



BEHIND BARS, BEYOND JUSTICE: URGENT REFORMS FOR PAKISTAN'S PRISONS

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Abstract

Pakistan's prison system is in urgent need of enhanced reforms that require immediate attention, such as issues of overcrowding, poor living conditions, and a lack of rehabilitation programs, which we are seeing as severe issues in Pakistan prisons. We have a large number of inmates who are under trial prisoners who are spending years waiting for their cases to be heard, which is a result of the judicial system's delay. Also, we see that access to health care, legal advice, and vocational training is minimal, which adds to their hardships. Although we have seen recent policy changes and court interventions, which have brought some improvements, the prison system as a whole is still very much of a punitive nature as opposed to a rehabilitative one. This study looks at the key issues in Pakistan's prisons and also looks at the reform which is on going. It puts forth the need for alternative sentencing, better legal representation for the under-trial prisoners, and also better prison infrastructure. Also, its most important focus is to shift from punishment to rehabilitation by way of giving inmates education, vocational training, and mental health support. For fundamental changes to take place in prison reform, we see that there has to be a collective effort from the government, judiciary, and civil society to put in place that which will make sure that prison does, in fact, serve the purpose of the justice system, which at the same time upholds human dignity.

Keywords: healthcare, legal reforms, overcrowding, prison reforms, rehabilitation

Introduction

“It is not the prisoners who need reformation, it is the prison” (Oscar Wilde)

An offender who is confined in the boundary wall of prison is known as a prisoner or inmate. They are restricted in this particular area due to their wrongful act, which was contrary to the state's enacted law. The manifest motive of their custody is to stop this specific individual from doing further wrongful acts (Alif et al., 2024). Pakistan's prison system has been struggling with serious problems for a long time. These include overcrowding, poor healthcare, and a lack of proper rehabilitation programs. As of 2024, the country's prisons held more than 102,026 inmates, which is 152% over their official capacity. Some prisons are even worse—for example, Karachi Central Prison was built for 2,400 inmates but now houses 8,518 prisoners. This overcrowding is made worse by the fact that about 73.41% of inmates are still waiting for their trials, showing how slow and inefficient the judicial system is (Abdullah, 2025).

The health situation in these prisons is just as bad. Inmates are often held in dirty environments, have restricted access to clean water, and receive inadequate medical care. A 2023 report by Human Rights Watch pointed out that prisoners are regularly denied the healthcare they need. It leaves thousands at risk of getting sick or, in the worst cases, dying.



Mental health support is almost nonexistent, and prisons don't have enough medical staff or resources to help (Human Rights Watch,2023). These conditions demonstrate how desperately Pakistan needs to reform its prison system to safeguard the health and rights of those who are incarcerated.

A 2025 report by the National Commission for Human Rights and Justice Project Pakistan recommended judicial reforms and the use of non-custodial sentencing to reduce overcrowding and improve prison conditions. (National Commission for Human Rights,2025)

Addressing these problems is necessary to build a prison system in Pakistan that is humane and successful. And when it comes to overcrowding, better healthcare, and rehabilitation, Pakistan has an opportunity to take significant steps toward a more fair and just system.

Research Justification

The improvement of prison reform remains a critical matter throughout Pakistan. The Correctional System in Pakistan endures multiple operational challenges, from crowding prisons with prisoners to retaining laws from colonial times and insufficient healthcare services together with insufficient rehabilitation programs for incarcerated people. The present conditions in prisons have evolved into suffering centers rather than facilities for rehabilitation. The prison system faces obstacles in its development whereby court orders, along with policy modifications, produce inconsistent results. Research examining Pakistan's prison reforms becomes essential because the prison system faces population increases alongside worsening human rights conditions. The study provides insight into system inadequacies to create implementable solutions.

