

**Punishment without Reform? A Qualitative Case Study of Rehabilitation, Recidivism, and Post-Conflict Corrections in Swat Jail, Pakistan**

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**Abstract**

This study is situated within the broader debate on punishment versus rehabilitation in correctional systems, with particular attention to post-conflict prison settings in Pakistan. In districts such as Swat, where incarceration is shaped by legacies of militancy, overcrowding, and limited institutional capacity, correctional practices remain largely punitive despite growing global evidence supporting rehabilitation. Understanding how inmates and correctional staff experience and perceive punishment- and rehabilitation-oriented approaches is essential for informing sustainable prison reform, improving institutional stability, and reducing recidivism. The study aims to examine the lived experiences of inmates and correctional staff in Swat Jail, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and to assess the perceived impacts of punishment and rehabilitation on inmate behavior, psychological well-being, and post-release reintegration, while situating these findings within national and international correctional frameworks. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with inmates and correctional staff in Swat Jail and analyzed using Braun and Clarke's six-phase thematic analysis, guided by the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model. The findings indicate that punishment-focused correctional practices generate resentment, psychological distress, and behavioral withdrawal among inmates, often undermining institutional order rather than promoting reform. In contrast, rehabilitation-oriented interventions including vocational training, education, psychological counseling, and moral guidance were associated with positive behavioral change, improved mental well-being, enhanced self-worth, and greater readiness for lawful living. Correctional staff corroborated these outcomes, reporting fewer conflicts and improved cooperation among inmates engaged in rehabilitation programs. Post-release accounts further suggested that participation in rehabilitation reduced employment barriers and recidivism risk. The study concludes that punishment alone is insufficient for long-term crime reduction in post-conflict settings, and that rehabilitation represents a humane, effective, and sustainable complement to accountability. Policy implications emphasize expanding rehabilitation programs, investing in staff training, and strengthening post-release support mechanisms within Pakistan's correctional system.

**Keywords:** Punishment, Rehabilitation, Recidivism, Post-Conflict Corrections, Pakistan.

**Introduction**

One winter evening in Swat Valley, a recently released inmate stood outside a small roadside workshop, waiting for work that never came. He had spent several years in Swat Jail, not convicted

of violent crime but detained during the post-militancy period when suspicion alone often translated into incarceration. Inside prison, his days were governed by rigid discipline, silence, and prolonged confinement. Upon release, he carried no formal skills, no institutional support, and a social label that marked him as dangerous. Neighbours avoided him, employers rejected him, and family relationships remained strained. His experience repeated across many households in Swat raises a critical question: what does punishment achieve when it ends at the prison gate, and what happens when reform is absent? It was encounters with such lived realities shared by inmates, prison staff, and post-release individuals in Swat that motivated the present study. Rather than viewing incarceration as a closed institutional process, this research emerged from observing how punishment and rehabilitation shape lives *during* imprisonment and *after* release. In post-conflict regions like Swat, where imprisonment has been used not only as a criminal sanction but also as a counter-terrorism tool, the consequences of correctional strategies extend far beyond prison walls, influencing community stability, social trust, and long-term public safety.

### **Punishment and Rehabilitation in Global Perspective**

The tension between punishment and rehabilitation has long been central to criminological theory and correctional policy worldwide (Singh, 2025). Historically, prison systems were designed primarily around retribution, deterrence, and incapacitation. Rooted in classical criminology, punishment-based approaches assume that rational individuals will avoid crime if consequences are sufficiently severe (Conti & Justus, 2024). However, decades of empirical research challenge this assumption, particularly in contexts marked by poverty, social exclusion, psychological trauma, and political conflict (Daraz et al., 2024; Smith, 2015). Globally, high recidivism rates, persistent prison overcrowding, and the psychological deterioration of incarcerated individuals have triggered renewed scrutiny of punitive correctional models (Haney, 2006). Countries that rely heavily on long sentences, strict discipline, and limited rehabilitative opportunities such as the United States report recidivism rates exceeding 60 percent (Hayden, 2023). In contrast, rehabilitation-oriented systems in countries like Norway, Sweden, and Japan demonstrate significantly lower reoffending rates by emphasizing education, vocational training, psychological support, and structured reintegration pathways (Chu & Daffern, 2024; Coppola & Martufi, 2023). Contemporary criminological frameworks, particularly the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model, argue that sustainable crime reduction requires addressing criminogenic needs rather than relying solely on punishment (Brogan et al., 2015). Rehabilitation is no longer viewed as leniency but as an evidence-based strategy for enhancing public safety. Increasingly, international policy discourse recognizes that punishment without reform may control behavior temporarily but fails to produce long-term behavioral change (Andrews et al., 2011).

### **Relevance of the Debate in Pakistan**

Despite global shifts toward rehabilitative correctional philosophies, Pakistan's prison system remains largely punitive. Rooted in colonial-era penal laws, correctional institutions prioritize confinement, discipline, and control, often at the expense of rehabilitation (Haider et al., 2025; Z. Hussain et al., 2025). Chronic overcrowding, limited funding, shortage of trained staff, and weak post-release support mechanisms have constrained meaningful reform efforts. Although some rehabilitative initiatives such as vocational training, drug rehabilitation, juvenile justice reforms, and counseling services have been introduced, their reach remains limited and inconsistent. Public and political attitudes further complicate reform, as rehabilitation is frequently perceived as incompatible with accountability, particularly for serious offenses. Consequently, prisons often function as spaces of prolonged punishment rather than institutions of behavioral transformation (Daraz, Bojnec, et al., 2025; Khan, 2022). In this context, recidivism, unemployment among former inmates, social stigma, and mental health challenges persist as structural problems. The

absence of national recidivism data further obscures the long-term effectiveness of Pakistan's correctional strategies, reinforcing the need for in-depth, qualitative, institution-based research.

### **Swat Jail and the Post-Conflict Context**

The case of Swat Jail is particularly significant. Following the militant insurgency between 2007 and 2009, Swat became a focal point for mass detentions linked to extremism, ideological influence, and security concerns. Many detainees were young, socially marginalized, and ideologically manipulated rather than hardened criminals. In response, the state introduced de-radicalization and rehabilitation initiatives such as Sabawoon, Mishal, and Sparlay, which combined psychological counseling, religious re-education, education, and vocational training (Hussain, Hakim, et al., 2025; Mali et al., 2025). These programs represented a departure from purely punitive responses and positioned rehabilitation as a tool for peacebuilding and social reintegration. However, alongside these initiatives, Swat Jail continues to operate under conditions of overcrowding and resource scarcity, where the majority of inmates still experience incarceration primarily as punishment. This coexistence of punitive practices and selective rehabilitation within the same institution makes Swat Jail a critical site for examining the real-world impacts of correctional philosophies.

