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The Juvenile Justice System: A Critical Analysis Of Effectiveness & Addressing Juvenile Delinquency In Pakistan.

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ABSTRACT

This research paper is developed to analyze the gaps and challenges found in the juvenile justice system, alongside the growing issue of rise in delinquency in Pakistan, targeting the socioeconomic, factors and investigating the underlying psychological reasons is the primary motive of this analysis. The literature relied upon is all the pre exiting laws made in order to provide protection to juvenile's offenders of Pakistan however while these laws exist, there is no proper enforcement, check and balance, and management crisis in the state. This study critically examines the extents of effectiveness of juvenile justice system and the cause of delinquency while focusing on the practical implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act-2000 and Juvenile Justice Act 2018, their relation to other relevant laws and understanding how they are applied to states in reality. Focusing on the involvement of youth in criminal behavior, factors contributing in juvenile delinquency and resultantly revealing the causes, negligence and shadow casted upon juvenile justice in Pakistan despite legislative and administrative advancements The system's effectiveness is hindered by inadequate infrastructure at foundational level, lack of trained personnel, insufficient resources and administrative failure to acknowledgement. While highlighting the need for reforms and suggesting the future recommendations for investments in the juvenile justice system, this research aims to ensure that it provides adequate support and services to juvenile offenders in the country and ultimately impacting in reduction of juvenile delinquency and promotion of their rights being protected and mental, physical well-being of children when they came in conflict with the law.

Key Words: Juvenile, Justice, JJSA, Juvenile Delinquency, Juvenile Courts.

Introduction

Pakistan's juvenile justice system has undergone significant transformations in recent years, with the enactment of the Juvenile Justice System Act-2018 and the earlier Juvenile Justice Ordinance-2000. These legislative measures aim to establish a framework to deal with children who are in conflict with the law, while emphasizing on rehabilitation, education, and reintegration into society. Despite these efforts, the

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country still grapples as high rates of juvenile delinquency prevails, and concerns persist about the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system in addressing the root causes of delinquent behavior.

The current legal system of Pakistan is currently quite ill-equipped to address any of these challenges effectively and has been a target of international criticism because there exists significant shortage of trained legal professionals who tends to understand the complexities of juvenile cases, which limits the ability of these children to receive proper representation in the court and their due rights infringed. Moreover, societal stigma surrounding mental health concerns rising due to toxic environments of these juvenile offenders in Pakistan, discourages the society from acknowledging undermining psychological trauma or seeking necessary support, a stigma deeply rooted in the cultural and social norms of these regions of the country.

The Juvenile justice Act- 2018 is a landmark legislation in the history of juvenile justice of Pakistan as it raises the age of criminal responsibility to sixteen years, establishes juvenile courts, and outlines the procedures for the handling of juvenile cases across courts of Pakistan. The Act also emphasizes the importance of diversion, rehabilitation, and reintegration programs for juvenile offenders. However, the implementation of these provisions remains a challenge, and concerns exist about the capacity of the system to provide adequate support and services to juvenile offenders. While the country faces financial crisis every year, the rehabilitation is left commonly neglected and unpractical, resulting in admission of the juvenile offenders in same procedures as those of adult's criminals, where these juvenile offenders are commonly exposed to corporal punishments which only contributes as reinforcement of delinquent behavior as a consequence, instead of a proving to be a solution.

Pakistan has been exposed to criticism nationally and internationally, when it's come to justice since ages, for the violation of human rights and corporal punishment against the juveniles without acknowledging the due rights under UN charter. This research seeks to critically analyze the effectiveness of Pakistan's juvenile justice system in addressing delinquency, with a focus on the implementation of the Juvenile justice Act- 2018 and the Juvenile Justice Ordinance- 2000. Through a comprehensive examination of the system's strengths and weaknesses, this study aims to identify gaps and challenges that hinder the system's ability to prevent and address juvenile delinquency, targeting the strengths of JJS 2018 and how they can be further polished to bring about the desired reforms in the deprived country's future, the goal is to study the framework or Act and these gaps can be filled.

Background Of Research Study

Pakistan stands on sixth as the most populous country of the world, having almost half of its population under the age of 18 years, where Adolescents alone formulates in rough 23% of its total population. Nevertheless, the mental health services to the most vulnerable population are almost negligible considering the statistical data.

