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## CHALLENGES FACED BY JUVENILES IN REHABILITATION CENTERS: A CASE STUDY OF RAWALPINDI

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**ABSTRACT.** Juvenile Delinquency is one of the serious problems where almost all the societies of the world are facing including Pakistan, by which most of the children ruin their lives. The primary objective of this study was to examine the difficulties and obstacles encountered by juveniles within rehabilitation centers located in Rawalpindi. This research also focused on the perception of the juveniles struggle before entering the juvenile detention system, their experiences within a rehabilitation centers, and the juveniles' future plans. Qualitative method using a case study was employed. Researcher conducted this study with a sample of (n=10) respondents currently enrolled in rehab centers by using purposive sampling techniques. All the respondents were males. Participants ages ranges from 10 to 16. The selection of participants was based on their possession of relevant knowledge, their consent, willingness, and ability to provide essential information for the study. To collect the required data, a semi-structured interview approach was utilized. All interviews were recorded using mobile phones in two distinct phases. In First Phase, four interviews were conducted and themes were drawn from them and rest six interviews were conducted in second Phase. The recorded interviews were transcribed, and the resulting transcripts were thoroughly reviewed multiple times. Initial notes were taken, and fundamental recurring themes were identified during this process. From the findings, it is concluded that there are number of socio-cultural factors such as broken families, carelessness of parents, domestic violence, Parental neglect, poverty and family background are the root causes of children in the rehabilitation centers and children are facing problems of

admission process, inadequate training materials, inadequate supply of basic necessities like shampoo and soap, overcrowded rooms, mental and emotional challenges, bullying by senior inmates, not getting chance to connect to their parents, counseling and guidance problems.

**Key words: Juveniles, Delinquency , Rehabilitation**

### **Introduction**

Juveniles, also known as minors or youths, are “individuals who are under an age fixed by law (such as 18 years) at which he or she would be charged as an adult for a criminal act” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). According to the Juvenile Justice System Act of Pakistan approved in 2018, a juvenile offender is defined as “an individual under the age of eighteen who may be dealt with for an offence in a manner which is different from an adult” (Sindh Judicial Academy, 2018). Juvenile delinquency pertains to the actions of young individuals that contravene societal and familial standards and laws, encompassing behaviors that range from minor to severe transgressions (Talpur et al., 2012). This is a cause of major concern for all countries around the globe (Bobbio et al., 2020). These offenders, often not being considered mature and independent under the law, are vulnerable members of society, having laws specifically introduced for their protection.

Rehabilitation centers are designed to provide support and guidance to individuals who have faced challenges in their lives and need help getting back on track. For juveniles who have found themselves in trouble with the law, these centers are often seen as a way to get a fresh start and a chance to turn their lives around. However, despite the best intentions of these facilities, juveniles in rehabilitation centers often face a unique set of challenges that can make their road to recovery even more difficult.

In Pakistan, a range of governmental and non-governmental organizations, such as Roshni Helpline, Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, and the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child, along with Youthful Offenders Industrial Schools located in Karachi, Hyderabad, Sukkur, and Larkana, as well as Borstal Institutions and Juvenile Jails situated in Faisalabad and Bahawalpur, are actively involved in ensuring the protection of rights for young offenders. These organizations have successfully provided legal assistance to numerous young offenders in conflict with the law, addressing their concerns and resolving issues they would have otherwise encountered (Roshni Research and Development Welfare Organization, 2023; Child Protection & Welfare Bureau n.d. ; SPARC, n.d.).

Research has shown that many juvenile offenders lack a staunch support system, including family and friends, which can further compound the challenges they face during rehabilitation (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2021). This absence leads to feelings of isolation and loneliness among the juveniles placed in these rehabilitation programs, which lowers the effectiveness of these centers, along with hindering the juvenile’s progress towards recovery (Zhao & Shi, 2020). From isolation and lack of family support to the stigma of being a "delinquent," these challenges can be both mental and emotional, and they can have a significant impact on the outcome of the programs.

### **Population and Study Setting**

The study's participant sample size was selected using purposive sampling from the Child Protection Bureau and Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. The researcher specifically chose participants who possessed relevant knowledge, provided their consent, and demonstrated the willingness and ability to contribute vital information for the study. The participant group consisted of 10 male children, aged between 10 to 16 years, who had been brought to these centers by the Police from various locations in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

### **Procedure for Data Collection:**

To address the research inquiries outlined in this study, the following steps were executed. The researchers composed an informed consent statement and a formal request letter to the Office Superintendent (J) of the Inspector General Prisons Punjab Lahore, as well as the Superintendent of the central jail and the District Officer of the Child Protection Bureau. These letters sought authorization for the collection of necessary data for the study. The researchers duly completed a research request form encompassing the specified terms and conditions. This form was then subjected to scrutiny and assessment by the agency's research committee before being considered for approval. Subsequently, an official endorsement letter addressed to the center heads was dispatched to both the Superintendent of the central jail and the District Officer of the Child Protection Bureau. This endorsement granted the researchers permission to access the required data for the study. To ensure participant confidentiality, identifying names were not used; instead, numerical codes were assigned to safeguard their anonymity.