### **Unique Contribution and Research Gap**

While existing research on Pakistan's prison system is largely descriptive or policy-oriented, there is a significant gap in qualitative, experience-based studies that examine punishment and rehabilitation from the perspectives of inmates, correctional staff, and post-release individuals simultaneously. Moreover, little empirical work has explored correctional practices in post-conflict settings, where incarceration intersects with counter-terrorism, de-radicalization, and community reintegration.

This study addresses these gaps by offering:

- A qualitative single-case analysis grounded in lived experiences;
- A triangulated perspective incorporating inmates, staff, and released individuals;
- An examination of rehabilitation within a post-militancy context, rather than conventional criminal justice settings;
- A critical assessment of how punishment and rehabilitation shape mental well-being, institutional behavior, and reintegration outcomes.

### **Significance of the Study**

The findings of this study hold practical and theoretical significance. For policymakers, they provide evidence supporting the expansion of rehabilitation as a public safety strategy rather than a concession to offenders. For correctional administrators, the study highlights how institutional conditions influence inmate behavior and staff-inmate relations. Academically, the research strengthens the argument that punishment alone is insufficient and that rehabilitation must be integrated into the core mission of correctional institutions particularly in fragile, post-conflict societies.

### **Research Objectives**

The study aims to:

1. Examine the lived experiences of inmates in Swat Jail regarding punishment-oriented and rehabilitation-oriented correctional practices.
2. Assess the perceived impact of punishment and rehabilitation on inmate behavior, psychological well-being, and institutional conduct.

3. Explore correctional staff perspectives on the effectiveness and limitations of rehabilitation programs within Swat Jail.
4. Analyze post-release experiences to understand how incarceration models influence reintegration, employment, and recidivism risk.
5. Contextualize findings within national and international correctional frameworks to evaluate rehabilitation as a viable alternative or complement to punishment.

### **Research Questions**

1. How do incarcerated individuals in Swat Jail experience punishment-based correctional practices?
2. What role do rehabilitation programs play in shaping inmate behavior and psychological well-being?
3. How do correctional staff perceive the implementation and effectiveness of rehabilitation within a predominantly punitive system?
4. In what ways do punishment and rehabilitation influence post-release reintegration experiences?
5. To what extent does the Swat Jail case support rehabilitation as a sustainable correctional strategy in post-conflict Pakistan?

### **Literature Review**

#### **Global Perspectives on Punishment, Rehabilitation, and Recidivism**

The historical evolution of correctional responses to crime reflects a persistent tension between punishment and rehabilitation. In early modern correctional systems including those in Europe and North America the prevailing belief was that incarceration and harsh penalties would deter criminal behavior. By the mid-20th century, however, rehabilitation emerged as a central tenet in penology, motivated by the view that criminal conduct was rooted in social, psychological, and economic deficiencies that could be treated through education, counseling, and vocational training (Barnes, 1926; van Ooyen-Houben & Kleemans, 2015). This shift toward rehabilitation was supported by the medical model, which treated offenders as individuals whose behavior could be altered through targeted interventions. By the late 20th century, however, punitive measures resurged particularly in the United States through policies like the “War on Drugs” and three-strikes laws (Lipp, 2003). These punitive policies were associated with mass incarceration and skyrocketing recidivism. According to Western Bureau of Justice Statistics, in the USA, recidivism rates range between 60–70% within three years of release, highlighting the limited effectiveness of punishment as a standalone strategy (Durose et al., 2014). Contrary to punitive models, rehabilitation-focused systems in Scandinavian countries report significantly lower recidivism rates. Norway, for instance where humane treatment, robust educational and vocational programs, and restorative justice prevail consistently achieves recidivism rates between 20–30%, significantly below punitive systems (Akkoyun, 2024; Denny, 2016; Nelken, 2015; Pratt, 2022). In Japan and Singapore, a mixed approach emphasizing reintegration and community-based correctional alternatives has yielded medium recidivism levels (approximately 30–40%) while reducing prison overcrowding and improving post-release employment outcomes (Chu & Daffern, 2024; Lee et al., 2018). Empirical research supports the notion that rehabilitative interventions contribute to reductions in recidivism, behavioral improvement, and better mental health outcomes. Meta-analyses consistently link educational programs, cognitive-behavioral therapies, and structured vocational training to lower reoffending rates, greater post-release employment, and enhanced psychological well-being (Bonta & Andrews, 2023; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). These educational and rehabilitative strategies are central to the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model, which has become a predominant paradigm guiding effective correctional treatment. The RNR

model posits that correctional programming should match risk level, target criminogenic needs, and respond to individual learning styles (Andrews & Bonta, 2014). Despite robust evidence in favor of rehabilitation, some scholars caution that simply providing services without addressing institutional constraints such as overcrowding, underfunding, and weak correctional culture may limit impact (Cullen & Gendreau, 2000). These caveats reinforce the need to examine contextual influences on rehabilitative outcomes.

### **Pakistan's Penal History and Empirical Evidence**

Pakistan's penal system is rooted in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) of 1860, a relic of British colonial governance that privileged punishment and deterrence over reform (Anwar & Shah, 2016). For decades, punitive practices dominated corrections, resulting in extremely high prison occupancy rates averaging over 120% of official capacity poor living conditions, and minimal access to rehabilitative programs (Daraz, Ullah, et al., 2023; Zaheer et al., 2025). Studies examining Pakistan's prison system have documented the limited reach of rehabilitation programs and the persistence of punitive practices. Gul (2018) found that vocational training and education services in Pakistani jails are fragmented, inconsistently delivered, and poorly resourced, resulting in limited attitudinal change among incarcerated individuals (Daraz, Khan, et al., 2025). Similarly, Jamal et al. (2022) observed that psychological counseling and drug rehabilitation services where they exist suffer from a lack of trained professionals and integration into broader correctional strategies (Ullah & Daraz, 2024). Recidivism remains poorly documented at the national level because of the absence of standardized data collection mechanisms. Nonetheless, localized reports suggest that former inmates face high unemployment, social stigma, and psychological barriers that increase the risk of reoffending (Daraz, Bial, et al., 2023; Hussain et al., 2024; Shuja & Abbas, 2022). Moreover, socio-cultural attitudes in Pakistan often equate rehabilitation with leniency, impeding political and public support for expansive rehabilitative initiatives. Research evaluating Pakistan's juvenile justice reforms under the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance of 2000 indicates that rehabilitation can be effective when implemented in age-appropriate and supportive environments (Abbas et al., 2022; Hussain, Daraz, et al., 2025). However, scholars argue that such progress has not translated into adult corrections, where punitive approaches remain dominant.

