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## **Role of Probation Services in Community Based Correction for Sustainable Crime Control and Prevention: A Study of Lahore Division**

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### **Abstract**

*Probation is an alternative to imprisonment and incarceration, which helps the offenders to reshape their personality. Probation is a correctional process which focus on the philosophy of rehabilitation and reformation and reintegration of offenders. It prevents offenders from becoming professional / habitual / hard criminals. As, offenders are regarded as corrigible human resource, community based correction play vital role to reduce recidivism and crime control. The purpose of this research was to study the community based correction for sustainable crime control in Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan. In this study qualitative approach was used. Primary data was collected through in depth interviews and focused group discussion from Probation officers and probationers / offenders of Lahore Division. Secondary data was collected from document analysis, journals, and officially published articles. Population of this study was the Probationers of Lahore Division. The sampling technique to be used for this study was non-probability Purposive sample because selected participants have direct experience with probation services and completed their probation period successfully. Semi-structured interview guide was prepared by researcher and collected data through in depth interviews from probationers of Division Lahore, who had explore their experiences, challenges and perceived effectiveness of Probation services. Data was collected until the saturation point reached. The collected data was analyzed by using content analysis. The results of study revealed that Community based correction programs and active Probationers' engagement play crucial role in crime prevention and their positive behavior modification. Offenders place on probation were less likely to involve in criminal activities. However, it was found that role of community based correction programs in probation services was partial for sustainable crime control, other factors such as*

*offenders' personal responsibility, role of law enforcement agencies, active role of Punjab parole and probation department and its representative is also important. In the light of research findings it is suggested that probation services are valuable tool in crime preventing but the current system face challenges that prevent it from fully recognizing its potential.*

**Keywords:** *Community based correction, rehabilitation, reformation, reintegration, Lahore Division.*

## **Introduction**

### **Overview of the Criminal Justice System**

Crime committing is one of the major problems not only in Pakistan but also all over the world. There is no crime free society exist on the globe. The rise in crime rates across the country has become a serious concern. Criminal behavior is usually associated with poor physical, mental, social and economic conditions of the individual. Poverty, unemployment, injustice, corruption and unawareness of special laws are the major factors that lead to commit crimes. Pakistan is a developing country; after partition its criminal justice system divided into five components of criminal justice system in Pakistan i.e. Police, Prosecution, judiciary (Sessions, High, Supreme), Prisons and Parole and Probation Services respectively. The core objective of criminal justice system is to make a way to implement and maintain law to protect the citizens, deliver justice to the masses and criminals should be punished. The primary responsibility of the police is to lodge FIR, arrest the criminals and start investigation. Under Pakistan law it is not the duty of police to decide who is criminal and who is not. Police can just arrest the criminal and present him before the court. Further, a court can decide that offender is a criminal or not. The second essential pillar of criminal justice system of Pakistan is Prosecution. In job description of prosecution is to read the challans, scrutinize the case, present the prosecution case in the court, confront the arguments of defendant, and guide the investigation officer if needed. The most important component is judiciary which starts the case proceeding and provide a chance to accused for his defense. Court aware the accused about charges included in the charge sheet; if accused is convicted he will be punished according to the intensity of crime; there will be three types of punishments, firstly, send to imprisonment, secondly, to pay fine and thirdly, probation which is alternatives to incarceration (Ghafoor, 2024).

Probation is an important and crucial component of the criminal justice system, allowing the offenders to serve their sentences in the community under supervision of a probation officer following certain conditions of probation, regular check-ins and monitoring which support for rehabilitation and reintegration rather than confined in prison (Latessa & Smith, 2011).

The current research has been focused on societal benefits of non-custodial measures (Probation) through reformation and reintegration beyond the bars of prison. Probation has long term societal impact on offenders which help to change their in a supportive

environment rather than punitive. It also ease the burden of imprisonment / jail department. Probation contribute to the safer community by reducing recidivism through providing offenders such tools which lead to productive and crime free society (Ghafoor, 2024).

