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Rehabilitation Programs Among Persons Deprived of Liberty in the District Jails of Bohol

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Abstract

This study examined the implementation of rehabilitation programs in the district jails of Bohol and identified challenges encountered by jail personnel in delivering these interventions. Using a quantitative research design and stratified random sampling, the study surveyed 117 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) and 58 jail personnel across four district jails. Results revealed that violations of R.A. 9165 were the most prevalent offenses among PDLs, reflecting national concerns regarding drug-related crimes. Rehabilitation programs—such as basic needs provision, health services, the Alternative Learning System (ALS), livelihood programs, the Therapeutic Community Modality Program (TCMP), interfaith services, cultural activities, paralegal processing, and e-dalaw—were generally well implemented, with ALS and TCMP receiving the highest

engagement. However, gaps were noted in skills training, livelihood activities, interfaith sessions beyond mass celebrations, and access to clean water. Both PDLs and personnel identified overcrowding and the increasing number of drug-related offenders as pressing issues, although PDLs perceived the severity of problems more strongly than personnel. A significant difference was found between the two groups' perceptions ($p = 0.038$). The study concludes that while rehabilitation programs are functioning, improvements are needed in resources, inclusivity, facility conditions, and capacity building to strengthen reintegration outcomes. Recommendations include enhancing program consistency, expanding skills training opportunities, addressing overcrowding, and improving health and sanitation systems.

Keywords: Persons Deprived of Liberty, Rehabilitation Programs, District Jails in Bohol, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Recidivism Prevention, Alternative Learning System

Introduction

Correctional systems worldwide are established to maintain public safety, enforce the law, and rehabilitate offenders. Central to modern penology is the belief that incarceration should not only punish but also reform individuals to reduce recidivism. However, global and national trends show a continuous rise in prison populations, signaling challenges in sustaining humane conditions and effective rehabilitation programs.

According to global reports, more than 11.5 million individuals are incarcerated worldwide, with drug-related offenses contributing significantly to the prison population. Similarly, in the Philippines, overcrowding remains a persistent crisis. In 2021, Bohol District Jails housed 993 Persons Deprived of Liberty (PDLs) despite limited personnel, underscoring the burden on correctional facilities to provide adequate services and rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation programs—such as education, skills development, behavioral modification, spiritual activities, livelihood programs, and paralegal assistance—are mandated under Republic Act No. 10575 (The Bureau of Corrections Act of 2013) [16]. These programs are designed to address the underlying causes of criminal behavior and prepare PDLs for reintegration into society.

Two theoretical foundations guide this study:

1. **Labeling Theory** – posits that individuals may internalize societal labels such as “criminal,” which can reinforce deviant behavior. Rehabilitation efforts aim to counteract such effects by reshaping identity and self-worth.
2. **Rehabilitation Theory** – emphasizes structured interventions that enhance skills, modify behavior, and address personal needs to reduce future offending.

Given the increasing number of offenders—particularly drug-related cases—in Bohol district jails, this study examines the

implementation and effectiveness of rehabilitation programs as perceived by both PDLs and jail personnel. It also identifies challenges that hinder effective delivery.

Research Gap

While previous studies examined rehabilitation programs in various Philippine correctional facilities, limited research focuses specifically on **district jails in Bohol**, particularly with a comparative perspective between PDLs and jail personnel.

Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Identify the crimes committed by PDLs in Bohol District Jails.
2. Determine the rehabilitation programs implemented for PDLs.
3. Assess the problems encountered by jail personnel in conducting rehabilitation programs, as perceived by PDLs and jail personnel.
4. Determine if there is a significant difference between the perceptions of PDLs and jail personnel regarding these problems.
5. Provide recommendations based on the findings.

Research Methodology

Research Design

A quantitative descriptive research design was employed using a structured survey questionnaire. The design allowed systematic collection and analysis of data related to the implementation of rehabilitation programs and the challenges encountered.

Research Environment

The study was conducted in four district jails of Bohol:

- Bohol District Jail (Male and Female)
- Carmen District Jail
- Talibon District Jail
- Ubay District Jail

These facilities implement BJMP-mandated rehabilitation programs and house a significant number of PDLs with diverse backgrounds.

Participants

Stratified random sampling was used to ensure proportional representation.

- 117 PDLs (from a total population of 993)
- 58 Jail Personnel (from 137 total personnel)

Inclusion criteria for PDLs:

- Incarcerated in Bohol District Jails
- Age 18 and above
- Willing to participate

Inclusion criteria for Personnel:

- Officially designated BJMP staff
- Willing to participate

Research Instrument

A self-constructed questionnaire, validated by a statistician, measured:

1. Rehabilitation programs received/implemented
2. Problems encountered (rated on a 4-point Likert scale)

A pilot test ensured reliability and clarity.

Procedures

- Secured permissions from BJMP offices.
- Obtained informed consent ensuring voluntariness, anonymity, and confidentiality.

- Data collection conducted face-to-face with the assistance of trained BJMP personnel for sensitive populations.
- Participants were free to withdraw at any time.
- Completed questionnaires were tabulated and analyzed.