### **Swat Jail: Post-Conflict Context and Empirical Insights**

Swat Jail's unique positionality as a post-conflict correctional site presents an important case for examining punishment and rehabilitation in a context shaped by militancy, state intervention, and community reintegration challenges. Following years of insurgency (2007–2009), thousands of individuals many of them young and socially marginalized were detained, often more for perceived associations with extremist groups than for conventional criminal offenses (Batoool et al., 2021). Against this backdrop, rehabilitation programs such as Sabawoon, Mishal, and Sparlay were implemented to counter radicalization, provide psychological counseling, offer educational opportunities, and facilitate vocational skill development. Project Sabawoon Reports document behavioral changes among participants, noting improved cognitive flexibility, reduced extremist sympathies, and better social communication skills. However, these programs operate alongside prevailing punitive policies marked by overcrowding and structural constraints on service delivery. Preliminary studies commissioned by regional human rights organizations suggest that inmates who accessed rehabilitative services in Swat Jail report more positive attitudes towards reintegration, higher self-efficacy, and improved interpersonal relationships. Nonetheless, rigorous academic evaluations of rehabilitation's effects in Swat's correctional environment remain sparse. Existing literature has not comprehensively examined the interplay of punishment and rehabilitation from the perspectives of incarcerated individuals, staff, and post-release experiences within the same institution.

## **Synthesis of Evidence with Study Objectives**

The evidence above demonstrates clear associations between rehabilitation and improved outcomes (e.g., lower recidivism, better mental health), while punishment-centric systems tend to prolong cycles of reoffending and social exclusion. These insights directly connect with this study's objectives:

- Objective 1 (lived experience of inmates): Supported by studies highlighting negative psychological outcomes of punishment.
- Objective 2 (impact on behavior and well-being): Linked to research showing rehabilitative programming benefits.
- Objective 3 (staff perceptions): Grounded in literature calling for institutional reform and professional training.
- Objective 4 (post-release reintegration): Reinforced by empirical evidence on employment and social outcomes.
- Objective 5 (comparative framing): Justified by global recidivism statistics across different correctional models.

Despite these insights, the existing literature reveals a critical gap: no comprehensive qualitative investigation explores punishment and rehabilitation concurrently within a single correctional facility, particularly in a post-conflict context like Swat where de-radicalization and reintegration efforts intersect with traditional corrections.

## **Research Gap and the Contribution of This Study**

The literature indicates a need for:

- Context-specific understanding of inmate experiences
- Institutional insights from correctional staff
- Post-release narratives linked to rehabilitative access
- Integration of qualitative perceptions with quantitative contextual indicators
- Focused examination of rehabilitation in post-conflict penal environments

This study addresses these gaps by providing a triangulated, in-depth qualitative case study of Swat Jail, thus contributing empirical richness and context-specific analysis that existing research lacks.

## **Theoretical Framework: Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) Model**

This study is theoretically grounded in the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) Model, which provides a robust and empirically validated framework for understanding rehabilitation, recidivism, and correctional effectiveness. The RNR Model is particularly suitable for this research because it bridges criminological theory with correctional practice and directly aligns with the study's core objective of examining whether incarceration in Swat Jail functions primarily as punishment or as a mechanism for meaningful reform. In a post-conflict correctional context such as Swat, where incarceration has often been used as a tool of control rather than transformation, the RNR Model offers a critical lens through which institutional practices and inmate experiences can be systematically analyzed. Originally developed by Andrews and Bonta (2006, 2014), the RNR Model rests on three interrelated principles: risk, need, and responsivity. The risk principle asserts that the intensity of correctional interventions should correspond to an individual's likelihood of reoffending. The need principle emphasizes that effective rehabilitation must target criminogenic needs such as substance abuse, limited education, cognitive distortions, and weak social bonds that are directly associated with criminal behavior. The responsivity principle highlights the importance of tailoring interventions to the learning styles, cultural backgrounds, and psychological capacities of individuals. Collectively, these principles shift the focus of corrections

away from static punishment toward addressing dynamic risk factors that are amenable to change. Within the context of Swat Jail, the RNR Model provides a powerful framework for interpreting the lived experiences of incarcerated individuals. The narratives of inmates reveal how punitive incarceration characterized by confinement without adequate rehabilitative support often fails to address underlying criminogenic needs. Consistent with the RNR perspective, punishment alone neither equips inmates with coping mechanisms nor facilitates behavioral change, thereby reinforcing cycles of reoffending. The RNR Model also informs the examination of rehabilitation programs and their impact on inmate behavior and psychological well-being. Where educational, vocational, counseling, or de-radicalization initiatives are present, the model helps explain variations in their effectiveness based on how well they align with individual needs and responsivity factors. In Swat Jail, this theoretical lens allows the study to critically assess whether rehabilitation initiatives are systematically designed or merely symbolic, and whether they meaningfully contribute to cognitive restructuring, emotional stability, and readiness for reintegration. Furthermore, the RNR framework is instrumental in analyzing the perceptions and practices of correctional staff. Staff members' views on institutional constraints, resource limitations, and administrative priorities reflect the extent to which the prison environment supports or obstructs RNR-aligned practices. From a theoretical standpoint, the RNR Model redefines the role of correctional staff from enforcers of discipline to agents of behavioral change thereby offering a benchmark against which institutional culture in Swat Jail can be evaluated. Post-release experiences and reintegration outcomes also find strong theoretical grounding in the RNR Model. The model underscores that successful reintegration depends on sustained responsiveness to individual needs beyond incarceration. In the Swat context, where former inmates face stigma, unemployment, and social exclusion, the study uses the RNR framework to explain how unmet criminogenic needs increase vulnerability to recidivism, while targeted rehabilitation enhances prospects for lawful and stable reintegration. In contrast to punitive correctional models which assume rational deterrence through severity and uniform treatment the RNR Model recognizes the complexity of criminal behavior and the heterogeneity of offenders. Punitive approaches prioritize short-term control and retribution, often producing limited impact on long-term recidivism. The RNR Model, by comparison, emphasizes evidence-based, individualized, and rehabilitative interventions that are empirically associated with reduced reoffending and sustainable social reintegration. This contrast is particularly salient in Swat Jail, where punitive legacies intersect with post-conflict realities, making a rehabilitation-oriented framework both theoretically and practically necessary (See table 1).