In this section, the researcher highlighted core themes and subordinated themes derived from the interviews such as compounding factors, Relationship (with family, Peers), Socialization, Family background, Social cultural Factors (poverty, violence against mother, Parental neglect, abusive father), Debilitating Factors (drugs, sexual abuse) problems with adjustment problems on work habit, problems on needs, Problems on Petty Fights, lesson learned and the perception about the future.

### **Ethical Consideration**

Ethical Consideration was taken from the concern departments and the respondents. Confidential information was intentionally omitted from the interview transcripts. Moreover, the disclosed information was solely utilized for the purpose of this research.

Finally, the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were diligently preserved throughout the study. Their identities were not disclosed, and no details were included that could link any individual as the information source. To ensure this, a coding system was assigned to each participant.

### **Data Analysis**

The collected interview data were organized, analyzed, and interpreted using the following steps as the interpretive process. A semi-structured interview approach was employed to delve into the experiences of juveniles in rehabilitation programs. The recorded interviews were transcribed, and these transcripts underwent multiple readings. Preliminary notes were made, and emerging themes were identified. Subsequently, these initial themes were listed, and the researcher endeavored to uncover connections between each theme. A focus group discussion took place once all individual

interviews were concluded, and the data was reviewed for any recurring themes. During the focus group, I addressed questions that had surfaced from the initial one-on-one interviews. The analysis process encompassed initial coding, in vivo coding, and selective coding techniques. In this section, the researcher highlighted core themes and subordinated themes derived from the interviews such as compounding factors, Relationship (with family, Peers), Socialization, Family background, Social cultural Factors (poverty, violence against mother, Parental neglect, abusive father), Debilitating Factors (drugs, sexual abuse) problems with adjustment problems on work habit, problems on needs, Problems on Petty Fights, lesson learned and the perception about the future.

### **Analysis and Discussion**

All of the respondents share details about their offenses. caused to brought them here Most of the respondents shared that they came here because they are habitual of taking drugs and running away from home again and again.

**Respondents A**, 13 years boy told that “I am here because I wasn’t going to school and was smoking weed” (*Mein is wasdah nal idr han q k mein shool nai janda sa, khar aly zabrdasti krday sa jadu, mein nas jara ci and is tarha menu dosta yaran nal beh k chars pinda di maat lg gai*).

Respondents D, stated that

He was there because he run away from his home which is located in Karachi because his father was beating his mother and keep her hungry he fought with him with knife and then run away and reached in Muree where he worked in someone house and once he visited shop for purchasing a charger then the shopkeeper abused him sexually and give him Money and then asked him to do the same things with him. He repeated this with him whenever he needed money then he become habitual. He said he was caught red handed by the police when he tried to repeat this act with his peer.

Respondents E shared that

He used to did fight with his siblings and beating them badly and also use to break things of the house. Once he throw his eldest brother from the roof during fighting and he got serious injuries therefore his parents sent him to Bureau.

Respondents H reported that he is the habitual thief, and used to steel things from other such as Bicyycle, mobile phones, motorbikes and money. Once he was stealing things from someone house, they called police and police gave him warning but he did the same thing again and his parents sent him to child protection bureau.

Respondents I said that he came here for so many reason such as robbery, use of drugs, selling's drugs, keeping illegal gun and domestic violence.

### **Relationship with Family members**

Frequent subjects of discussion included broken families, encompassing scenarios like divorced parents, foster care, and the absence of knowledge or a relationship with one biological parent. Along with broken families, participants seem to be affected by the lack of money and lack of attention their

parents gave to them. And shared, “My mom never had money. My dad was too lazy to give me money. (Respondents B).

