

## **Determining Rehabilitation under Probation System: Demographic Differences of Offenders in Punjab Province, Pakistan**

**Sociology**

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### ***Abstract***

*The purpose of the study was to explore the demographic differences determining rehabilitation of offenders in Punjab province, Pakistan. Probation within criminal justice system intends to reform the offenders who get punishment for their involvement in minor offences and probation is revocable release of such offenders under the supervision of a probation officer. Quantitative research method was employed to obtain the relevant data from the respondents. For this purpose simple random sampling method was utilized to select 10 districts of Punjab province out of total 36. Proportionate sampling method was applied to include all selected districts in the study and a sample of 511 probationers was finalized. The structured questionnaire was used to get responses from the respondents and raw data was coded and analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The results of the study showed that the demographic factors i.e., age and education are significant determinants of rehabilitation of probationers. With increase in age and educational level, the chances of rehabilitation increased. Thus, demographic features of offenders under probation were found significant for predicting their chances of rehabilitation. It is suggested that role of probation in criminal justice system may be enhanced by giving awareness and easy access to probation opportunity by the concerned legal officials.*

**Key words:** Probation, Demographic, Age, Education, Rehabilitation

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## **1. Introduction**

Probation in criminal justice system is a form of sentence (Schmallegger, 2009) in which an offender is released conditionally from jail (Goff, 1999). There is legal disposition that allows the convicted offender to live in the community subject to conditions of being supervised according to the court order (Minor, Wells, & Sims, 2003). The probation system maintains the human dignity of offenders without damaging their self-esteem (Kleinig & Smith, 2001). Therefore, the behavioural recovery of offenders is better option to reintegrate them into society (Aulakh, 1986). However, a probationer can be brought back to the prison if probation is revoked for committing another crime by him or her (Aulakh & Khan, 2005).

Probation system in Pakistan is governed by provisions under the Probation of Offenders Ordinance 1960 (Bhutta, 2010). Probation is based on the belief that encouragement must be given to the criminals not only to be a law-abiding citizens (Carlson, 1975) but also to contribute to the development of the society (Hudson, 2001). The world is moving away from retributive practices, therefore, the rehabilitative justice is being focused in recent decades (Bhutta, 2010).

The probation system is significant because it depends on differences of demographic characteristics in predicting the rehabilitation of probationers.

### ***1.1 Demographic factors***

#### ***i- Age***

Age is an important factor in determining the rehabilitation of probationers of different generations (Morgan, 1993). The older generation accepts reformation more quickly because the experiences of older ones help them to understand the dynamics of societal behavior. The aged probationers have more capacities to adjust themselves again into society and have higher success rate of rehabilitation (McCarthy & Langworthy, 1987). Henceforth, age is an essential demographic characteristic for failure and success of rehabilitation of probationers, and the differences in age groups have significant impact on rehabilitation of probationers.

#### ***ii- Education***

Education also enhances the chances of rehabilitation of probationers (Batiuk, Moke & Rountree, 1997), and more educated probationers show high participation in rehabilitative programmes. More educated probationers act upon the guidance of probation officer during counseling process (Tong & Farrington, 2008). Education increases knowledge, and social skills (e.g., cognitive, communicative skills) which facilitate the process of rehabilitation and these social skills minimize the costs and difficulties linked with process

and procedure (Estevez-Abe, Iversen & Soskice, 2001). Nonetheless, the more educated probationers take part in rehabilitative programs and continuously engage themselves in meetings with probation officers for counseling purpose (Gray, Fields & Maxwell, 2001). Education creates the sense among educated probationers that the pleasure of crime is temporary but the severity of punishment is permanent (Weiner, Graham & Reyna, 1997). Higher education is also associated with more income and occupational position (Putnam, 1995) that plays an important role in reintegration of offenders back into society (Bazemore, 1998). Thus, education particularly formal education is a strong predictor of rehabilitation of probationers (Olson, & Lurigio, 2000).

### ***1.2 Purpose of the study***

The purpose of the study was to analyze the selected demographic characteristics of probationers, who were on probation under the supervision of probation officers and demographic differences for predicting the rehabilitation of probationers.

### ***1.3 Hypotheses***

- a) Higher the level of age, higher will be the rehabilitation of probationers.
- b) Higher the level of education, higher will be the rehabilitation of probationers.

## **2. Data and Methods**

Methodology is essential in collecting and managing the data for statistical analysis (Neuman, 2000). The population of the study consisted of all the male adult<sup>1</sup> probationers in 36 districts of Punjab who had also spent some duration in prisons. The sample was finalized at two stages.

At first stage, random sampling technique was used to draw ten districts out of 36 districts of whole Punjab. Time and cost were the limits of the study due to which sample was limited to ten districts.

At second stage, 511 adult male probationers were selected from ten districts of Punjab by using proportionate sampling technique (table1). However the proportion of each district was fixed as 10% to total number of probationers in every district to make true representative sample.

The data was collected through a structured questionnaire. Previous literature of the study helped in devising the questionnaire. The probation officer from every district was approached by the researchers and probation officer was requested to arrange an interview meeting of the researchers with the

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<sup>1</sup> Above 18 years of age

respondents. As most of the respondents were illiterate and could not fill the questionnaire that was developed in English language, therefore, the researchers filled questionnaire through arranged meetings with the respondents. The collected raw data was entered into SPSS-19 version to apply statistical tests for confirming statistical relationship between demographic factors and rehabilitation of probationers. Statistical mean, standards deviation and chi-square test were applied to analyze the data.