This research holds significant value since most inmates in Pakistan spend their sentences before they face judicial processing. Long waits in jail become a norm since court procedures slow down their trials to unacceptably long durations. Prisoners reoffend frequently because they face substandard living arrangements and have minimal access to legal representation while lacking proper reentry programs into society. When basic human rights violations continue, and rehabilitation goals remain unmet, only fundamental corrections to the system will resolve this situation.

The research analyzes historical patterns together with active institutional problems and examines recent policies to create actionable solutions for prison condition improvements. The study produces findings that will benefit policymakers alongside human rights groups and legal experts who want to establish a fairer correctional system in Pakistan.

Research Objectives

1. To discuss the historical context of Pakistan prison reforms.
2. To highlight the theoretical context of Pakistan prison reforms.
3. To analyze the laws regarding Pakistan prison reforms.
4. To identify the key challenges regarding Pakistan prison reforms.
5. To explore the opportunities for Pakistan prison reforms.
6. To propose effective prevention and intervention strategies.

Research Methodology

This study employed a systematic review methodology, with research objectives established accordingly. A comprehensive literature review was conducted (Komba & Lwoga, 2020). Research findings were categorized based on their content (Hiver et al., 2021;



Petticrew & Roberts, 2006), and classified information was incorporated into the study by organizing it into headings (Gan et al., 2021; Pawson et al., 2005). The evaluation of classified information and titles formed the basis of the study (Page, 2021; Rahi, 2017), ensuring the integrity of the research subject and its contents (Egger et al., 2022; Victor, 2008). The criteria for selection are enlisted.

1. **Relevance:** Researches that directly addressed the questions posed by this study are included.
2. **Quality:** Studies that meet a certain quality threshold (e.g., methodological rigor, bias risk) are included. Most of the researches are from Scopus indexed and Clarivate Analytics journals and reputed publishers.
3. **Recency:** Consideration of the publication date to ensure that the review reflects the most current evidence. Most of the studies are from the last three years.
4. **Language:** Only studies published in English are included.
5. **Data Completeness:** Previous studies must provide sufficient data on outcomes of interest for practical synthesis; it is also ensured in this research.

This study did not use primary data from human participants; therefore, no ethics clearance letter from the ethics committee was required.

Literature Review

Pakistani prisons persist in facing three key problems involving excessive inmate numbers and insufficient healthcare facilities with outdated prison reforms. Previous research related to these prison challenges has suggested reforms that aim to enhance incarceration quality and achieve international human rights standards.

A major issue in Pakistan's prisons is severe overcrowding, primarily caused by a high number of under-trial prisoners. Pakistan's prisons hold 88,650 inmates despite a sanctioned capacity of 65,168, leading to an average overcrowding rate of 136% (HRW,2023). The problem is exacerbated by delays in the judicial process, causing pretrial detainees to spend years in custody without a verdict. In Pakistan, under-trial prisoners make up approximately 73.41% of the total prison population (Justice Project Pakistan,2025). In contrast, excessive reliance on pretrial detention increases the risk of wrongful imprisonment and deteriorates prison conditions.

The facility for healthcare in Pakistani prisons remains wholly inadequate. The Pakistani prison system suffers from an extreme shortage of healthcare professionals and medical supplies and insufficient medical facilities. Many inmates suffer from chronic illnesses but receive little to no medical attention. Moreover, mental health issues among prisoners are ignored mainly (HRW,2023). The unhygienic conditions in Pakistani prisons harm women prisoners physically and mentally. Children living with their mothers in prisons suffer the most (Jafri et al.,2022)

Many children and teenagers are being locked up in the same jails as dangerous adult criminals. It happens because there's not enough space to keep them separate. While in prison, these young people often face terrible treatment. They are tortured and sometimes even sexually abused. Because of this, many poor detainees can't talk to a lawyer. It means they are being denied their fundamental right to a fair trial(Akbar & Bhutta, 2012). Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that no one shall be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment. (Universal declaration of human rights,1948)



Prison reforms are required to make sure that the fundamental rights of inmates are respected in accordance with the international standards and norms that have been established. (Shahbaz et al, 2023). Upgrading prison conditions in order to meet international human rights standards and developing comprehensive rehabilitation programs are vital to preparing inmates for societal reintegration (Islam et al.,2024). Fyodor Dostoevsky once said, "The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." The UN Office on Drugs and Crime has identified several long-standing issues in Pakistan's prisons. Besides overcrowding, the safety and health of inmates in these facilities remain unsafe and unhealthy.

