mentioned that *"even when one has full support from the family, probation pressure unwinds the relation, at least in his case it did."*

Specifically, Respondent 19 said, *"This is where family members were strength, but mainly the stress when they cannot understand the situation."* Respondent 20 also said *"it turned our families against us because we had to balance family expectation with a probation requirement."*

3.1.3 Community Acceptance and Support:

Community acceptance and support are also crucial components for any worthwhile reintegration process. As Johns et al. (2016) maintain, "such a social-ecological framework invites consideration of immediate and broader socio-cultural contexts." Trotter (2017) summarizes this lack of family support and disruption as part of the pathways to offending, thus making community-based interventions imperative.

According to Respondent 01, *"Support from the community helped me get on my feet. Without it, I may have felt a lot more abandoned."* Respondent 02 stated, *"I even felt like an outsider in my neighborhood. The lack of community support only served to make the effort of readjustment to civilian life more difficult."*

Respondent 03 shared, *"It was a "huge relief when the community accepted me."* Respondent 04 stated, *"Community acceptance played a significant role in my rehabilitation process, helping me rebuild my life."* Respondent 05 added, *"I struggled to find a sense of belonging, which affected my motivation to complete my probation."*



Respondent 06 stated, *"Support from the community helped me feel less isolated, but it was often inconsistent."* Respondent 07 mentioned, *"The lack of community support made my reintegration more difficult, impacting my overall progress."*

3.2 Economic Issues:

Various other economic issues prevail among the youth offenders on probation; which mess up their economic structure or occupation. This means that probation, in as much it affects the financial aspect of an individual, can have a bearing on the life and family needs of these individuals throughout the lifetime of Lewis (2024). Insufficient employment also affects the offender's employment status which in turn has economic effects hence the necessity to tackle the employment issue even more apart from the offending behavior (Widdowson et al., 2021). Young offenders can be seen to encounter financial difficulties at some point in their lives attributable to debts and other financial problems implying that there should be robust supporting frameworks in place to assist young offenders to have a fresh start on financial matters (Barra et al., 2022).

3.2.1 Impact of Probation on Financial Stability:

Probation imposes significant financial challenges, affecting the economic well-being of young offenders and their families. Lewis (2024) highlights the lasting effects of probation on financial stability. Sitney (2000) discusses caregiver disruption and its financial impact, underscoring the strain on families of juvenile offenders.

Respondent 01 shared, *"Probation significantly impacted my financial situation. I struggled to manage my expenses and ended up in debt."* Respondent 02 added, *"The financial strain affected my whole family, making it even harder to focus on my rehabilitation."*

Respondent 03 shared, *"I faced a lot of economic pressure because of my probation, which made it hard to manage day-to-day expenses."* Respondent 04 said, *"My family had to cover my expenses, which created additional stress for us all."*

Respondent 05 stated, *"The financial instability caused by probation made it difficult to plan for the future."* Respondent 06 added, *"Managing financial challenges while fulfilling probation requirements was overwhelming."*

3.2.2 Difficulties in Finding Stable Employment:

Securing stable employment is a major challenge for young offenders on probation. Louden & Manchak (2018) emphasize the importance of social networks and treatment adherence for employment outcomes. Respondent 07 shared, *"Finding a stable job while on probation was nearly impossible. Many employers were unwilling to give me a chance."* Respondent 08 added, *"Even with my skills, it was tough to find work because of my probation status."*



Respondent 09 stated, *"Employers were hesitant to hire me due to my probation, which limited my job opportunities."* Respondent 10 mentioned, *"My probation status made job hunting extremely challenging."*

Respondent 11 shared, *"Despite having the necessary skills, the stigma of probation affected my job search."* Respondent 12 added, *"Job opportunities were scarce, and it was difficult to find employment that accommodated my probation requirements."*

3.2.3 Debt and Economic Stress:

Debt and economic stress are prevalent issues, affecting the overall well-being of young offenders on probation. Spohr et al. (2019) highlight the relationship between financial stress and treatment outcomes. Respondent 13 stated, *"I had to deal with a lot of debt, which added to my stress and made it difficult to focus on my probation requirements."* Respondent 14 said, *"Economic stress played a big role in my substance use. I felt overwhelmed by the financial pressure."*

Respondent 15 shared, *"Managing debt while on probation was a significant source of stress."* Respondent 16 added, *"The economic pressure made it hard to stay committed to my rehabilitation goals."*

4. Findings:

The study findings present the concerns affecting the offenders on probation, which represent several aspects of their socioeconomic statuses from a social point respondents had feelings of Stigma and isolation since they were always rejected by their fellow mates and community members making it very difficult to find acceptance back into the community. Such attempts to reconstruct the positive self-image were often undermined by this sense of alienation. The factors that influenced the outcome included the availability and involvement of family support; patients who had family members actively supporting them had an easier time when trying to concentrate on recovery and reintegration. However, difficult family relationships aggravated the difficulties and this underscores the significance of positive family dynamics in probation. Self-acceptance was also noted to have an impact this was viewed in terms of support from the community in which the received support gave them motivation rather than socially isolated. On the other hand, people who underwent the emotions of rejection had more challenges in the reintegration process.

From an economic perspective, probation had various financial problems. This is truly the case and surprisingly more than one-half of the young offenders report that they experience problems in the management of their finances thereby making them indebted and stressed. The financial cost therefore not only touched the subjects who committed the offense but also affected their family leaving the whole process of rehabilitating a mess. The major issue most people faced was to achieve stability in their employment status. Significantly, many respondents reported that they struggle to find jobs because of their probationary status making their economic situation worse. The issues close to debt



and economic problems were named as the current issues that influenced the general state of the subjects and made it more challenging for them to satisfy the requirements of probation. These results highlight the importance of developing complex programs that address social labeling and financial difficulties as the factors that may influence favorable outcomes of juvenile offender's reintegration.

5. Recommendations:

From the study findings, the following recommendations should be made aimed at increasing young offenders' reintegration into society through probation. First, it is necessary to work on the changes of the negative attitudes and social isolation with the help of integrating into friendly communities and putting into practice measures, which interfere with the prejudice related to the probation. There is the need to enhance family support as discussed above, approaches, such as family counseling and education regarding superior relationships and a suitable environment to deal with juvenile delinquents. Likewise improving community support over public enmity is also helpful in providing greetings between each individual on probation and the community enhancing reintegration.

From an economic point of view, it is necessary to offer an extensive range of assistance measures in an attempt to solve the organizational and financial problems affecting young probationers. Thus, it is possible to design special financial aid and job training activities for young offenders and plan such standardized activities in a way that they can successfully reintegrate into the workforce. These can entail providing debt forgiveness or funding financial literacy sessions to lessen peoples' economic burden and enhance financial well-being. Hence, probation systems can create conditions that would be more favorable for the successful social and, in particular, economic reintegration of young offenders.

6. Conclusion:

The research found that young offenders on probation orders experience a range of social and economic problems that impact their community reform and re-entry process. It is very important that the probationers did not have positive identities, and failed to get enough help and support, including stigma, social isolation, and fractured family relationships. The problems that were raised were important in showing the significance of having a supporting community that would embrace any person with disabilities. Probation affected arrangements from an economic perspective in a way that reduced the chances of finding stable employment and dealing with debts, which increased stress and deteriorated well-being. Therefore, through focused and effective interventions, it is possible to resolve different complicated matters and enhance the efficacy of probation programs. This will assist the juvenile offenders to effectively be absolved back into society as well as their overall reformation and reformation back to society.



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