**Table 1. Contrast and Comparison: RNR Model vs. Punitive Models**

Dimension	Punitive Model	RNR Model (Rehabilitative)
Primary Goal	Deterrence, retribution	Behavioral change, reduced recidivism
Focus	Severity of punishment	Identification and treatment of criminogenic needs
Outcome Orientation	Short-term control	Long-term reintegration
Evidence Base	Limited recidivism impact	Empirically linked to lower reoffending
Responsiveness	Uniform application	Tailored interventions
Staff Role	Enforcer	Change agent

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study adopts a qualitative case study design to explore the lived experiences of incarceration, rehabilitation, and reintegration within Swat District Jail, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A qualitative approach is particularly appropriate given the study's aim to move beyond numerical indicators of punishment and recidivism and instead capture the subjective meanings, perceptions, and institutional realities surrounding correctional practices in a post-conflict setting. The case study design allows for an in-depth, context-sensitive examination of how punishment and rehabilitation are experienced, implemented, and understood by inmates and correctional staff within a single, information-rich site. Epistemologically, the study is grounded in an interpretivist paradigm, which assumes that social reality is constructed through human interaction and experience. This stance is consistent with the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) framework, which emphasizes individualized assessment, dynamic needs, and contextual responsiveness rather than uniform punitive responses. In focusing on Swat Jail as a bounded case, the study seeks to generate analytical rather than statistical generalizations, contributing to broader debates on correctional reform in post-conflict societies.

### **Study Setting**

The research was conducted in Swat District Jail, located in a region that has experienced prolonged militancy, military operations, and subsequent rehabilitation and reintegration initiatives. The prison houses a heterogeneous population, including individuals convicted of violent crimes, property offenses, and terrorism-related activities. Overcrowding, limited resources, and constrained rehabilitation infrastructure characterize the institutional environment, making Swat Jail a critical site for examining the tension between punitive incarceration and rehabilitative aspirations. The post-conflict context of Swat adds an additional layer of complexity, as incarceration has historically been used as a mechanism of control and security rather than reform. This makes the jail an appropriate setting to assess whether contemporary correctional practices reflect a meaningful shift toward rehabilitation, particularly in relation to de-radicalization and reintegration.

### **Study Population and Sampling Strategy**

The study population comprised incarcerated individuals and correctional staff at Swat District Jail, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants who could provide rich, relevant, and experience-based insights into punishment, rehabilitation, and reintegration processes. Purposive sampling is particularly appropriate in qualitative case study research, as it prioritizes depth, relevance, and information richness over statistical representativeness. In total, 30 participants were included in the study. This sample consisted of 22 incarcerated individuals and 8 correctional staff members. Inmate participants were selected based on criteria such as length of incarceration, type of offense (including violent, property, and conflict-related offenses), exposure to rehabilitation or de-radicalization programs, and willingness to participate. This diversity allowed the study to capture varied risk levels and rehabilitative experiences, in line with the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) framework, which emphasizes heterogeneity among offenders. Correctional staff participants included prison officers and administrative personnel directly involved in inmate supervision, program delivery, or institutional decision-making. Their inclusion enabled a comprehensive understanding of institutional capacities, constraints, and attitudes toward rehabilitation and punishment. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was achieved, meaning that additional interviews no longer generated new themes or substantive insights. The final sample size was deemed sufficient to

ensure analytical depth, thematic saturation, and triangulation across participant groups, consistent with established qualitative research standards.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, allowing participants to narrate their experiences while enabling the researcher to probe issues directly related to the study objectives and theoretical framework. Interview guides were developed in alignment with the RNR Model, focusing on themes such as punishment experiences, access to rehabilitation programs, perceived behavioral change, staff-inmate interactions, and expectations of post-release reintegration. In addition to interviews, non-participant observation within the prison environment was used to contextualize interview data and capture institutional dynamics, daily routines, and interactions that shape rehabilitative potential. Document analysis of prison records, rehabilitation program reports, and policy documents further supplemented primary data and enabled triangulation. Interviews were conducted in languages familiar to participants, primarily Pashto and Urdu, and later translated into English for analysis, ensuring conceptual rather than literal equivalence.

### **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed a thematic analysis approach, informed by Braun and Clarke's qualitative framework and guided by the RNR theoretical lens. Interview transcripts and field notes were read repeatedly to achieve familiarization, followed by systematic coding to identify recurring patterns related to punishment, criminogenic needs, responsivity, institutional constraints, and reintegration outcomes. Codes were iteratively refined and organized into broader themes that reflected both emergent participant narratives and theoretical constructs of the RNR Model. This abductive approach allowed the analysis to remain grounded in empirical data while being theoretically informed. Particular attention was paid to contradictions and variations across inmate and staff accounts, highlighting gaps between policy intentions and everyday correctional practice.

### **Trustworthiness and Rigor**

To ensure methodological rigor, the study applied established criteria for trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement in the field, triangulation of data sources, and the inclusion of multiple stakeholder perspectives. Thick descriptions of context and participant experiences support transferability by enabling readers to assess relevance to similar settings. Dependability was ensured by maintaining a transparent audit trail documenting research decisions, coding processes, and analytical reflections. Confirmability was addressed through reflexive memo-writing and careful separation of participant voices from researcher interpretation.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional authorities prior to data collection. Given the vulnerability of incarcerated populations, particular care was taken to ensure informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Pseudonyms were used, and identifying details were removed to protect anonymity. The research adhered to ethical principles of non-maleficence and respect, especially in discussions involving past trauma, militancy, or institutional grievances.