Data Analysis

- Frequency and percentage distribution – crimes committed and implemented programs
- Weighted mean – severity of problems encountered
- Independent samples t-test – differences in perceptions between PDLs and staff

Results

1. Crimes Committed by PDLs

The majority of incarcerated individuals were charged with violations of R.A. 9165 (55.56%), highlighting the predominance of drug-related offenses. Other notable crimes included:

- Rape – 8.55%
- Murder – 8.55%
- Acts of Lasciviousness, Theft, Homicide – 1.71% each
- Confidential/undisclosed – 18.80%

2. Implementation of Rehabilitation Programs

a. Provision of Basic Needs

Both PDLs and jail personnel confirmed:

- 100% provision of three meals daily
- Lower rating for clean water access among PDLs (66.67%)

b. Health and Counseling Services

High implementation noted:

- Provision of medicines (PDLs: 98.29%)
- Counseling and medical services rated 100% by personnel

c. Educational Program (ALS)

- Exceptionally high participation: 99.15% of PDLs

d. Skills Training (TESDA)

- PDL participation relatively low (52.14%)
- Personnel reported higher availability (84.48%)

This gap indicates limited slots or accessibility for PDLs.

e. Livelihood Programs

Participation varied depending on activity (bags, crafts, pastries, woodworking).

- Highest involvement: bag-making (61.54%)

f. Behavioral Management / TCMP

- Very high engagement: 94.02% of PDLs
- Personnel rate implementation at 86.21%

g. Interfaith Activities

- Mass celebrations highly implemented (PDLs: 99.15%)
- Catechism lowest among PDLs (37.61%)

h. Cultural and Sports Program

- Most celebrated: Christmas (96.58%)
- Lowest participation: Ramadan (11.97%), attributed to religious demographics

i. Paralegal Program

High implementation by both groups (86–88%). Supports early-release processes.

j. E-Dalaw Program

- Video calls widely used (PDLs: 98.29%)
- Chat least utilized (52.14%)

3. Problems Encountered

As perceived by PDLs

Serious problems:

- Overcrowding (WM = 2.63)

- Increase in drug-related offenders (WM = 2.52)

Less serious problems included sanitation, ventilation, food shortage, and social/environmental changes.

As perceived by Jail Personnel

Only serious problem:

- Increase in drug-related offenders (WM = 2.50)

Most other issues rated as less serious or not serious, particularly food shortage and sanitation.

4. Difference in Perceptions

A t-test revealed a significant difference ($p = 0.038$) between the two groups:

- PDLs perceived higher levels of problems than jail personnel.

Discussion

The findings show that Bohol District Jails implement a wide array of rehabilitation programs mandated by BJMP and RA 10575. Programs such as basic needs provision, ALS education, the Therapeutic Community Modality Program, and paralegal services demonstrate strong implementation.

Drug-related crimes dominate the PDL population, mirroring national trends and emphasizing the need for targeted interventions, such as substance abuse treatment and behavioral programs.

PDLs report greater concerns regarding overcrowding and the rising number of drug offenders—issues that personnel tend to downplay. This discrepancy suggests differences in lived experience: PDLs are more directly affected by congestion, resource limitations, and health vulnerabilities.

Skills training and livelihood programs exhibited lower PDL participation rates, likely due to:

- Limited slots
- Insufficient trainers
- Scheduling conflicts or security restrictions

Interfaith and cultural programs were implemented but require more inclusive planning—especially for minority groups such as Muslims.

Implications

- Overcrowding undermines health, rehabilitation quality, and security.
- The rise of drug offenders indicates systemic gaps in drug prevention and community rehabilitation.
- Enhancing education and skills programs can improve employment prospects post-release.
- Strengthening staff training ensures consistency and quality in implementing programs.

Limitations

- Conducted only in Bohol district jails; findings not fully generalizable.
- Cross-sectional data collection limits long-term outcome evaluation.
- Self-reporting introduces potential bias.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Bohol District Jails demonstrate strong efforts in providing mandated rehabilitation programs, particularly in meeting basic needs, education, health services, behavioral modification, and paralegal support. However, challenges remain—most notably overcrowding, the surge of drug-related offenders, uneven program implementation, and resource constraints.

PDLs experience these challenges more acutely, as shown by their higher problem ratings compared to jail personnel.

Rehabilitation programs are effective but require further enhancements to maximize their impact on reducing recidivism and improving reintegration outcomes.

Recommendations

1. Address overcrowding through coordinated paralegal processing, alternative sentencing, and facility expansion.
2. Enhance drug-related rehabilitation programs, including counseling, TCMP enhancements, and specialized substance abuse interventions.
3. Increase TESDA training slots and diversify skills development opportunities.
4. Improve water supply, sanitation, and ventilation—areas repeatedly flagged by PDLs.
5. Strengthen interfaith inclusivity, especially for Muslim PDLs during Ramadan.
6. Provide regular staff training to improve implementation consistency and program delivery.
7. Conduct longitudinal research to monitor rehabilitation outcomes post-release.
8. Strengthen mental health services, including access to licensed counselors.

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