### **The Role of Probation Services**

Probation is a “lesser” punishment and an alternative to incarceration. Probation is consider as form of conditional release where failure to comply with the mandated requirement can result in reinstatement of original incarceration sentence. Probation created framework for the expansion of the community based sanction through the concept of intermediate sanctions in which the liberty restrictions in the community provide for” prison without walls.” The movement and behavior’s of individual are monitored as part of punishment, and treatment or program requirements are used to create or intensify the restrictions in such a manner that the individual learn more social control (Taxman et al., 2011).

Probation aims to reshape the behavior and personality of offenders. Probation offers numerous benefits which include reduced prison overcrowding, cost-effectiveness, Community-based rehabilitation, Opportunities for restorative justice. By providing a supportive and structured environment, probation helps the offenders to become productive and fruitful members of society, promoting community safety and rehabilitation. Probation holds offenders accountable for their actions. Research highlights the effectiveness of probation in reducing recidivism and promoting rehabilitation (Petersilia, 1998).

Probation transform the offenders behavior to positive and fruitful activities by addressing the root cause of criminal behavior. To the transform offenders’ negative and criminal behavior to positive, involves a process of change, often facilitated by interventions, support, and personal growth. Certain factors are involved such as social support, family and peers relationships, personal motivation and self-efficacy, coping skills and problem-solving, education and employment opportunities. These components provide in community based correction which can help individuals to develop positive behavior, attitudes, and values. Consequently, which lead towards reduce recidivism rate in and improved community reintegration (Ward & Maruna, 2007).

Current trends in probation services are reflecting the soft image of Punjab Probation and Parole Services in rehabilitating offenders and ensuring their community safety. Firstly; there is a growing focus on reformation and rehabilitation programs, such as individual, group or family counseling, awareness seminars, education, and job training, Rescue 1122 trainings, blood donation camps, health awareness and religious therapy sessions, plantation; these programs become helpful to strengthen community based correction which help to rehabilitate the offenders in more meaningful ways. All these elements help the offenders to address underlying issues and develop skills necessary for reintegration

into society. Secondly; Community-based corrections, which include probation and parole, to become more prominent in order to reflect a shift away from institutional-based corrections, where offenders remain in the society to become part of the society. Thirdly; use of technology in probation services to monitor and supervise the offenders. Technology, such as use of Offender management System (OMIS) in the offices of Punjab Parole & Probation Services for offenders' data maintenance. OMIS helps to monitor offenders' data of every district of Punjab by Head Office, Lahore. Moreover, OMIS monitor probationers' attendance and daily activities performed by probation officers. Monthly activity planners and use of PMS App to monitor daily attendance of probation officers to make them regular and punctual. Also, video calls are made by competent authority while performing daily scheduled activities in order to compliance strict monitoring (PP&PS, 2024).

However, there are certain challenges faced by the department since its inception that hinder in the effectiveness of services. Firstly, limited and inadequate resources, secondly, corruption and lack accountability, thirdly, socio- cultural barriers from community on probation services and lastly, insufficient training and capacity building of official and officers.

### **The Need for Community-Based Corrections**

Traditional institutional corrections basically consist of imprisonment (e.g. prisons, jails) which has face a number of persistent problems; few of the most significant issues are overcrowding, recidivism, limited community engagement, inadequate physical and mental health services. Overcrowding occur when number of prisoners exceed from the available capacity of prisons, this condition leads to negative consequences. It hinder progressive and rehabilitative programs. It leads to poor living condition and increase violence. Overcrowding put immense pressure on prisons' resources and facilities i.e. food, healthcare, security personnel's, which increased cost effectiveness. Recidivism refers to the tendency of repeating of crime. It is the tendency of previously imprisoned individuals, re-arrest, re-convict and re-prisoned. High recidivism rate in prison system indicates that traditional corrections fail to effectively rehabilitate the offenders (Latessa et al., 2010).