Youth is usually the main building block and foundation which always plays a vital role in the shaping of a prosperous society, however if the future of a society starts to be indulgenced in commitment of immoral activity or sever nature offenses, this is the warning for an alarming situation. In order to cure this tense situation and provide protection to the future of country numerous efforts are witnessed to bring about

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impactful and positive change to evolve the juvenile justice system in world.

The juvenile justice system has a rich history which dates back to the late 19th century when the concept of juvenile delinquency actually emerged for the first time, leading to the establishment of separate courts for minors while also focusing on rehabilitation and reform rather than harsh punishment. With the passage of time the approached shifted. In the 1960s-1970s, a new punitive turn took over, in which more harsher penalties were given and transfers of minors into adult courts was practiced. But this changed yet again in the 1990s-2000s where a fresh resurgence of the rehabilitative approach was introduced, emphasizing on evidence-based programs and alternatives to detention. Throughout these changes, the system continues to evolve, striving for improvement with the passage of times.

According to articles laid down in the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) 1989:

Article 37: States are bound to provide child's rights to protection from torture, humiliating treatment, harsh punishment, life imprisonment, and unlawful deprivation of liberty.

Article 39: Right to receive rehabilitation and reintegration

Article 40: With meaning to the juvenile justice, involves the treatment beginning from the time of allegation is made through investigation, arrest, charge, trial and sentence.

Globally, many countries have implemented and introduced new laws and regulations which prioritizing minors' rights and unique needs while they are in confinement, emphasizing separate custodial measures for instance remand homes and rehabilitation institutions near to their homes. This facilitates family visits, and initiate supporting rehabilitation.

All International standards regarding the juvenile offenders, stresses on avoiding pre-trial detention and minimizing liberty restrictions, using detention only as a last preventive resort in extreme rare cases. These international guidelines have required the Juvenile courts to prioritize least restrictive measures, limiting detention time periods. Unfortunately, systemic issues like procrastination, apathy, and lack of resources often lead to prolonged imprisonment of these juvenile offenders, hindering rehabilitation.

Problem Statement

Pakistan taken steps and has introduced legislation, including the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance- 2000 and the Juvenile Justice System Act- 2018 with an intent protect juvenile offenders' rights. However, the part where implementation is concerned is neglected and remains limited, giving birth to further concerns for international human rights bodies and activists. Apart from this the hunt for sole reason of why these particular minors tend to commit such acts remain neglected, this matter of criminal mens rea of a child is mostly rooted to domestic shortcomings and questionable upbringing methods. Although this problem maybe expected and thus neglected, to be only the concern of parents or imitate family but we as the whole

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general society plays a role in behavior of another, especially a vulnerable minor, who is still in the process of developing and has potential to be reshaped as a batter individual. Pakistan's juvenile justice system lacks effective rehabilitation and reintegration programs, leaving most young offenders without access to education, mental health care, or post-release support undermining the intended rehabilitative purpose of the JJSA, having faced legal and systematic challenges these may include: Overcrowded detention centers, inadequate staff, exploitation, abuse, harassments, ineffective rehabilitation programs.

Research Objectives

To analyze the existing legal framework in Pakistan concerning the juvenile justice system

To increase awareness and understanding regarding the juvenile delinquency and provide steps to reform the concerning hurdles in Pakistan.

Analyze the effective is the Juvenile Justice System Act- 2018 in providing a legal framework for dealing with juvenile offenders.

Identifying the challenges and gaps in the implementation of the juvenile justice and how can they be addressed.

Limitations Of Study

This study is confined to the Pakistan legal context, specifically examining the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance- 2000 and the Juvenile Justice System Act- 2018, along with relevant international laws and standards for the safeguard and rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. While this focus allows for an in-depth analysis of Pakistan's juvenile justice system, it also means that the findings and conclusions drawn from this research may be limited in their applicability to other countries or jurisdictions. Furthermore, this study targets the undermining challenges and socio-economic barriers restricting its inhabitants to seek awareness for their due rights, which may cause limitation to its case studies and findings, since there appears very diminutive theoretical and conceptual data.

Similarly, this research is developed on the existing laws and ordinance, raising the chances of some changes since the study began. The conclusion drawn are based on only relevant laws, regulations, internationally recognized standards and human rights and may not apply universally. Any future researches conducted could benefit from reforms, recommendations and comparative analyses across multiple jurisdictions, of this analysis, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how juvenile justice systems functions globally, enhancing the extents of applicability and relevance of findings.

