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Research Article

Professional Challenges Faced by Community-Based Correctional Officers: Jaffna District

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Abstract	Manuscript Information
Community-based Correction is a significant criminal justice approach that strengthens the rehabilitation and social reintegration of minor offenders as an alternative to incarceration. The success of these measures depends heavily on the professional competence and operational effectiveness of the community-based correctional officers implementing them. Even if officials working in this sector face various social, legal, institutional, and economic challenges, this study aims to examine the challenges faced by practitioners implementing community-based correctional measures in the Jaffna district of Sri Lanka. A descriptive research design with a qualitative approach was employed in this study. Using purposive sampling, 12 professionals directly engaged in community-based correctional work with minor offenders were selected, data were collected through semi-structured interviews and analysed using Braun and Clarke's reflexive thematic analysis method. The study findings revealed that key challenges faced by professionals include the nature of the social environment, a lack of family support, a shortage of institutional resources, a lack of inter-agency coordination, professional role conflicts, work-related stress, the underutilization of pre-sentence reports, a lack of legal awareness among minor offenders, and barriers related to employment and economic reintegration. These challenges not only compromise the quality of rehabilitation services but also affect the successful social reintegration of minor offenders. Therefore, community-based Correction should not be an approach that relies solely on legal supervision. Instead, it must be a holistic rehabilitation approach that integrates social work, family participation, community support, institutional strengthening, and multi-sectoral coordination. Furthermore, strengthening organizational resources, expanding professional skill development training, promoting evidence-based practices, conducting awareness programs to reduce social stigma, and enhancing family and employment support schemes are essential to improving the effectiveness of community-based corrections. The findings of this study provide useful evidence for policy formulation, professional practice, and future research regarding the community-based corrections sector in Sri Lanka.	▪ ISSN No: 2583-7397 ▪ Received: 11-08-2026 ▪ Accepted: 03-10-2026 ▪ Published: 08-10-2026 ▪ IJCRM:5(5); 2026: 571-584 ▪ ©2026, All Rights Reserved ▪ Plagiarism Checked: Yes ▪ Peer Review Process: Yes How to Cite this Article Thavarasa Tharshan. Professional Challenges Faced by Community-Based Correctional Officers: Jaffna District. Int J Contempt Res Multidiscipline. 2026;5(5):571-584. Access this Article Online  www.multiarticlesjournal.com

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1. INTRODUCTION

Community-based correctional interventions are a significant approach aimed at rehabilitating minor offenders. It is an alternative to imprisonment through supervision, counselling, rehabilitation, and social reintegration measures within the Community itself. Such an approach not only alleviates prison overcrowding but also reduces the opportunity of recidivism. As a result, it enhances public safety and sustainable rehabilitation. Social workers, probation officers, counsellors, rehabilitation officers, Community Correctional Officers, and judicial professionals play a key role in the successful implementation of Community Based Intervention (CBI). Still pay attention to various challenges such as a lack of adequate human and financial resources, heavy workloads, a lack of professional training, poor inter departmental coordination, administrative and legal constraints, social stigma, and a lack of community cooperation affect the effective implementation of these programs.

In Sri Lanka, rehabilitation programs are being implemented under the Community-Based Corrections Act No. 46 of 1999. Even so, there is a dearth of research regarding the challenges faced by the professionals implementing these programs, particularly studies focused on the Jaffna District of the Northern Province. Influence Factors, including post-war socio-economic changes, unemployment, drug abuse, a lack of family support, and social stigma, makes community-based rehabilitation efforts increasingly complex. In this context, the objective of this study is to examine the challenges faced by professionals implementing community-based interventions in the Jaffna district. The findings of this study are expected to provide evidence-based recommendations for policy design to improve the effectiveness of community-based interventions, enhance professional capacity, and strengthen coordination between departments.