Healthcare facilities in prisons operate poorly, while programs that facilitate prisoner reintegration into society after release do not exist. Information systems are outdated, and there's no effective planning to improve the situation. Communication between institutions is weak, and inspection systems to monitor prisons are not strong enough. These problems make it hard to manage prisons properly and ensure fair treatment for inmates. Addressing these issues will require better coordination and effort (Gul,2018). The offenders can only be reformed through practical reformation and a rehabilitative system. The criminals confined in the prisons have more chances of committing crimes again, especially from the perspective of the Pakistani prison system (Alif et al., 2024).

The Pakistani prison system requires immediate restructuring to meet the necessary fundamental standards. The implementation of outdated laws and poor healthcare alongside prison overcrowding stand as significant barriers to the protection of inmates' rights and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs. The recent digitalization initiatives and legal reforms provide promise for improvement, but their success hinges on proper execution. Research for the future must examine the extended effects of new reforms and new punishment systems that can decrease the prison overcrowding problem.

Historical Context of Pakistan Prison Reforms

Pakistan inherited the prison system from the British as a colonial legacy. This system was used as an instrument to suppress political opponents and to neutralize threats to Crown rule. (Khan,2010). Historically, the system operated under the Prisons Act of 1894, a framework established during British rule that prioritized punishment over rehabilitation. This act led to overcrowded facilities and inadequate conditions for inmates.

The prison reforms in Pakistan started in 1950 under the chairmanship of Col Salamat, former inspector general of prison (Anwar & Shah,2016). On the institutional side, the National Academy for Prisons Administration (NAPA) was created in 1974. NAPA, which works under the Ministry of Interior, is the leading training center for prison staff in Pakistan. Its mission is to improve prison management and bring it closer to international standards. It shows Pakistan's efforts to make its prison system more effective and humane.

In recent years, significant strides have been made to modernize the prison system. In 2019, Sindh enacted the Sindh Prisons & Corrections Service Act, replacing the outdated 1978 prison rules. This legislation marked a shift towards rehabilitation, focusing on providing inmates with opportunities for skill development and successful reintegration into society. The act also emphasized improving living conditions within prisons, ensuring access to healthcare, and investing in staff training to enhance prison management (Sindh Prisons & Corrections Service). These changes in laws and institutions highlight Pakistan's ongoing work to tackle challenges in its prison system. The goal is to create a fairer and more effective system that respects human rights and focuses on rehabilitation.



Pakistan Prison Laws in Pakistan

Multiple transformations happened to Pakistan's prison system throughout recent years because authorities adopted rehabilitation-based reforms instead of maintaining penal practices from colonial times. The Prisons Act of 1894 carried over from British rule to retain control after Pakistan obtained independence in 1947 yet its primary focus remained on controlling inmates rather than helping them recover. The framework resulted in overwhelming prison populations while staff abused inmates and abandoned basic care needs most severely among women prisoners and young people along with mentally ill detainees.

The Sindh province started major reforms because it understood the existing problems. A new law called the Sindh Prisons & Corrections Service Act took effect in 2019 to address the outdated provisions from the 1978 Pakistan Prison Rules. This new approach brought a significant change by establishing rehabilitation services as the primary focus to assist prison inmates during their transition back to society. The law focused on prison safety through its commitment to preserve prison health and maintain cleanliness alongside its execution of healthcare services.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), together with the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, implemented the Prison Management Information System (PMIS) at 22 prison locations throughout Sindh. The implementation of this system eliminated traditional paper records and established a single data center that modernized prison management activities. The Prisons Staff Training Academy in Hyderabad serves as a professional development institute that trains correctional staff through modern correctional practices.