Literature Review

Pakistan's juvenile justice system is rooted in its deep historical context, the role of 1973's Constitution plays a crucial role in protecting the rights of children, ensuring to the citizens under Article 9 of fundamental rights, that "no person shall be deprived of life or liberty save in accordance with law", forming the bedrock for broader legal safeguards, which includes all those pertinent to juvenile justice. Moreover, under Article 10 special protections are given regarding arrest and detention, requiring that

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no individual is to be held without being informed of the grounds for their apprehension and guaranteeing access to legal representation. whereas, Article 25(c) explicitly empowers the state to provide special protections for women and children, underscoring Pakistan's commitment to child welfare. To further strengthen juvenile justice, Pakistan has enacted specific legislation such as the Juvenile Justice System Act, 2018, which aims to ensure fair treatment and rehabilitation for young offenders.
The UN Convention in 1989, based upon the rights of children (UNCRC), is the most globally ratified human's rights treaty in the world, with a total of 196 states party to it, except the United States and Somalia are not signatories to it. This convention highlights the guidelines for the administration of the juvenile justice of its signatories in a manner that upholds the rights and dignity of children in conflict with the law.

Juvenile Justice system Act- 2018

The Juvenile Justice System Ordinance was introduced in 2000, aiming to set out and provide protection to juveniles who were found to be involved in criminal litigation and trying to rehabilitate them in society. This seemed to be a milestone achievement, being the first federal law for regulation and the protection of juveniles but this milestone never got to glory and ended in utter disappointment, as juveniles were met with an increased onslaught of corporal punishments, leading to conclusion that the ordinance was inconsistent with fundamental rights under constitution of Pakistan, containing the right to be dealt in accordance with law, right to life and liberty and right to equality. As a result, the JJSO 2000 was amended and reformulated into now enforced JJS act in 2018. The Act maintains the key provision of JJSO that provides for the legal aid, establishment of juvenile courts in each province, special procedures in manner of arrest, investigation of juveniles, it also mentions those special procedures for investigation and detention regarding female juvenile, establishment of rehabilitation centers and observation homes and alternative forms of justice through alternative formal proceedings under section 9 and 10. However, this act as well has been remain limited to papers only, where the sever punishments on juvenile offenders remain intact as the process of age determination reside with police authorities to identify the proper age of these juveniles and at times without proper age determination report minors as adults, to avoid the safeguards accorded to children under the JJSA- 2018. Many of these juveniles coming from deprived families has no age record or documents to back their claims of minority while being convicted.
The previous Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000, which led to harsh and outdated punishments for child delinquents, which was meant to be improved after the introduction of the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 as a legislative effort to provide legal protection and ensure fair treatment for child offenders. Despite that JJSA 2018, juveniles in Pakistan still face discrimination and violence, mainly in police stations, the stipulation that arrested minor suspected offenders are to be kept in observation homes, not police stations, and that their parents/legal guardians or probation officers should be informed immediately after arrest, even a trial cannot be held in absence of legal guardian according to JJSA 2018. Moreover, it lacks clear legislative guidelines regarding torture in minor offender investigations which leads these Juvenile offenders being subjected to abuse, torture, inhumane treatments in custody, and rape

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during investigation by police and incarceration. While JJSA 2018 allows for separate observation homes the juvenile prisoners in Pakistan still are nonexistent.
In accordance with the section 16 of JJSA 2018, death sentences, handcuffing, and all forms of corporal punishment for juvenile offenders are prohibited, meanwhile the opposite occurs in reality. Pakistan has enacted stronger legislation post-2000, prohibiting corporal punishment of juveniles in custody. Similarly, the JJSA 2018, Section 15, also promotes rehabilitation over retribution against juvenile offenders but Pakistan's court system often award life sentences as studied in case studies, in provincial High Court jurisprudence.

Prevalence of juvenile delinquency

The concept of juvenile delinquency means any ill behavior on behalf of an individual who has not attained the age of maturity i.e. 18 years, and this behavior results in violation of code of criminal procedures. A child is not inherently born a criminal; rather, it is the pervasive influence of toxic environments and challenging circumstances that shapes their trajectory. Since these juvenile offenders in these are not merely to be considered as offenders but victims in a sense as well. They are to be handled differently than otherwise normal offenders and when they are tried separately, they have legal procedural protection, which is not normally available to adults' offenders in custody.