Community Based correction Programs needs to design to supervise offenders in the community, rather than to put them in prisons, it will help to ease overcrowding and can reduce recidivism. Community Based Correction provide direct engagement with the society, offenders spend time in the community while playing positive and responsible role for the welfare of the society. Community-based corrections have multiple benefits as compared to traditional incarceration such as cost effectiveness, reduced recidivism rate, reintegration into society, personal accountability and rehabilitation, support for families and communities, reduce overcrowding, flexibility and adaptability. Community Correction has much low cost programs e.g. Probation, Parole, electronic monitoring as compare to prison, as they reduce the need for facilities, staff, and other resources. It help

to reduce crime tendency to repeat by reintegration the individuals back into the society. Individuals become responsible and accountable for their criminal acts by getting a chance to improve themselves. Community Based Corrections support the offenders families if they are the only bread earner. Moreover, offenders placed on community based correction are often get emotional and social support from family and local network instead of stigmatization. CBC help to meet the basic needs of offenders, remain involve with the community which leads to positive outcomes. Rehabilitation and reintegration are essential components of community-based corrections, as its core objective to reduce recidivism rate, to enhance public safety, promote social justice and improve the offenders' quality of life (Lab, 2005).

**Problem Statement**

The effectiveness of probation services regarding community service in Lahore Division is unexplored, especially concerning their role in sustainable crime control and prevention. Moreover, focus on rehabilitation, reintegration and reformation of offenders remain inadequate. In addition to this, effectiveness of traditional punitive approaches i.e. confinement in the jail seems limited in reducing crime rates. There is dire need for alternative approaches to control crime for smooth functioning of society and this is the probation services which play integral role to rehabilitate and reform the offenders by providing alternative to prison. To understanding how probation services operate within the community based correction framework and their impact on crime rates and recidivism is crucial for improving the criminal justice system in the region.

**Research Objectives**

1. To examine the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
2. To assess the current state of probation services in Lahore Division.
3. To evaluate the impact of probation services on offenders' rehabilitation and recidivism.
4. To recommend strategies for improving probation services for sustainable crime control and prevention.

**Significance of the Study**

This research aims to explore the role of probation services in community-based correction for sustainable crime control and prevention, with a focus on Lahore division, holds significant importance for several reasons. Examining the effectiveness of probation services in rehabilitating offenders and reducing recidivism rates. Investigating how probation services facilitate offenders' reintegration into society, promoting community safety and social cohesion. Exploring the long-term impact of probation services on crime control and prevention in Lahore division. Identifying successful strategies and challenges in implementing probation services, informing policy improvements and replication in other regions. This study will be a contribution to the existing literature on probation services regarding community-based corrections programs. Assessing the extent to which

probation services respect offenders' rights and dignity, aligning with international human rights standards. Comparing the cost-effectiveness of probation services with traditional incarceration methods, considering economic and social implications. This study contributes to the development of evidence-based practices and policies in community-based corrections, ultimately enhancing crime control and prevention strategies in Lahore division.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do probation services contribute to sustainable crime control and prevention through community- based correction programs?
2. What is the current status of probation services in Lahore Division?
3. What is the impact of probation services on offender rehabilitation and recidivism?
4. What is the importance of community based correction for crime control and prevention?

### **Methodology**

An interview guide was used by the researcher to gather information from the Probation Officers and Probationers in the four Districts (Kasur, Lahore, Sheikhupura and Nankana Sahib) of Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan. Probationers who have successfully completed their probation period was the targeted population for study. Five Probationers and one Probation Officers from each district are scheduled to participate in this study due to population concerns. In depth Interviews will be conducted with all participants.

A sample is a smaller representation of a larger whole. Instead of focusing on the entire universe; it is conservative to focus just on examples.as the study of the entire cosmos with a focus on its entirety. Because it was expensive and time-consuming to investigate the entire cosmos in the exploration domain. Therefore, only five Probationers and one Probation Officer from each district of Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan were selected as a Instead of focusing on the entire universe, the variables of time, cost, and genuine limits typically play a vital role in the friendly inspections about test. 20 (Twenty) Probationers from each district of Lahore Division were selected and given a useful examination. 20 (Twenty) Probationers and 4 (four) Probation officers from Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan, were selected as a sample. A total of 24 participants were then asked to provide the necessary information. The interview guide provided assistance in gathering the material, which was presented as a contextual research technique.