The authorities show their dedication to nationwide progress by transforming their punishment approach toward a rehabilitative system focused on preserving human dignity within correctional facilities. Ongoing work seeks to develop both humane and efficient prison facilities, which will lead Pakistan towards a more secure and just future for its citizens.

Theoretical Context of Pakistan Prison Reforms

Pakistan's prison reform laws originate from criminological theories combined with legal principles along with human rights standards. The conceptual basis entails rehabilitation combined with restorative justice and prisoner dignity treatment. Traditionally, Pakistan's prison system used deterrence theory to scare offenders from criminal activity while simultaneously applying retributive justice principles to make offenders face punishment for their deeds. The prison system now demonstrates a transition toward rehabilitation approaches alongside reintegration methods that concentrate on treating the base reasons behind criminal conduct without solely focusing on punishment.

The modern prison system incorporates restorative justice as its main transformative element. By providing training and education along with mental healthcare facilities, offenders receive assistance to reintegrate into society. The approach addresses the underlying factors that lead people to commit crimes, such as poverty combined with inadequate education or mental health conditions because these elements help prevent future crime occurrences.

The legal system in Pakistan provides its prisoners with a defense under constitutional protection. These constitutional protections offer inmates a minimum standard of treatment based on human dignity throughout their terms of incarceration. Human rights principles act



as fundamental elements that guide the development of prison reforms across nations. These legal frameworks support the development of a justice system that guarantees equal rights to everyone, including imprisoned individuals. The laws governing Pakistan's prison system continue to evolve toward a correctional framework that emphasizes the rehabilitation of inmates before their full return to society. Societies are increasingly recognizing that offering support to inmates builds both justice and safety for modern societies through reconstructed lives.

Challenges for Pakistan Prison Reforms

The efforts to reform Pakistan's prison system encounter various obstacles that prevent the establishment of a just and efficient correctional system. The current imprisonment system faces numerous difficulties that stem from overcrowded prisons and old legislation while also resulting from insufficient health care facilities, insufficient rehabilitation services, and feeble law enforcement practices. These fundamental prisoner rights violations prevent the development of a prison system that offers better treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Prison overcrowding stands as the primary major problem. The prison capacity of Pakistan exceeds its original design by at least twice the intended number, thus creating overcrowded prison conditions. Under-trial prisoners form the central portion of Pakistan's incarcerated population because they have not been convicted yet. About 73% of the prison inmates are under-trial prisoners. Long delays in the court system, together with insufficient legal help and bureaucracy, generate delays that result in prolonged imprisonment for individuals who have yet to face trial.

The current legal structure functions as an additional challenge for the correctional ecosystem. Old prison laws that regulate Pakistan's penal institutions, such as the Prisons Act of 1894, remain outdated despite modern security challenges. The Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act of 2019 represents a new legal framework introduced in Sindh unless the provincial government decides to enforce it across Pakistan. The absence of probation and parole for minor offenders increases prison overpopulation and weakens rehabilitation possibilities within penal institutions.

The quality of medical care within prisons exists as a significant problem. The healthcare services at many prisons lack adequate staffing of doctors, medicine, medical supplies, and mental health support staff. People in jail who suffer from chronic illnesses, together with mental disorders or infectious diseases, typically receive inadequate medical care. The healthcare situation for pregnant women and juvenile detainees becomes dire because essential medical care remains inaccessible to them. Recent healthcare reforms have demanded better prison care, but insufficient funding and weak administration have hindered overall improvement.

The majority of prisons fail to provide rehabilitation programs to their inmates. The primary prison focus tends to revolve around punishment without giving any useful rehabilitation programs that would prepare inmates for life beyond incarceration. The correctional facilities lack basic vocational programs in combination with educational opportunities and mental health care options. The lack of rehabilitation programs creates challenges that force former prisoners to return to crime, making them statistically likely to repeat their offenses after release. Such conditions make it likely these individuals will choose criminal activities over rebuilding their ability to fulfill societal responsibilities.