As Frederick Douglass once famously stated;

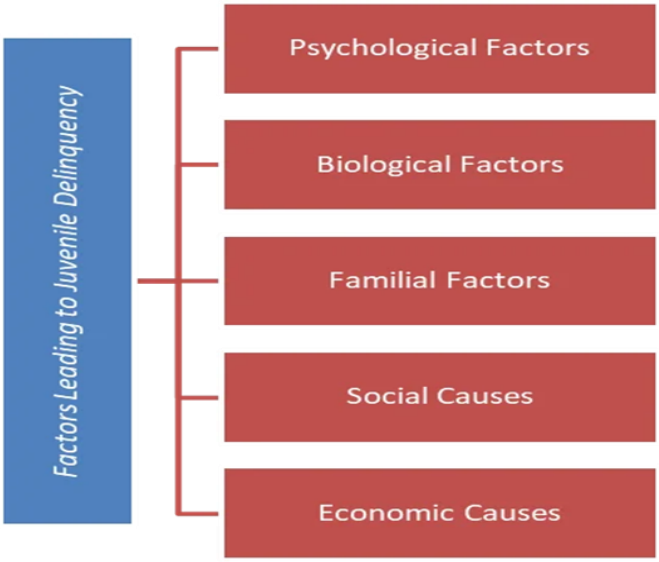
"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men."
A complex interplay of socioeconomic and psychological factors significantly impacts a child's development, often pushing them towards the path leading to delinquency. Domestic violence, a significant yet neglected social issue, plays a crucial role in shaping delinquent behavior among children, being raised in abusive households often mirror such behavior in their interactions with peers and may engage in violent acts within society. Extensive research has demonstrated that harsh and degrading disciplinary methods during early childhood contributes to the development of aggressive tendencies and violent attitudes later in life.

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The concerning rise of juvenile delinquency surge stems from a complex socio-economic landscape in Pakistan, in which over three million children live below the line of poverty, forcing them to do child labor and be the bread winner of families at such young age, this harsh environment exposes them to exploitation and trauma. The vulnerable environment they foster in promotes antisocial behavior while increasing delinquency risks even more among such population. Pakistan has pledged into protection of these minors' rights, to ensure their safety, well-being, and future prospects, when it became a signatory to the 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child but these implementation gaps remain persistent and efforts to address root causes and support at-risk youth hinders throughout, while doing so risking their interests and threating the lives of these young individuals for a promising future ahead.



The above figure highlights the key factors that contribute to formation of juvenile offenders in a society. Similarly, in Pakistan, financial suffering stands out as a critical driver of juvenile delinquency. Poverty, a lack of access to education, and limited opportunities can compel children to engage in illicit activities as a means of survival or to support their families. This economic distress when coupled with societal pressures and inadequate support systems, can erode a child's sense of hope and agency, making them vulnerable to exploitation and involvement in criminal behavior and easy prey of unforgiving part of society. The unstable financial conditions often lead to psychological stress, malnutrition, and exposure to violence, further exacerbating the risk in rise of juvenile delinquency. Evidently, addressing the root causes of financial hardship is paramount in preventing juvenile delinquency and fostering a safer environment to foster for children in Pakistan.

Nonexistent juvenile Courts and prisons

As per the Section 4 (10) of the very Act, juvenile cases are to be held other than the

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place where ordinary courts take place, the motive behind this is not exposing minors to adult criminals is to focus on helping these yet to develop minds, learn and change instead of just punishing them, as they're more capable to reform. This separation also helps keep the focus on rehabilitation, education, and family support, which lowers the risk that a mistake in childhood will turn into a lifelong pattern of crime. But despite the existing legal provisions, the practical application of juvenile justice in Pakistan falls insufficient regarding court proceedings. Although the legal framework for juveniles is deemed satisfactory on paper, some laws governing them, for instance the Prison Act-1894 and the Prison Rules-1978, also known as Jail Manuals, are over a century old. In the Prison Rules 1978 under chapter 12 it is addressed that the juvenile offenders specifically, is not enforced in practice. This includes the deplorable and devastating practice of admitting juveniles with adult criminals in cells, rather than in dedicated rehabilitation facilities.