A traditional meeting between the questioner and the respondent is referred to as an interview guide. The questions formulated by the requirements of the exploration goals are referenced in the meeting guide. To collect accurate data, a particular process is required. Although the meeting guide included both planned and unstructured questions in English, participants were asked the questions in the local language on the day of the meeting.

A qualitative research methodology was employed, gathering data using a semi structured interview guide. Non-probability Purposive sampling was used in the data collection process because selected participants have direct experience with probation services and completed their probation period successfully. Content analysis was used for the study of the collected data. The study selected twenty Probationers and four Probation Officers as a sample and gathered information from the inmate population. Twenty Probationers and four Probation Officers from each District of Lahore Division were chosen by using Non-purposive sampling technique for this qualitative study. The information acquired is important for answering the test questions. This could entail conducting meetings, managing summaries, or looking at current data related to role of probation and community correction based. Ensure that moral considerations are adhered to, such as obtaining informed consent and maintaining member classification.

Since everything under evaluation depends on the information, the information assortment is the primary component of the exploratory work. The researcher herself collected the information in a week through in-person interactions and close, personal conversations. In an eye-to-eye situation, the researcher herself collected the data in November 2024. With permission from the Assistant Director Lahore Division, Lahore in Punjab, Pakistan, and the Probation Officer of each District of Lahore Division, Punjab, Pakistan; the in depth interviews of Probationers and Probation officers were conducted. Content analysis used as data analysis tool in Lahore Division and will be face-to-face interviewed.

### **Results and Discussion**

The data has been collected for this research would be analyzed by using content analysis, focusing on identifying themes, patterns, and key issues related to probation services, community-based corrections, crime prevention, and rehabilitation. The results would be presented according to following main themes:

1. Socio-economic characteristics of respondents.
2. Current state of probation services in Lahore division.
3. Impact of probation services on Recidivism, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration.

**Table 1: Socio-economic characteristics of respondents (Probationers).**

Respondents	Gender	Age	Residence	Education	Occupation	Type of offense
1	M	50	Moar Kundah Nankana Sahib	Primary	Labourer	3/4 4/3 The prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order, 1979 (Alcohol drinking)
2	M	19	Purna Nankana	Illiterate	Habitually free	3/4 4/3 The prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order, 1979 (Alcohol drinking)
3	F	38	Dhari Muhbatwala Nanakana	Primary	Housewife	462-I PPC Electricity Act
4	M	27	Syedwala Nankana	B.A	Agriculturist	13(2)A 2015 A.o
5	F	28	Shakot Nankana Sahib	Matric	Housewife	9-B CNSA
6	M	33	Teer dy Sheikhupura	Primary	Labourer	3/4 4/3 The prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order, 1979 (Alcohol drinking)
7	M	80	Ranjeetkot Sheikhupura	Middle	Agriculturist	430 PPC (Wrongfully diverting water)
8	M	40	Sheesh Muhal Sheikhupura	Illiterate	Labourer	Gambling
9	M	31	Kang Road Sheikhupura	FA	Marriage Hall Owner	462-I PPC Electricity Act
10	M	24	Jandiala Sher Khan SKP	Middle	Labourer	13-2 (a) 2015 A.O
11	M	22	Anarkali Lahore	Matric	Carpenter / woodworker	Gambling
12	M	36	Dharampura	BA	Grocery store owner	279 PPC Rash/ negligent driving
13	M	52	Gulberg Lahore	Matric	Privately Employed	462-I PPC
14	M	41	Lakshami Chowk Lahore	FA	Labourer	3/4 4/3 The prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order, 1979 (Alcohol drinking)
15	M	37	Allama Iqbal Town Lahore	Matric	Sales Man	13-2 (a) 2015 A.O
16	M	23	Bhamba Kalan Kasur	Middle	-	462-1 PPC