An essential obstacle to effective reforms stems from inadequate implementation of the new programs. The implementation of new policies remains challenging because of corruption along with absent political support combined with opposition from law enforcement agencies. Staff members in prisons do not receive training in human rights principles or rehabilitation practices, which results in incidents of unlawful treatment and physical abuse, together with deliberate legal rights violations. Trained professionals at the National Academy for Prisons Administration (NAPA) seek better training methods, yet sustainable transformations to prison systems remain inadequate.

Pakistan requires a set of extensive reforms to remedy these current issues. To enhance the justice system Pakistan requires faster judicial operations to cut pretrial prison times in addition to upgraded health services and expanded rehabilitation programs. The creation of a prison system based on human rights principles requires stronger oversight alongside better reform enforcement mechanisms. The implementation of solutions to these challenges will enable Pakistan to establish a better system of justice.

Opportunities for Pakistan Prison Reforms

The prison reform in Pakistan can lead to establishing superior correctional infrastructure. The development of updated laws combined with alternative sentencing programs, expanded rehabilitation centers imp, improved healthcare facilities, and international partnership programs will enable Pakistan to develop a correctional system that combines fair treatment with rehabilitation goals.

Updating legislative rules represents a significant chance for advancement. The Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act of 2019 marked Pakistan's initial step towards prison reform by emphasizing rehabilitation as a primary objective instead of traditional punishment measures. National expansion of these reforms would lead to uniform prison management throughout the country. The implementation of updated laws that replace outdated legislation, such as the Prisons Act of 1894, stands as a vital approach toward defending prisoner rights and advancing prison facilities.

Another opportunity is alternative sentencing. Overcrowding in prisons has become the main challenge due to the extensive presence of under-trial prisoners. The prison population can decrease through the implementation of parole and community service programs and probation systems for certain minor offenses. Mediation involving victims with offenders stands as a viable substitute rather than prison time in some instances. These methods reduce prison congestion while supporting convicted persons in their return to society after their prison term.

The potential of rehabilitation programs remains huge for the development of effective prison systems. The Pakistani correctional facilities lack formal recovery programs that would benefit prisoners preparing to return to society. The availability of skill development opportunities, together with education and mental health assistance provided by the government, will decrease the chances of prisoners reoffending. The implementation of vocational training curricula in carpentry, along with tailoring and IT, provides prisoners with essential practical abilities that enhance their employability afterward. Sustainable prison rehabilitation initiatives can become stronger through collaboration with both NGOs and private companies.

The improvement of healthcare services within prison facilities stands as an essential chance for change. A large number of incarcerated individuals face insufficient medical



treatment combined with inadequate mental health services alongside poor sanitation standards. Enhancing medical facilities combined with training healthcare staff and delivering specialized care for women and juveniles Prisoners represents a significant change opportunity. Mobile health units, together with telemedicine services, provide solutions for resource shortages, allowing prisoners to receive necessary medical attention.

With international cooperation, Pakistan can benefit from established worldwide standards of operation. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) provide Pakistan with specialized expertise in addition to funding and policy recommendations through partnership. Implementation of international standards, especially the Nelson Mandela Rules, will strengthen Pakistan's prison system, thus enhancing prisoner care standards.

The implementation of available opportunities will enable Pakistan to develop a prison system that combines rehabilitation services with human rights protection and prisoner return to society initiatives. Updated laws combined with political dedication and enhanced correctional programs will enable Pakistan to create a justice system that provides fairness while keeping safety and humanity central to its operations. This development would result in a safer and better society.