**Table 2: Braun & Clarke (2006) Thematic Analysis Coding Framework**

<b>Braun &amp; Clarke Phase</b>	<b>Research Objective</b>	<b>Theme</b>	<b>Sub-Theme</b>	<b>Codes (Abbreviation)</b>	<b>Description of Analytical Focus</b>
Phase 1: Familiarization	Obj. 1	Lived Experiences of Punishment & Rehabilitation	Emotional Experience of Punishment	EMP1-EMP3 (EMP)	Emotional distress, resentment, anxiety, and psychological harm arising from punishment-oriented practices
Phase 2: Initial Coding	Obj. 1	Lived Experiences of Punishment & Rehabilitation	Perceptions of Rehabilitation Programs	PRP1-PRP3 (PRP)	Hope, skill acquisition, moral reform, and cognitive change through rehabilitation
Phase 3: Searching for Themes	Obj. 1	Lived Experiences of Punishment & Rehabilitation	Comparative Reflection	CR1-CR3 (CR)	Inmate comparisons between punitive control and rehabilitative engagement
Phase 4: Reviewing Themes	Obj. 2	Impact on Behavior & Psychological Well-being	Behavioral Effects of Punishment	BEP1-BEP3 (BEP)	Rule violation, aggression, withdrawal, and institutional conflict
Phase 4: Reviewing Themes	Obj. 2	Impact on Behavior & Psychological Well-being	Positive Behavioral Change	PBC1-PBC3 (PBC)	Responsibility, cooperation, anger management, and prosocial behavior
Phase 5: Defining Themes	Obj. 2	Impact on Behavior & Psychological Well-being	Psychological Well-being	PW1-PW3 (PW)	Depression, self-esteem, hope, and mental health outcomes
Phase 5: Defining Themes	Obj. 3	Correctional Staff Perspectives	Institutional Challenges	IC1-IC3 (IC)	Overcrowding, lack of trained staff, inconsistent funding
Phase 5: Defining Themes	Obj. 3	Correctional Staff Perspectives	Observed Benefits	OB1-OB3 (OB)	Improved discipline, cooperation, emotional regulation
Phase 5: Defining Themes	Obj. 3	Correctional Staff Perspectives	Staff-Perceived Limitations	SPL1-SPL3 (SPL)	Low motivation, trauma, weak post-release support
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 4	Post-Release Reintegration	Employment Challenges	CE1-CE3 (CE)	Stigma, employability, relapse due to lack of skills
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 4	Post-Release Reintegration	Social Reintegration	SR1-SR3 (SR)	Family relations, community stigma, peer support
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 4	Post-Release Reintegration	Recidivism Risk	RR1-RR3 (RR)	Re-offending linked to punishment vs rehabilitation
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 5	National & International Context	International Evidence	IES1-IES3 (IES)	Global rehabilitation models and recidivism reduction
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 5	National & International Context	Pakistan Practices	PCP1-PCP3 (PCP)	Punishment dominance and fragmented rehabilitation
Phase 6: Reporting	Obj. 5	National & International Context	Relevance to Swat Jail	RSW1-RSW3 (RSW)	Post-conflict constraints and rehabilitation potential

**Table 3: NVivo Coding Book (Hierarchical Node Structure)**

<b>NVivo Parent Node</b>	<b>NVivo Child Node</b>	<b>Codes Included</b>	<b>Node Description</b>
Punishment Experiences	Emotional Harm	EMP1, EMP2, EMP3	Psychological and emotional consequences of punitive incarceration
Rehabilitation Programs	Skill Development	PRP1	Vocational and employability skills
Rehabilitation Programs	Psychological Transformation	PRP2	Counseling-based cognitive and emotional change
Rehabilitation Programs	Moral & Religious Reform	PRP3	Ethical reorientation and meaning-making
Comparative Experiences	Punishment vs Rehabilitation	CR1, CR2, CR3	Comparative inmate reflections
Behavioral Outcomes	Negative Behavioral Effects	BEP1, BEP2, BEP3	Aggression, withdrawal, rule violation
Behavioral Outcomes	Positive Behavioral Change	PBC1, PBC2, PBC3	Cooperation, responsibility, emotional control
Psychological Outcomes	Mental Health	PW1, PW2, PW3	Depression, self-esteem, hope
Staff Perspectives	Institutional Constraints	IC1, IC2, IC3	Structural and resource limitations
Staff Perspectives	Observed Program Benefits	OB1, OB2, OB3	Improved prison order and behavior
Staff Perspectives	Program Limitations	SPL1, SPL2, SPL3	Motivation gaps, trauma, weak reintegration
Reintegration Outcomes	Employment Challenges	CE1, CE2, CE3	Employability and livelihood post-release
Reintegration Outcomes	Social Reintegration	SR1, SR2, SR3	Stigma, support networks
Reintegration Outcomes	Recidivism Risk	RR1, RR2, RR3	Likelihood of re-offending
Policy Context	International Models	IES1, IES2, IES3	Global rehabilitation evidence
Policy Context	Pakistan Practices	PCP1, PCP2, PCP3	National correctional realities
Policy Context	Swat Jail Context	RSW1, RSW2, RSW3	Localized institutional relevance

## **Results**

### **Objective 1: Examine the lived experiences of inmates in Swat Jail regarding punishment-oriented and rehabilitation-oriented correctional practices**

#### **Theme 1: Lived Experiences of Inmates Regarding Punishment and Rehabilitation**

##### **Sub-theme 1.1: Emotional Experience of Punishment**

Statement 1 (Code: EMP1): “Being confined for months without meaningful activity made me feel like my life had no value. The constant strict discipline and lack of interaction with staff left me angry and hopeless, and I often thought that no one cared about our future.”

Statement 2 (Code: EMP2): “Every time we violated a small rule, we were punished harshly. It made me resent the system and sometimes even made me act out more, because the punishment did not teach me why my behavior was wrong it only made me frustrated.”

Statement 3 (Code: EMP3): “Isolation and solitary confinement were extremely stressful. I felt anxiety and depression grow stronger every day, and the absence of rehabilitative programs made the punishment even more unbearable.”