17	M	55	Dholan Hitar Kasur	Illiterate	Labourer	3/4 4/3 The prohibition (Enforcement of Hadd) Order, 1979 (Alcohol drinking)
18	F	39	Bazipur Kasur	Primary	House wife	462-1 PPC
19	M	27	Mustafa-Abad Kasur	Matric	Electronics Shop Owner	13-2 (a) 2015 A.O
20	M	52	Ding Shah Kasur	BA	Agriculturalist	430 PPC(Wrongfully diverting water)

### Discussion:

For this study, interviews were conducted with five probationers who had completed their probation period from each of the four districts of Lahore Division. The socio-economic characteristics of these probationers were collected. The data includes both male and female of all ages, ranging from young to old. These individuals had committed various petty offenses, including gambling, violating public order, illegal possession of weapon, violations of Section 430 PPC; water theft, consumption of alcoholic drinks, electricity theft, and other similar offenses. These offenses were committed due to their negligence, mistakes, fights, quarrels, anger, or some other reasons. Most of them are poorly educated but almost all were engaged in various occupations and professions. These were the sole breadwinners for their families. They attribute their situation to the probation system, stating that if the court had given them the actual punishment for their crimes, such as heavy fines which they couldn't afford or on the other hand confinement to jail, probably, they would have lost their jobs and businesses would have been ruined due to the absence of a guardian. Therefore, probation is a blessing in disguise for them.

### Current state of probation services in Lahore division

One of the primary objectives of this research was to understand the current state of probation services within Lahore Division. Specifically, the study aimed to explore how probation services are functioning, the extent to which people are benefiting from them, and the level of awareness about these services among the general public. Additionally, the research sought to identify the types of cases being referred to probation, the extent to which people are utilizing probation services, and the role of probation officers in educating the public about these services and facilitating their benefits. Furthermore, the study aimed to understand the expectations and hopes of individuals before being placed on probation, and their experiences after completing the probation period.

### Expectations from Probation Services

“what was your expectations from the probation services before place on probation?”

Was asked to the Probationers, twelve number of Probationers answered they had no knowledge about probation at all. Even they were not explained by their lawyers and Judicial officers while placing on probation. They told, after probation order from the concerned court; Probation officer received their case and explained in detail in their

native language about terms and conditions of probation. Eight number of Probationers answered; they were explained at the time of probation order about probation services. They affirm their consent because they have no money to pay the imposed fine.

A probationer revealed:

*“The honorable court imposed financial penalty of three thousand rupees (3000/-), you have to pay it otherwise we are going to place you on probation. I am a poor man, I was unable to pay the fine. Magistrate pass Probation Order and instructed me to follow probation officers’ order. I have nothing to do except regularly to visit probation officers’ office. I regularly used to come this office and participate in various activities. Sir (Probation Officer) is very kind to us, staff is much cooperative.”*

In addition to this, they have some little bit knowledge about probation services from their peers and media; there is such department existed who work for the welfare of offenders who involve in minor offenses.

When it comes to Probation officers side, before join to this department they don’t have extensive knowledge about it, but with the passage of time they got excellence and expertise in their field.

A probation officer explained:

*“The core reason behind remain uninformed the masses and limited awareness about probation. General public is uninformed about the purpose and function of Probation services. Many people are not even familiar with the word Probation. There is dire need to outreach and media coverage of Probation services to increase public awareness, to improve community engagement and for better outcomes of rehabilitation.”*

### **Experience of Probation Services**

The probationers revealed that they had no knowledge about probation services before being placed on probation. They shared that they either couldn't afford to pay the fine due to poverty and other option was jail. To avoid this, the judge suggested to put them on probation, and they agreed without knowing much about it. Similarly, probation officers stated that they didn't know much about the department before joining. However, after gaining experience, they shared that the probation service primarily works for the welfare of society, aiming to improve it by helping offenders to become better individuals who have committed minor offenses. By giving a chance, we prevent from becoming hardened criminals.