Discussion

The ongoing prison reforms within Pakistan illustrate the current problems of old-fashioned penal systems and emphasize the absolute necessity of modern prison development. Although the Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act 2019 represents an attempt to improve conditions, the prisons of Pakistan continue to face substantial challenges with their high prisoner population density as well as inadequate healthcare services, and insufficient program resources for prisoner rehabilitation. The high population of under-trial prisoners remains a primary reason behind prison overcrowding because these prisoners must wait in jail until their cases close. The judicial system operates at an unbearably slow pace. Pakistan must address its judicial slowdown by implementing alternative sentencing choices, improving legal assistance programs, and reducing the duration of court proceedings to resolve this issue.

Prison reform faces an ongoing dispute about how punishment should be prioritized compared to prisoner rehabilitation. Modern correctional theory shifts its focus from punishing offenders toward focusing on restoration through justice practices. Through structured vocational training together with educational and mental health service programs, prisoners develop the tools to transform their lives before successfully transitioning back into society. These rehabilitation programs encounter two main obstacles including insufficient budget support and weak political backing. Education and collaboration between public entities and private organizations, together with appropriate investment in correctional programs, will help Pakistan resolve its existing obstacles.

The prison system of Pakistan needs to adopt international human rights standards, including the Nelson Mandela Rules. The standards implement measures that guarantee that convicted inmates receive proper dignity and respectful treatment. A human and rehabilitative prison system requires superior healthcare services to protect vulnerable groups such as women, minors, and mentally ill prisoners.

Pakistan must work towards the continued execution of established policies while enhancing institutional responsibility and making regulatory changes. The country needs to



handle these problems because it will produce a prison structure that is both just and productive and aimed toward prisoner rehabilitation.

Conclusion

Improving Pakistan's criminal justice system requires effective prison reform measures. The Sindh Prisons and Corrections Services Act of 2019 marks an improvement in prison reforms, but Pakistan faces substantial problems that need resolution. The significant continuing challenges in Pakistani prisons include bad healthcare services, crowded facilities, and limited rehabilitation services. The resolution of these problems requires Pakistan to advance its court system exp, and legal support services, and update its prison policy. A transformational change forms the basis for developing an equitable and efficient system.

The system requires a fundamental transition from punitive approaches to restorative rehabilitation. Directed healthcare improvement, together with vocational training programs and mental health support and education, will help prisoners assimilate back into society while lowering their potential to revert to criminal actions. The implemented programs deliver benefits to prisoners and simultaneously drive improved community safety. The national prison policies of Pakistan should adopt international human rights standards particularly the Nelson Mandela Rules. A human justice system demands prisoners receive proper respect and dignity through strict standards set by the Nelson Mandela Rules.

Pakistan requires both robust political determination together with speedier and more impartial court processes and institution-wide accountability to implement these reforms effectively. Justice-based correctional initiatives, together with human dignity principles, serve as higher priorities than punitive measures alone. The country can use its prison facilities to develop areas that assist inmates in creating new lives while generating positive outcomes for society.

Recommendations

- 1. Reduce overcrowding through alternative sentencing:** The government should create and expand probation programs combined with parole and community service and restorative justice initiatives to minimize prisoner populations, especially for non-violent criminal acts.
- 2. Speed-up judicial process:** The number of under-trial prisoners will decrease through speedy court procedures coupled with digital case tracking platforms and free legal support systems, which ensure prompt access to justice.
- 3. Improve prison infrastructure:** Prison infrastructure should receive upgrades through sustainable improvements to sanitation services, healthcare services, and living quarters until they reach international humane living standards.
- 4. Enhance rehabilitation and skill development programs:** Prisoners should receive vocational training combined with education and psychological counseling because this combination helps them smoothly reenter society and prevents future crimes.
- 5. Strengthen oversight and transparency:** The establishment of independent prison monitoring committees along with civil society and media involvement will protect against corruption and ensure accountability.
- 6. Separate juvenile and female prisoners:** The construction of specific juvenile detention facilities and female prisons is essential because this approach enables proper legal and psychological services for detainees.



7. Implement technology for prison management: Prison management can achieve modernization and diminish corrupt incidents through implementing biometric tracking as well as electronic case records and surveillance systems.