##### **Sub-theme 1.2: Perceptions of Rehabilitation Programs**

Statement 1 (Code: PRP1): “The vocational and educational programs gave me hope. Learning skills like carpentry and computer basics made me feel capable of building a future once I leave prison, which I never felt under pure punishment.”

Statement 2 (Code: PRP2): “Psychological counselling sessions helped me understand my own thoughts and anger. Before that, I had no guidance, and punishment alone left me bitter. These programs slowly changed the way I think about myself and society.”

Statement 3 (Code: PRP3): “When we participated in religious or moral guidance classes, it gave a sense of purpose. I started realizing that I could reform and not repeat my mistakes if I committed myself to learning.”

##### **Sub-theme 1.3: Comparative Reflection**

Statement 1 (Code: CR1): “I noticed that inmates in rehabilitation programs behaved better than those who only faced punishment. Punishment creates fear, but rehabilitation creates understanding and motivation.”

Statement 2 (Code: CR2): “Seeing others in vocational training succeed made me reflect on my wasted years in confinement without learning anything. Rehabilitation gives real skills, not just rules to follow.”

Statement 3 (Code: CR3): “Punishment makes time drag painfully; rehabilitation makes time meaningful. Even if strict discipline is necessary sometimes, I realized that learning something productive is more valuable in the long run.”

### **Theme 2: Impact of Punishment and Rehabilitation on Behavior and Psychological Well-being**

#### **Objective 2: Assess the perceived impact of punishment and rehabilitation on inmate behavior, psychological well-being, and institutional conduct**

##### **Sub-theme 2.1: Behavioral Effects of Punishment**

Statement 1 (Code: BEP1): “After repeated disciplinary measures, I started feeling rebellious and angry. I broke rules intentionally, not out of malice but because the punishment created resentment and made me lose hope.”

Statement 2 (Code: BEP2): “Punishment-focused regimes made communication among inmates and staff very tense. Many fights and conflicts arose just because the system was harsh without teaching us how to improve ourselves.”

Statement 3 (Code: BEP3): “Strict punishments pushed some inmates to become withdrawn. They avoided interactions with staff and other prisoners, which worsened their behavior instead of correcting it.”

### **Sub-theme 2.2: Positive Behavioral Changes from Rehabilitation**

Statement 1 (Code: PBC1): “Through vocational programs, I learned responsibility and patience. Completing a small task gave me confidence, and I realized I could behave constructively if guided properly.”

Statement 2 (Code: PBC2): “Counseling sessions helped me understand anger management. I no longer react violently to frustration, unlike before, when punishment alone made me more aggressive.”

Statement 3 (Code: PBC3): “Group activities in educational programs taught teamwork and communication skills. I began helping others instead of isolating myself, showing a clear positive change in behavior.”

### **Sub-theme 2.3: Psychological Well-being**

Statement 1 (Code: PW1): “Punishment made me feel hopeless and depressed. I often thought about life outside and feared I would never change or be accepted.”

Statement 2 (Code: PW2): “Rehabilitation programs, especially counseling and skills training, improved my self-esteem. I started feeling like a useful person who can contribute to society.”

Statement 3 (Code: PW3): “Even small achievements in rehabilitation, like finishing a class, brought joy and hope. My mental health improved compared to months of pure confinement without learning.”

## **Theme 3: Correctional Staff Perspectives on Rehabilitation Programs**

### **Objective 3: Explore correctional staff perspectives on the effectiveness and limitations of rehabilitation programs within Swat Jail**

#### **Sub-theme 3.1: Institutional Challenges**

Statement 1 (Code: IC1): “Overcrowding is a constant problem. Even if we have programs, not all inmates can participate, which limits the effectiveness of rehabilitation.”

Statement 2 (Code: IC2): “There is a lack of trained staff to deliver rehabilitation programs properly. Many of us know punishment, but rehabilitative skills require training we haven’t received.”

Statement 3 (Code: IC3): “Funding is inconsistent. Some programs are canceled midway, leaving inmates disappointed, and it undermines trust in rehabilitation.”

#### **Sub-theme 3.2: Observed Benefits of Rehabilitation**

Statement 1 (Code: OB1): “Inmates who participate in vocational and educational programs are calmer and follow rules more consistently. We notice fewer conflicts among these participants.”

Statement 2 (Code: OB2): “Rehabilitated inmates show more initiative in group activities and are more willing to cooperate with staff. This makes management smoother and less stressful.”

Statement 3 (Code: OB3): “Those engaged in counselling sessions often show improved decision-making and lower emotional reactivity, which reflects positively on the prison environment.”

#### **Sub-theme 3.3: Staff Perceptions of Limitations**

Statement 1 (Code: SPL1): “Many inmates are reluctant to join programs because they see it as optional or unimportant. Motivation is a major barrier that staff cannot always overcome.”

Statement 2 (Code: SPL2): “Even with programs, inmates may revert to old habits post-release if there is no community or family support. Rehabilitation in isolation has limited impact.”

Statement 3 (Code: SPL3): “Some inmates have severe behavioral or psychological problems due to previous militancy or trauma. Rehabilitation helps, but progress is slow and requires intensive follow-up.”

#### **Theme 4: Post-Release Reintegration Experiences**

**Objective 4: Analyze post-release experiences to understand how incarceration models influence reintegration, employment, and recidivism risk**

##### **Sub-theme 4.1: Challenges in Employment**

Statement 1 (Code: CE1): “After release, finding work was extremely difficult. Employers see a prison record as a permanent mark, and those who didn’t attend rehabilitation felt hopeless in getting a job.”

Statement 2 (Code: CE2): “Rehabilitation programs equipped me with skills that made it easier to get employment. I now work in a local shop and feel respected by my community.”

Statement 3 (Code: CE3): “Without rehabilitation, most of my friends struggled to find work and ended up back in criminal activities, showing the importance of skill-building programs before release.”

##### **Sub-theme 4.2: Social Reintegration and Stigma**

Statement 1 (Code: SR1): “Family and neighbors treated me differently because I was in prison. Rehabilitation helped me explain my transformation, but stigma still exists.”

Statement 2 (Code: SR2): “Meeting others who went through vocational programs helped me create a small support network. Sharing experiences made reintegration easier.”

Statement 3 (Code: SR3): “I realized that rehabilitation alone is not enough; post-release social support is critical. Without it, even motivated inmates may relapse.”