A Probation Officer commented:

*“It has a significant positive impact, and create a soft image that we are saving someone from becoming a hardened Criminal. We are playing our role to prevent the birth of another evil person.”*

A probationer shared that if he hadn't been placed on probation, his business would have been ruined, and their children would be suffering. He realized that probation beneficial for him, and after experiencing it, he learned to appreciate its value.

A probation officer added:

“While doing this job for a salary, they feel that it's a good thing, as I am working for human welfare and doing good deeds for the betterment of society.”

### **Impact of Probation Services on offenders' Rehabilitation and Recidivism**

Respondents informed that rehabilitation and community based correction programs, including counseling, skills training, religious therapy, plantation, Rescue 1122 trainings and educational opportunities, become crucial part of probation services. These programs are playing pivotal role to change the offenders' mindset and behavior. Probation officers emphasized the significance of rehabilitation and reformation of offenders by involving them into community service rather than simply punishing them, focus on the need for such programs that address the root causes of criminal behavior, such as substance abuse, poverty, unemployment and lack of education.

One Probation Officer shared:

*“Supervision of offenders won't work alone; they need a proper environment and guidance to change their thoughts, behaviors and actions. We can't ignore the root cause of their problems i-e drug addiction, lack of job skills, stigmatization, that led them to commit crime in the first place. We need to help them to reintegrate them back into the society.”*

### **Impact on Recidivism, Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration**

Probation services aim to reduce aggressive reaction and facilitate the offenders in their rehabilitation and reintegration into the society. The findings suggested that effective implementation of Probation services through community based correction programs can play a crucial role in crime prevention, reformation and rehabilitation and successful reintegration.

### **Reduced Recidivism Rates**

Respondents, reported that successful implementation of probation services had a positive impact to reduce recidivism rates. Many offenders who had been under probation supervision and participated in community based correction programs were less likely to involve in criminal activities as compare to those who remain in prison sentences without rehabilitation and community service support, they became hard criminals.

One probation officer stated:

*“I observed that Probationers who have completed their probation period successfully without violating conditions are less likely to return to crime because we rarely receive repeat cases these probationers. It's not a perfect solution, but it works and providing effective results.”*

A probationer expressed:

*“Probation services through community based correction help me a lot and play significant role to fit me back into the society. Now, I no longer see myself as separate, but rather consider myself as part of the community and I feel myself connected to the society.”*

### **Contribution to Rehabilitation**

A probationer expressed his views who remain on probation under section 462-1 Pakistan Penal Code for theft of electricity:

*“I learned a lot good and positive things while remaining on Probation. One most notable change in myself is I become regular and punctual. On every visiting date I was here on sharp 9:00 Am without delay. Another positive thing, I become more conscious, renounce about my past wrongdoings and vowed never to commit any crime again. I become a responsible citizen and make promise to continue being a good citizen in future.”*

Another Probationer shared his experience who was place on probation under section of Punjab Sound System Act:

*“I commit this crime because I wasn’t aware about the specific law. I learned about law while remaining on probation. I learn what is my rights on state and my duties in return.”*

### **Successful Social Reintegration**

Social reintegration of offenders is another key factor associated with Community service. Probationers who involved in community service frequently get emotional support and guidance from their family and peer group to successfully reintegrate into the society. In this way, they undergo a transformative process. Their emotional connection with family member strengthens and their peer group encourage and motivate them to start a new life. A Probationer shared:

*“While receiving probation services, I continued my job in a woodshop, and earning a handsome amount for my family. My ustaad (shop owner) continually encourage and motivate me, “saying” ‘what done is done, you made mistakes, but you have chance to start a new life. You have a second chance to improve yourself.’ Such supportive interactions boosted my morale and I used to regularly attended awareness sessions and actively participated in all welfare activities. Now, I can feel a positive change in my behavior.”*

### **Conclusion**

#### **Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

The study has been revealed socio-economic characteristics of respondents which include the aspects of their gender, age, place of residence, occupation, education, nature of offense. All aspects are in connected with each other.