**Table 1: Sampling technique of the Study**

District	No. of Probationers in sampled district (N)	Proportion of each district (n)
Bahawalpur	596 (N1)	60
Bhakkar	257 (N2)	26
Faisalabad	927 (N3)	93
Gujrat	372 (N4)	37
Jhelum	293 (N5)	29
Khanewal	261 (N6)	26
Layyah	324 (N7)	32
Mianwali	693 (N8)	69
Sahiwal	531 (N9)	53
Sheikhupura	862 (N10)	86
Total	<b>5116 (N)</b>	<b>511(n)</b>

*(Directorate of Reclamation and Probation Punjab, 2013)*

### 2.1 Limitations of the study

In the research process, only male adult offenders were included in the study because it was easy to access male. The probationers whose probation order was for one year were included in the study. Female offenders were excluded from the study because it was difficult to access to them for data collection.

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 2: Demographic determinants for predicting rehabilitation of offenders**

Age (years)	Mean	SD	SD error
Up to 35	11.53	2.86	.276
36-45	11.89	3.75	.424
46-55	12.33	3.46	.516
56 & above	13.90	2.77	.836
Education (in completed years)			
Illiterate	11.34	3.08	.334
Primary	11.90	2.83	.271
Middle	11.90	3.72	.416
Matriculate	12.33	3.08	.516
FA & above	14.81	2.83	.836

Age is an important predictor of rehabilitation of probationers as aging alters social roles, creates new opportunities and rings forth new life obstacles (Roundtree, Edwards & Parker, 1984). Thus people of diverse ages and generations hold different views about life which also changes their attitude towards the rehabilitation process and acceptance of social norms to avoid the deviant behavior. The statistics about age in table 2 show that there was a significant difference of rehabilitation of probationers in age group between 19 and 25 years old. The mean difference ( $Mean=12.34$ ) was 0.33454 with standard deviation difference of 3.08. The next age groups were 26 to 35 and 36 to 45 years which indicated a considerable mean difference (0.36) and standard deviation difference (0.89) about the rehabilitation of probationers. There was noted a steady increase in rehabilitation among respondents from 46 to 55 and a significant mean difference (0.91) and standard deviation difference (1.65) among the age group 56 to 65 and 66 and above. However total mean ( $Mean=12.16$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=3.46$ ) good enough in considering age an essential variable in predicting the rehabilitation of probationers. The extent of rehabilitation increases during the reconfiguration from younger age to the older age because of strong familial ties and maturity in understanding that criminal career is dangerous for them as well as for their families.

The table under discussion also reflects the educational achievement of the respondents. Education stands for deliberate instruction or training. Man does not behave in society impulsively or instinctively. He behaves in a way according to which he is trained (Rao, 2005). Regarding educational attainment there was no difference between rehabilitation of probationers between primary and Middle level of educational attainment ( $Mean= 11.90$ ). However there was a significant increase in chances of rehabilitation among Matric pass respondents ( $Mean=12.33$ ). Moreover an essential rise was noted among those respondents who had Intermediate (college level educational attainment in Pakistan) and more educational attainment ( $Mean=14.81$ ). The data is supported by Schiff & Terry (1997) who argued that educational attainment is the significant predictor of rehabilitation of probationers.

**Table 3:** Association between age and rehabilitation of Probationers

Categories of age (years)	Rehabilitation Of Probationers			
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Total</i>
19-25	54	39	34	127
26-35	59	64	41	164
36-45	60	29	31	120
46-55	19	22	26	67
55 & above	3	10	20	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>511</b>

*P value = 0.01*

Table 3 shows association between age of the respondents and extent of rehabilitation. The data in table under discussion indicates that rehabilitation was low in age categories of 19-25, 26-35 and 36-45 while the rehabilitation was high among those respondents who were in the age categories of 46-55 and above 55. The aged probationers have more capacities to adjust themselves again into society as they have vast experience in interacting with society. McCarthy and Langworthy (1987) concluded that older probationers had higher success rate of rehabilitation. For instance offenders, whose age was 28 and older, had the lowest rate of recidivism (Bartell & Thomas, 1997). The younger offenders are more recidivists because of the stigmatization by society and such offenders have great difficulty in succeeding on probation than do older offenders (Monahan, 1981).

**Table 4:** Association between level of education and rehabilitation of Probationers

Education	Rehabilitation Of Probationers			
	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Total</i>
Illiterate	86	84	61	231
Primary	26	21	14	61
Middle	29	26	21	76
Matric	26	27	29	82
F.A & above	15	19	27	61
<b>Total</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>511</b>

*P value = 0.03*

Table 4 shows that more educated people are more likely to be rehabilitated into society compare to offenders with low educational attainment. Out of 231 illiterate respondents, only 61 had higher chances while 86 had lower chances of rehabilitation. Among educated respondents, F.A. and above education holders had higher chances of rehabilitation (27 out

61) as compare to illiterate (61 out of 231). The educated probationers have more capacities to adjust themselves again in society as they have more understanding about the circumstances and better attitude about adjustment in society. Education gives the ability to individual to distinct between right and wrong (Nucci, 1981). So that, the probationer with better education realize that the crime committed by them is inappropriate for them as well as for the society. Landis et al. (1969) concluded that failure is more likely to in lower educational attainment than higher educational level.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Probation as an important organ of criminal justice system rehabilitates and reintegrates the offenders. Demographic factors determine the rehabilitation and reintegration of offenders into society. The quantitative study was conducted to know such variations among the probationers in Punjab province of Pakistan. Results of the study showed that the rehabilitation of offenders differed according to their age and education. The aged and educated offenders/probationers succeeded in the process of rehabilitation and reintegration more in compare with those were younger and had lower educational level. The courts may take a step to release the aged convicted prisoners who have been charged in minor offences. Educational programmes may be started for the offenders, who are on probation order. The classification of probationers regarding demographic characteristic may be ensured in Reclamation and Probation Department, Punjab for smooth functioning in rehabilitation process.

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