It is for a fact that juvenile cells or wards are not equivalent to the Reformatories or Rehabilitation centers, specifically designed for children's best interests, a significant number of juveniles are kept in general jails due to the lack of such specialized institutions. Even the nominal instruction for wardens to be less strict with juveniles in these cells is often disregarded. This commingling with adult offenders can have severe and long-lasting negative impacts on children, exposing them to further criminal influence and trauma, whereas on the contrary to the rehabilitative institutions provides a spirit intended by juvenile justice principles.
Juvenile detention fosters further criminal socialization, where young offenders networking with delinquent peers and reinforcing anti-social behaviors and attitudes. These associations often lead to recurring criminal activity, growing the risk of reoffending after release. Without effective intervention, juveniles may develop habitual offending patterns that escalate in severity and becoming involved in gangs, seeking identity, security, and belonging. Gang affiliation heightens delinquency risks, exposing youth to exploitation, and an increased likelihood of captivity or fatal encounters.

Underprivileged access to justice

Juvenile offenders in Pakistan overwhelmingly hail from underprivileged backgrounds, minors from low-income backgrounds are often unfairly criminalized for engaging in activities necessary for their survival and due to financial hardship, limited access to legal assistance, and the inability to meet bail requirements, many faces extended pre-trial detention. Lacking resources for legal counsel, these children often become easy targets for police and other legal agents who may exploit their ignorance or desperation to secure confessions or frame cases. Many reports from organizations like the Justice Project Pakistan (JPP) detail instances where children, unable to afford bail or legal representation, remain in adult prisons for extended periods, making them vulnerable to abuse and further criminalization.
In common practice when a defendant doesn't have financial support to appoint a legal counsel and when they make their first appearance to the court, the judge may appoint a public prosecutor to the defendant on behalf of the case, regardless of their existing caseloads or the qualification to take over that particular case. As a result, the

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poor defendants are left with inadequate legal assistance as cannot pay for proper councils.

In accordance to the Reformatory school Act 1987, Boarstal institutions and industrial schools are to be established and every juvenile who was to be kept for a period extended for more than three months should be sent to attend these schools. Similarly in the start of 2025 the Sindh Government launched an initiative of the education for prisons departments, offering complete educational support to juvenile offenders locked in prisoners in the province but this, setting yet another example of an effort turning into dust. Research has indicated that juveniles that are tent to be exposed to traditional justice systems often reoffend after release, as they hail from backgrounds that are marked by generational poverty, abuse, and illiteracy, acting as driving force behind the commission of such serious violations.

Section 4 (8) of the Act highlights that a prescribed period of no more than six months, shall be given to decide a case after cognition and it can only be extended upon presentation of reasonable cause of delay. However, in reality these juveniles are kept in lockups for unannounced period of months to years, these children are only being made rotted into what they should be protected in the foundational years of their lives, whilst the family suffers emotionally and financially to bring their child to justice of extensive legal proceedings.

Between the years, 2005-2019, there is a total of 22,000+ juvenile cases reported in Pakistan, with a solid 44% under trial and only 6% (2,620 cases) resulting in convictions, this highlights the prolonged detention for many awaiting trials judicial procedures.

Insufficient specialized and trained professionals

The majority of first information reports (FIR), with respect to juvenile offenders are misleading and typically recorded as "nojawan" when it comes to age factor. The on-duty police officers often fail to verify the actual age of suspected offenders, leading to them to mistakenly recording of their cases under standard of adult court proceedings. Even if later these individuals are determined to be juveniles at the trial stage, they are already standing at grave risk of having their rights denied, as they were throughout the police investigation phase. Such violations commonly include, the denial of the right to preventive detention to give propriate safeguards for juveniles, absence of a legal guardian during interrogation and trial stages. Henceforth, this lack of awareness and ill conduct by police officers regarding criminal procedures is a significant contributing factor to the failure in upholding the responsibilities owed to minors under their custody.

A vast number of medical experts are unprofessional, lacking specialized training when it comes to juvenile cases. For the matter of age determination of a juvenile offender an age assessment test is done. There includes a series of proper professional steps provided by the law enforcement authorities that includes a few steps in which, x-rayed and other physical examinations and dental tests are directed in order to record the proper age of the concerned suspected offender. However, it is crucial to note that this is age determination methods cannot verify the exact age of any person and can vary from two years range, making it unreliable.