Researcher has been found that respondents were selected regardless of age, which cover a wide range of ages, from younger to older. Everyone shared their views on probation services based on their age and experience. People in their 40s were more active and enthusiastic about participating in community service. The respondents were selected regardless of gender, but the majority of them were male respondents. The number of female respondents was relatively low, which is because female-related cases are relatively rare on probation. The cases that do exist are mostly related to electricity theft and Section 9-B CNSA. The respondents were selected regardless of their place of residence. The respondents' places of residence vary according to districts. Notably, most respondents from Nankana Sahib, Sheikhpura, Kasur belong to rural areas, whereas, in district like Lahore, which has an urban population, most respondents belong to urban areas.

The respondents have various occupations. Male respondents work as laborers; earn on daily wages, agriculturists, students, shopkeepers, businesses men, and privately employed. On the other hand, female respondents have only one occupation which is “housewife”. The study reveals that the respondents' educational background is not much high. Most of the respondents are illiterate or under matric, and the maximum educational level reported is graduation. Furthermore, there is a lack of awareness among people about their rights, which leads to commit crimes. The research reveals that the cases deal under probation are mostly of a petty nature, involving minor offenses and first-time offenders. These cases include electricity theft, illegal possession of weapons, and violations of the Fertilizer Act, child labor Act, as well as Section 9-B CNSA which pertains to females and juveniles only after recent amendment in the relevant law. Other similar minor cases are also handled under probation.

#### **Current State of Probation Services in Lahore Division**

The current state of probation services in Lahore Division is satisfactory. Both officers and probationers are well-aware of the probation services. Probationers shared their experiences, stating that they did not know much about probation before being placed on probation. However, after being assigned to the probation service, the probation officer explained in detail about probation terms and conditions and also explain how it work for their welfare and benefit. Moreover, the probation services in Lahore Division are putting in their best efforts in community-based programs to educate the probationers which help them to become law abiding citizens; in this way probation services pave the path for sustainable crime control. Probation Officers deliver their best to probationers, despite challenges and limited resources.

#### **Impact of Probation Services on Offenders' Rehabilitation and Recidivism**

Research findings indicate that offenders who were placed probation were less likely to engage in criminal activities and recidivism later on, and instead spent more time contributing to community service and engaging in positive activities for the betterment of society. In contrast, those who were placed in prison without adequate rehabilitation and community service support were more likely to become hardened criminals, displaying a higher propensity for repeat offenses. Moreover, while on probation and community service, individuals experienced significant positive changes within themselves, such as developing regularity and punctuality. Those unfamiliar with specific laws gained valuable knowledge and skills during their probation period. Probation played a crucial role not only in rehabilitation but also in the personal growth and development of the individual, help to develop a sense of responsibility and accountability. Apart from this, through community service and probation, individuals were able to remain connected to society and become productive citizens. Probation services facilitated their reintegration into the society, rather than isolating them. Instead of being misfits, probation helped them fit back into society.

## Recommendations

It was found that inadequate resources has been allocated to the Probation officers, sufficient funding and resources should be allocated for smooth function of the department and improve the likelihood of successful rehabilitation. Probation officers should receive continuous capacity building trainings in areas such as mental health counseling, drug addiction management, and social reintegration strategies. This would help to address the diverse needs of probationers more effectively. Efforts should be made to raise awareness about the role of probation services and its impact on crime prevention. This could involve public campaigns, workshops, and collaboration with local community organizations. Greater community involvement in the rehabilitation process will strengthen the support network for offenders and improve outcomes. A comprehensive, standardized legal framework for probation services should be established to ensure uniformity in the delivery of services across the Lahore Division. Clear policies, guidelines, and performance metrics would help to improve service delivery and accountability. In conclusion, while probation services play a key role in the sustainable control and prevention of crime in Lahore Division, addressing the identified challenges will maximize their effectiveness. By improving resource allocation, training, legal frameworks, and community involvement, probation services can contribute more effectively to sustainable crime prevention and the rehabilitation of offenders.

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