8. Improve healthcare services in prisons: Prison populations with specific needs, such as women and juveniles and individuals with mental health issues, should get unlimited access to mental health services and medical and addiction treatment.

9. Align laws with international human rights standards: The government should synchronize national laws with international human rights standards. The Nelson Mandela Rules adoption with strong UNODC and human rights organizations partnerships will bring Pakistan in line with international human rights standards.

10. Increase budget allocation for prison reforms: The government should allocate additional funds to establish better prison structures and increase rehabilitation programs alongside staff education for maintaining enduring prison system improvements.

A focused implementation of these recommendations would enable Pakistan to construct a better prison system based on human rights principles which provides fair treatment and effective rehabilitation services for all inmates.

Research Limitations

Research on Pakistan prison reforms faces several limitations. One major problem is the lack of reliable data. The official prison statistics suffer from outdated and incomplete data that makes it challenging to measure problems with overcrowding along with inadequate healthcare and insufficient rehabilitation programs. The absence of factual information hinders understanding of current problems and prevents proper measurement of issue development. Limited access to prison facilities stands as a severe obstacle to research investigations. Prisons in Pakistan restrict independent research projects and human rights organizations from conducting proper investigations about detention centers and prisoner welfare. Without proper prison transparency, it becomes challenging to perform objective evaluations of prison conditions and to keep authorities responsible for their actions.

The prison management systems between provinces throughout Pakistan display significant variations. Modern penal reforms have received adoption in Sindh but other regions throughout Pakistan continue to operate under outdated laws and outdated practices. The dissimilarities between different parts of Pakistan's prisoner system prevent experts from determining an overall assessment of its state. Implementation of reforms faces additional challenges because political instability exists alongside weak law enforcement institutions. New policies frequently fail to achieve their goals either because authorities improperly manage their implementation or because politicians do not show adequate persistence to sustain the policies over extended periods. The lack of sufficient rehabilitation funding, besides other initiative resources, makes programs less effective while creating delays in achieving progress.

Research Implications

The findings of this research have important implications for policy, society, and the legal system in Pakistan. This research enables policy creators to establish reforms that focus on decreasing prison capacity while enhancing correctional programs and developing new penal alternatives. The system becomes more efficient and humane following these changes.

Research findings demonstrate the necessity to raise public understanding about using a human rights-based system within correctional facilities. Vocational training combined with



proper rehabilitation services enables prisoners to successfully rejoin society, which in turn decreases both criminal conduct rates and repeat offenses. Better outcomes, along with safety, emerge when former inmates have improved access to opportunities in their communities.

The study underlines that Pakistan needs to use international human rights standards represented by the Nelson Mandela Rules to maintain legal alignment in prison law. The implementation of improved judicial operational efficiency combined with stronger oversight control and better prison management procedures will develop an open and responsible correctional system. Such reforms will create a justice system in Pakistan that provides fairness combined with rehabilitation efforts. The country can make a criminal justice system that heals its former offenders while they reconnect with society through dedication to human dignity and legal justice principles. Better outcomes will emerge from this approach that serve both incarcerated people and general community members.

Future Research Directions

Future research on Pakistan's prison reforms should focus on evaluating the effectiveness of recent policy changes and identifying gaps in implementation. Pakistan can learn effective prison reform strategies by conducting studies that analyze successful prison systems at work in other countries. Research needs to explore how alternative penalties such as community service programs and probation work in controlling prison overcrowding and enhancing offender rehabilitation. The evaluation of prison health care services requires a special focus on treatment provision for women prisoners and young offenders as well as those with mental illnesses. The assessment of vocational training, together with educational programs for offenders, serves to develop policies that focus on rehabilitation.

Future studies need to investigate prison system human rights violations and corruption practices while developing measures for transparency and accountability improvements. Research following prisoners throughout their reintegration process will collect essential data that can help design future reforms and establish long-term improvements in Pakistan's penal system.

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