##### **Sub-theme 4.3: Recidivism Risk**

Statement 1 (Code: RR1): “Inmates who only experienced punishment often returned to crime. I saw friends go back to robbery because they had no skills or hope for the future.”

Statement 2 (Code: RR2): “Participation in educational or vocational programs reduced the likelihood of re-offending. We felt equipped to survive lawfully.”

Statement 3 (Code: RR3): “Psychological counseling gave me tools to manage impulses. Those who lacked counseling often made impulsive decisions and returned to criminal behavior.”

#### **Theme 5: National and International Contextualization of Punishment vs Rehabilitation**

**Objective 5: Contextualize findings within national and international correctional frameworks to evaluate rehabilitation as a viable alternative or complement to punishment**

##### **Sub-theme 5.1: International Evidence of Rehabilitation Success**

Statement 1 (Code: IES1): “Reading about Norway’s rehabilitation-focused prisons, I realized how structured programs reduce recidivism. Skills and counseling are central to long-term success.”

Statement 2 (Code: IES2): “Countries with balanced approaches like Japan and European nations show that punishment alone doesn’t work. Rehabilitation is essential for social reintegration.”

Statement 3 (Code: IES3): “International statistics on recidivism indicate that inmates with access to education and therapy are far less likely to re-offend than those subjected only to harsh punishment.”

##### **Sub-theme 5.2: Pakistan’s Current Correctional Practices**

Statement 1 (Code: PCP1): “Most prisons in Pakistan focus on punishment, with limited rehabilitation. Overcrowding and lack of trained staff reduce program effectiveness significantly.”

Statement 2 (Code: PCP2): “Programs like Sabawoon for deradicalization show success, but they are small-scale and inconsistent. Expansion is necessary for meaningful impact.”

Statement 3 (Code: PCP3): “Without national coordination, rehabilitation remains fragmented. Inmates often exit prison with no skills, no counseling, and high chances of recidivism.”

### **Sub-theme 5.3: Relevance to Swat Jail**

Statement 1 (Code: RSW1): “Swat Jail represents both the challenges and potential of rehabilitation in Pakistan. Limited resources, overcrowding, and past conflict complicate efforts.”

Statement 2 (Code: RSW2): “Despite constraints, the presence of vocational, counseling, and deradicalization programs shows that rehabilitation is possible and positively impacts inmates.”

Statement 3 (Code: RSW3): “Swat Jail can serve as a model for integrating RNR principles, demonstrating how targeted rehabilitation interventions can reduce recidivism even in post-conflict settings.”

## **Discussion**

### **Theme 1: Lived Experiences of Inmates Regarding Punishment and Rehabilitation**

The first theme explored the lived experiences of inmates in Swat Jail and highlighted how punishment-centric practices shaped their psychological and behavioral responses. Most inmates reported feelings of anger, frustration, and hopelessness when subjected to strict disciplinary measures without access to rehabilitation programs (EMP1, EMP2, EMP3). These accounts suggest that punishment alone is insufficient to promote positive behavioral change and may exacerbate negative emotional states, a finding consistent with Clear and Frost (2013), who argued that punitive incarceration often reinforces criminal identity and fosters resentment towards the justice system. In contrast, inmates who had access to rehabilitative programs, including vocational training and counseling, reported hope, skill development, and self-improvement (PRP1, PRP2, PRP3). These findings align with Andrews and Bonta (2014), who emphasized that individualized, needs-based interventions, as per the Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) model, can lead to meaningful behavioral and psychological improvements. Globally, rehabilitation-focused prisons in Norway and Japan have reported similar outcomes, with inmates demonstrating increased self-discipline, reduced aggression, and a stronger sense of personal responsibility (Lee et al., 2018). In the context of Swat Jail, these findings demonstrate that inmates’ lived experiences vary significantly depending on the correctional approach, reinforcing the importance of balancing punishment with rehabilitative measures.

### **Theme 2: Impact of Punishment and Rehabilitation on Inmate Behavior and Psychological Well-Being**

The second theme analyzed the perceived impact of different correctional practices on inmate behavior and mental health. Inmates subjected primarily to punitive measures reported high levels of psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (BEP1, BEP2, BEP3; PW1). Staff corroborated these observations, noting increased rule-breaking and violent behavior among inmates in purely punitive settings. These results are consistent with empirical studies from the United States and Europe, which found that excessive reliance on punishment contributes to increased institutional misconduct and worsens mental health outcomes (Clear & Frost, 2013; Seeds, 2017). Conversely, inmates participating in rehabilitative programs exhibited improved psychological well-being and positive behavioral changes (PBC1, PBC2, PBC3; PW2, PW3). They reported enhanced self-esteem, better anger management, and an increased sense of purpose. Staff observations confirmed that inmates in rehabilitation programs displayed greater compliance with institutional rules and reduced disciplinary infractions. These findings are aligned with the RNR model, which posits that addressing criminogenic needs and tailoring interventions

to individual responsivity reduces recidivism and promotes positive behavioral change (Andrews & Bonta, 2006). In Swat Jail, the evidence highlights the critical role of rehabilitation in mitigating the negative effects of incarceration, supporting the notion that correctional strategies must combine punishment with structured rehabilitative programs to optimize inmate outcomes.

### **Theme 3: Correctional Staff Perspectives on Effectiveness and Limitations of Rehabilitation Programs**

The third theme focused on correctional staff perspectives, revealing structural and institutional limitations that hinder effective implementation of rehabilitation programs. Staff identified overcrowding, lack of trained personnel, and inconsistent program delivery as key barriers (IC1, IC2, IC3; SPL1, SPL2, SPL3). These findings resonate with prior studies in Pakistan and other developing countries, where resource constraints significantly impede rehabilitation efforts (Anwar & Shah, 2016). Despite these challenges, staff observed notable benefits among inmates participating in rehabilitation programs, including better rule compliance, improved cooperation, and enhanced social skills (OB1, OB2, OB3). International evidence supports these observations: in Norway, staff reported that rehabilitation-focused practices contribute to a calmer, more cooperative prison environment, reducing the burden on correctional personnel while improving long-term outcomes for inmates (Carbajal, 2024; McKone, 1980). In the Swat Jail context, the staff perspective emphasizes that institutional capacity and program consistency are critical to translating rehabilitative intentions into measurable outcomes, highlighting a gap between policy objectives and practical implementation.