Respondents G and F also shared that they did not have healthy relationship with their father because their father gave divorced to their mother and was habitual of domestic violence

Family violence was another experience mentioned by half of the respondents . Family violence was discussed as direct violent behavior from a respondents to a family member or a family member to the respondent “Family violence,” was also an offense that caused some respondents in rehab centers

### **Peer influences**

A common statement made by the participants was that they had friends which who considered to be the “wrong crowd.” and tells how they felt pressured by the friends to the things cause to brought them here. As Respondents A shared that how he become addicted by drugs and did an accidents. His friends always encouraged him to drive fast and he did so. Some of the respondents indicated they sought out friends because of lack of relationships at home. For instance, Respondent B indicated that:

My parents did not pay attention on me. Whenever I want to sit with them and shared my feelings with them they used to say “ *Jao Ja kr kaam karu apnah or humy tang nai karu or bi Bht kam hy and also gave preference to my cousin over me k wo tum sy acha parhta hein, First atah hein humehsa or tum humeha thore number lay k aty hun* ”

Having a family history of drug use, selling drugs, or being around peers who abused drugs was discussed by several participants. Respondents F stated, my father uses to take drugs and did not stay at home and I also started to take drugs in the company of my peers. Because I feel loneliness, anxiety, depression for not getting enough attention from my family as others children in the family received from their Parents.

### **Challenges during the adjustment period**

This study unveiled that the adjustment period experienced by participants within the center was notably challenging. During this time, they reported feelings of boredom and emotional instability. Boredom emerged as a prominent circumstance; for instance, one participant expressed, "I don't have anyone to talk to. I am alone, especially since my family is distant from me. I frequently contemplate when I will leave this center. Sometimes, I lose hope of exiting here." Another participant (B) shared, "I was bored here at the center. During lunchtime, I have no tasks, which leads me to reminisce about my sister." Furthermore, participant G conveyed, "Initially, it's boring and hard to be separated from family. I miss my grandmother and sister dearly." Another participant added, "At first, it was challenging. No access to cellphones, and being far from my parents made it tough. The two weeks of adjustment were really difficult, especially missing my parents and life outside." These reflections indicate that participants' idleness could evolve into boredom, triggering thoughts about family members who are close to them.

Engaging in repetitive tasks necessitates physical, emotional, and intellectual endurance on the part of juveniles, as they navigate through daily work activities. Across the spectrum of services offered to them, routine tasks encompassing physical, emotional, and intellectual components form an integral facet of the rehabilitation process. Most of the respondents shared that they did not give attention on their work task assigned by School instructor, sports instructor and supervisor because they continuously recalling their families. Respondents C shared that

Madam muji apne ghar walu ki bohat yad ati ha mere sy parhny nhi hota or jab yea muji kilany ground mein lay k jaty hy m 2 dafa wahn sy bagny ki koshih ki inho ny pakar liya ap muji mare ghar walo sy mila da mera yahn dil ni lgta muji bht yad ati ha ghar walun ki.

Respondents G stated that his parents were died in an accidents and he did not forget that memories and there fore did not concentrate on his work assigned by the instructors.

Respondent E indicated that he used to missed his school and run away from the school many times he did not found of formal education. Therefore he did not focused on school task but good in Quranic Education provided by centers.

Participants in the study shared their encounters with challenges related to fulfilling their needs. These encompassed requirements such as food, overcrowded living spaces, access to shampoo, and opportunities for recreation. Respondents E, G, H, and I concurred that the menus provided were monotonous and inadequate in meeting the nutritional needs of a healthy individual. Respondents A and F indicated that they get shampoo once in a week for taking a shower . Respondents D stated that he couldn't avail the opportunities of playing outside because he tried to escaped from there many times, now the supervisor avoided to bring him in a ground. Despite above mentioned problems, most of the respondents shared that they get enough food to eat and center provide opportunity to learn cricket, quranic and school education and also provides recreational services and they are happy over there.

Most of the respondents shared that due to over crowded room, some times boys were flighted with each other on simple random things and then the care taker responsibly handle the situation. Participant J shared that Sometimes we fight with each other. Each one of us does not understand each other madam due to mood swings, emotional and mental health and misunderstandings . We disobey their pieces of advices given by our caretaker and then he punished us. As a result, fighting emerged as a prevalent behavior among juveniles, leading to strained relationships with their peers. Nevertheless, juveniles highlighted their transition away from engaging in fights and their choice to pursue a more peaceful existence.

## **Conclusion**

The research findings suggest that there are numerous factors contributing to the presence of participants within these rehabilitation centers. Some of the participants were there due to Police and some were sent by their parents due to their anti social activities and behavior. Participants are facing numbers of issues such as adjustment issues, concentration on work, with their peers, not getting sufficient needs to filled. Along with they shared that centers administration help them to get rid out

their psychological problems by provided them different opportunities such as providing education, sending them ground for playing under supervision and also allow the parents to meet their children they said they will hep their parents and will not tease them again when they will go outside these centers.

The researcher's conclusions highlight that the challenges encountered by juveniles predominantly revolve around the case resolution process, influencing their personal and psychosocial well-being during rehabilitation. Furthermore, it is concluded that a universal optimal approach to addressing the issues faced by juveniles within rehabilitation centers does not exist.

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