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International comparative Analysis

Juvenile justice is deep-rooted in the idea that the state serves as a guardian for vulnerable children, emphasizing rehabilitation over punishment. This philosophy emerged with the first juvenile courts in the late 19th century, recognizing that young offenders differ from adults in culpability and potential for reform. In Pakistan, there's a troubling contradiction between international child rights law and its domestic application, particularly concerning the death penalty. The CRC, specifically under Article 37, has established a clear prohibition under international law, stating: "either the death penalty nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release can be imposed on any individual who is under the age of 18." Having meant that the application of capital punishment to persons below the age of 18 is explicitly forbidden at all coasts. But on the contrary, in Pakistan capital punishment is permitted in Pakistan despite being signatory and rectifier of CRC.

Age definitions for juvenile status vary significantly across countries. In Pakistan, the PPC generally considers children under 10 not capable of committing crime, while the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018 sets the age limit under 18. The United States, conversely, typically defines juveniles as under 18, though state laws vary. These differing age thresholds directly influence the legal treatment and rehabilitation approaches for young offenders in each nation.

Place	MIN	MAX
New York	12	19
Japan	14	18
Pakistan	7	18

The above table suggests different ages considered for majority in United states, Japan and Pakistan. While the JJSA ensures legal aid and privacy, effective provision, especially for the underprivileged, is often lacking, and age determination processes are frequently flawed, leading to misclassification of children as adults. International standards demand specialized police, courts, and rehabilitation centers. Pakistan's JJSA mandates these, but in practice, there's a shortage of trained personnel, inadequate specialized facilities, and frequent co-mingling of juveniles with adults, contrary to international norms. In essence, Pakistan's legal framework is evolving towards international standards, but insufficient implementation, resource limitations, and a need for greater sensitivity among legal agents hinder its full compliance with the rehabilitative spirit of global juvenile justice.

Research Methodology

The research employed, reflecting on a qualitative legal research method, drawing primarily on doctrinal analysis. The primary sources including the Statutes such as:
The Juvenile Justice System Act- 2018;
Juvenile Justice Ordinance- 2000;

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Pakistan Penal Code;
Constitution of Pakistan;
The international conventions of the UNCRC
Secondary sources highlight valuable insights from academic journals,
Reports by NGOs (e.g., Justice Project Pakistan, Legal Aid Society),
Judicial precedents
Media reports given in references
This methodological approach provided a robust framework to assess not only the legal provisions but also their practical application and impact.

Case Studies

In Pakistan, the capital punishment is tolerable despite being signatory and rectifier of CRC. Not only this is volition of international law but the JJSA, specifically prohibits the death penalty for the individuals who were recorded as juveniles at the time of commission of such offence. Yet we witness hundreds of these cases causally taking place in our surroundings without anyone taking a notice, until and unless it directly relating to them.

The devastating case of Muhammad Iqbal, who was only 17 years old in 1998, when he was convicted of a shooting in Mandi Bahauddin. In the later year, he was consequently sentenced to death, followed by the promulgation of the Juvenile Justice System Ordinance 2000, which made it illegal for those under 18 to be handed a death sentence. Iqbal even after the enactment of the JJSO 2000, spent the next two decades behind bars. It was only in February 2020, that his death row was commuted to life imprisonment, which was followed by his release from prison after struggling for 21 years in prison.

Shafqat Hussain, who was sentenced to death in Pakistan at just 14 years old, following a confession extracted through torture. Despite being convicted under Pakistan's Anti-Terrorism Act with no proven links to terrorism, he was executed in 2015 at the age of 24. His execution ignored international laws prohibiting capital punishment for juveniles and raised serious concerns about police intimidation and judicial misconduct. His case highlighted flaws in Pakistan's justice system, sparking global outrage and calls for abolishing the death penalty.

Recommendation and reforms

Although the Juvenile Justice System Act 2018, lies down every aspect and manner of conduct in the juvenile cases but the major setback of achieving its goal is not having any practical implications in reality. This whole research paper highlights and critically analyze the gaps and shortcomings the state faces, descriptively. Anyhow, the first and foremost informal school is the home where a child fosters. If all families are conscious about their children and provide them safe, cooperative surroundings with proper attention to their needs, mentally and physically The basic need to treat the cause at root is the work upon family size emerging from financially broke backgrounds as their children are more likely to be neglected at young age, resulting in greater risk to indulge in delinquent acts. A committee formed only to educate these parents upon basic knowledge beneficial for them and their children's future, could play a crucial role in reshaping the society.