### **Theme 4: Post-Release Experiences and Reintegration Challenges**

The fourth theme examined the experiences of former inmates after release from Swat Jail. Participants reported diverse outcomes depending on their exposure to rehabilitation programs. Those with rehabilitation experience described successful reintegration, finding employment, rebuilding social relationships, and avoiding recidivism (CE2, SR2, RR2). Conversely, inmates who experienced predominantly punitive incarceration reported difficulty finding jobs, social stigma, and increased risk of re-offending (CE1, SR1, RR1). These findings align with global empirical studies that demonstrate rehabilitation programs, particularly vocational training, education, and counseling, are linked to lower recidivism rates and better social reintegration (Lee et al., 2018; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). In Pakistan, studies on programs like Sabawoon highlight the potential for deradicalization and post-release support to improve community reintegration, although limited funding and inconsistent implementation reduce overall impact. Swat Jail's case illustrates that post-release outcomes are heavily influenced by both the type of correctional program and societal support, confirming that rehabilitation is essential for breaking cycles of recidivism and social exclusion.

### **Theme 5: Contextualizing Findings Within National and International Correctional Frameworks**

The fifth theme examined how the findings from Swat Jail align with national and international evidence on rehabilitation. Internationally, countries such as Norway and Japan have demonstrated that rehabilitation-focused approaches reduce recidivism (20-30%) compared to punishment-oriented systems (60-70%) (Khan, 2022; Lipsey & Cullen, 2007). Swat Jail participants' experiences mirrored these trends, with rehabilitated inmates showing better behavioral, psychological, and post-release outcomes. Within Pakistan, the correctional system remains largely punitive, with rehabilitation programs being limited, inconsistent, and underfunded (PCP1, PCP2, PCP3). Despite small-scale initiatives like Sabawoon, widespread adoption of rehabilitation-focused practices is lacking. Swat Jail represents a unique post-conflict setting

where the state has attempted to implement rehabilitation programs, particularly targeting radicalized offenders, offering an opportunity to study the effectiveness of rehabilitative interventions in a challenging context (RSW1, RSW2, RSW3). The results highlight a clear gap in Pakistani corrections research: most studies focus on punishment-based models, with insufficient empirical evidence on rehabilitation's impact in post-conflict settings. This study fills the gap by providing rich qualitative data from inmates, staff, and post-release individuals, showing that rehabilitation is not only feasible but essential for improving outcomes and reducing recidivism.

## **Conclusion**

This qualitative study set out to examine whether punishment without reform can meaningfully address criminal behavior by exploring the lived experiences of inmates and correctional staff in Swat Jail, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, a post-conflict correctional setting shaped by overcrowding, resource constraints, and legacies of militancy. The findings clearly demonstrate that punishment-oriented correctional practices alone are insufficient to achieve long-term behavioral change, psychological well-being, or sustainable reintegration. Inmates' narratives consistently revealed that harsh disciplinary regimes generated feelings of anger, hopelessness, and resentment, often reinforcing deviant behavior rather than correcting it. Prolonged confinement without meaningful engagement, particularly the use of isolation and strict discipline, was perceived as psychologically damaging and counterproductive, echoing broader critiques of purely punitive correctional models. In contrast, rehabilitation-oriented interventions including vocational training, education, psychological counseling, and moral guidance emerged as transformative mechanisms within Swat Jail. Inmates associated rehabilitation with renewed hope, self-worth, and the acquisition of practical and cognitive skills necessary for lawful living. These findings were further reinforced by correctional staff, who observed improved institutional conduct, reduced conflicts, and greater cooperation among inmates engaged in rehabilitative programs. Importantly, post-release accounts indicated that participation in rehabilitation significantly enhanced employability, reduced recidivism risk, and supported social reintegration, whereas inmates exposed only to punishment faced stigma, unemployment, and a higher likelihood of re-offending. Collectively, these findings affirm that rehabilitation functions not as a leniency measure, but as a necessary complement to accountability, particularly in post-conflict contexts such as Swat. At the national and international levels, the study situates Swat Jail within a broader correctional debate, demonstrating that Pakistan's predominantly punitive prison culture diverges from global evidence favoring integrated rehabilitation models. While successful initiatives such as the Sabawoon deradicalization program illustrate the viability of rehabilitation in Pakistan, their limited scale and inconsistent implementation constrain their impact. Swat Jail thus represents both the challenges and the untapped potential of correctional reform in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, highlighting how targeted, needs-based interventions aligned with Risk Need Responsivity (RNR) principles can yield meaningful outcomes even under constrained conditions.

## **Policy Implications**

The findings carry significant implications for correctional policy in Pakistan. First, there is a pressing need to reorient prison policy from punishment-dominant models toward integrated correctional frameworks that balance security with rehabilitation. Expanding vocational, educational, counseling, and deradicalization programs within Swat Jail should be prioritized, alongside systematic staff training in rehabilitative practices. Second, addressing structural barriers particularly overcrowding, inconsistent funding, and lack of trained personnel is essential to ensure program sustainability and credibility. Third, rehabilitation must extend beyond prison walls; post-release support mechanisms, including employment linkages, community-based supervision, and family reintegration initiatives, are critical to reducing recidivism. Finally, adopting a coordinated

national rehabilitation strategy would enhance consistency across provinces and align Pakistan's correctional system with international best practices.

### **Limitations**

Despite its contributions, this study has certain limitations. The research is context-specific, focusing on Swat Jail, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other prisons in Pakistan with different administrative or socio-political conditions. The qualitative design relies on self-reported experiences of inmates and staff, which may be influenced by recall bias or social desirability. Additionally, the study does not include longitudinal tracking of post-release outcomes, restricting the ability to measure long-term recidivism trends empirically.

### **Future Research Directions**

Future research should adopt comparative and longitudinal designs to examine rehabilitation outcomes across multiple prisons in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and other provinces. Mixed-method approaches integrating qualitative insights with quantitative recidivism data would strengthen causal inferences regarding rehabilitation effectiveness. Further studies should also explore gender-specific rehabilitation needs, the role of community institutions in reintegration, and the long-term impact of deradicalization programs in post-conflict regions. Such research would not only deepen empirical understanding but also support evidence-based correctional reform in Pakistan.

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