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Establishment of separate juvenile courts and rehabilitation centers

Pakistan's juvenile cases are heard in traditional courts that only regulates as juvenile court when the case is involving a juvenile offender, hence not even a single separate juvenile court exist in the state where they feel like a child being safe and not seen as a direct culprit. In regard with this matter at least a separate court should be established or a specific day or two should be allotted for hearing of just juvenile cases. Apart from these judges and advocate who hold expertise in these matters shall be consulted accordingly.

There are a few local and provincial rehabilitation facilities in Pakistan, but most of convicted juvenile offenders are locked up with adult inmates, hence the incidents of mental and physical harassment only making the situation worse. There are no reformatory schools in Pakistan that are but according to Reformatory Schools Act of 1897 child below the age of 15 can be sent to these schools at any stage of proceedings. Only Punjab has a functional borstal, in a facility that was built before independence. When in a survey, interviews were conducted from three juvenile offenders in custody, at Karachi's Youthful Offender Industrial School (YOIS) and the Director Reclamation and Probation, Sindh, it was concluded that while there exist some legal and institutional frameworks to tackle recidivism, but they are not being effectively implemented to prevent repeat offenses among young offenders.

It accounts to duty of the state's Government to formulate certain rules and policies to govern strict conduct in these rehabilitation institutions, not only to supervise but also holding them accountable when needed. When dealing with children it is not enough to have separate prisons but also having activities involving psychological, physical and educational impact throughout the process, the outcome of these reforms would prove to have great impact in all forms.

Legislative Reforms

Legislative changes are urgently needed to mandate medical age assessment by arresting officers if no prior records exist, ensuring children receive appropriate juvenile justice. This leads to these young offenders being subjected to the same rules and regulations as those of adults during court proceedings, including the lack of specialized prosecutors. Public Prosecutors often lack training in international and national child rights laws and are not appropriately sensitized to the unique needs of juvenile offenders, prosecuting them as they would adults. The failure of the improper age determination by police forces in Pakistan is a critical issue. When juveniles cannot produce ID, they are often wrongly processed as adults, leading to human rights violations. This deficiency in specialized legal expertise means children do not receive the distinct procedural considerations crucial for their well-being and development.

Administrative Reforms

Trained professionals can turn tables when the debate is of juvenile delinquency, the psychological understanding of these minds can help not only the other similar cases but also effect the developing of redefining the root cause of such behavior. The government should take initiatives to promote training workshops for the staff that

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administer and are given duties to look after these children should be employed based of their experiences in the field and trained and well-equipped knowledge for giving psychosocial support to the Juvenile offenders in rehab centers.
The publication of any part of case should be taken as grave misconduct and crime as this dents the child's confidence and results them to face more hurdles when relaunched into society.

Conclusion

This research paper critically explored and analyzed the juvenile justice system in focus of Pakistan, with a specific emphasis on the Juvenile Justice System Act- 2018, and its implementation within the broader legal and institutional framework. The study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of this Act in light of Pakistan's constitutional obligations, international human rights standards (especially the UNCRC), and the challenges faced in actual enforcement. The analysis revealed that while the JJSA - 2018 marks a progressive step toward safeguarding the lawful rights invested in children who are in conflict with the law, several structural and operational shortcomings continue to hinder its full realization. Issues such as lack of awareness among law enforcement authorities, no separate court systems for juveniles, insufficient training for judiciary/ legal counsel, and medical experts to determine age and provide psychological support, inadequate implementation of child protection mechanisms, and the absence of proper juvenile rehabilitation facilities were found to be persistent obstacles throughout the country since independence. The comparative analysis with juvenile justice systems in other jurisdictions, internationally and recommendations in form for reforms in legislative and administrative sectors, provided a clearer and fresh perspective on best practices that Pakistan can adopt. The need for a child-sensitive, restorative justice model, rather than a punitive approach, or corporal punishment practices, emerged as a critical theme throughout the study conducted in this research paper.

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