Background of the study

In recent years, criminal justice systems have been shifting their focus from imprisonment-centred approaches to community-based Interventions that emphasize rehabilitation and reintegration into society. These interventions aim to facilitate the social reintegration of minor offenders and foster a sense of responsibility, while also preventing Recidivism and enhancing public safety. Conversely, the success of this programme depends significantly not only on its design but also on the competence of the professionals implementing it, organizational Support, and inter-departmental coordination. Professionals implementing community-based interventions face challenges such as inadequate human resources, heavy workloads, lack of professional training, shortage of resources, poor coordination between organizations, and Lack of community support. The highlighted challenges directly affect the quality of Community-Based Intervention. The Consistency of Intervention delivery and the success of the offender's social reintegration. Even though community-based Correction measures have been implemented legally in Sri Lanka. Within that setting, very few practical studies on the challenges faced by professional stakeholders in putting them into intervention. More specifically, this matter has not been sufficiently examined in the Jaffna

district, which has faced post-war social and economic changes. For this reason, exploring the challenges that Correctional officers face in implementing community-based interventions. Initiatives in the Jaffna district are important for improving the effectiveness of Community-Based Intervention and for making evidence-based policy and practice improvement recommendations.

Problem Statement

Community-based Interventions are globally recognized. Therefore, an important approach for the rehabilitation of minor offenders is social reintegration and reducing recidivism. Rather than traditional punishment systems that focus only on incarceration. This approach aims to improve behaviour change, social responsibility, and sustainable community reintegration by providing rehabilitation services within the Community. In this process, community-based corrections officers take on various professional responsibilities such as case management, community investigations, counselling, monitoring, family coordination, and linking to social resources. While carrying out these professional responsibilities, officers face various social, legal, institutional, and economic challenges. Factors similar to social stigma, Lack of family support, negative impact of criminal history, difficulty in creating job opportunities, shortage of resources for rehabilitation services, Lack of coordination with multi-agency organizations, limited use of pre-sentence reports, and inadequacy of professional support structures can affect the effectiveness of community-based intervention. Most of the studies done so far have focused on the rehabilitation of minor offenders, reducing recidivism, and the outcomes of community-based rehabilitation programs. But there are very few studies on the professional challenges faced by community-based rehabilitation officers in implementing these programs, especially in the Sri Lankan context. Because of this, there's a significant gap in knowledge regarding the practical barriers in the profession, the challenges in service delivery, and the practical strategies used to handle them. So, it's important for this study to deeply explore the professional challenges faced by community-based Correctional Officers, understand how these affect the efficiency of community-based intervention, and suggest recommendations that can strengthen professional practices and policy frameworks. This research will provide evidence-based knowledge to improve the quality of community-based interventions and enhance organizational Support, multi-sectoral coordination, and community-based intervention officers.

Justification of the research

Community-Based intervention is an approach to punishment and rehabilitation that plays a key role in the reintegration of minor offenders. It is helping them live again and reducing recidivism. The success of this approach depends not only on the cooperation of the minor offenders but also greatly on the quality, efficiency, and continuity of the professional services provided by community-based correction officers. Although various factors like social stigma, Lack of family support, resource shortages, challenges in coordination with multiple agencies, legal procedure issues, and Lack of institutional

Support can affect the professional practice of these officers. Most of the research done so far has focused on the rehabilitation of minor offenders, reducing recidivism and the consequences of community-based intervention programs. Even So there are very few studies on the professional challenges faced by community-based correction officers in implementing these programs, especially in the Sri Lankan context. This leaves a gap in evidence-based knowledge needed to improve professional practice, strengthen institutional Support, and understand the barriers in service delivery. This study provides evidence-based recommendations to improve the quality of community-based intervention by deeply identifying and analyzing the social, legal, institutional, and economic challenges faced by community-based Correction officers. Moreover, the findings of this study offer helpful guidance for policymakers, the judiciary, social work professionals, community-based correctional departments, and training institutions on making decisions related to professional skill development, resource allocation, interdepartmental coordination, and social reintegration. So, exploring the professional challenges faced by community-based Correction officers is significant for strengthening their professional practice, improving the effectiveness of community-based intervention, ensuring the successful reintegration of minor offenders into society, and creating evidence-based policies and practices.

AIM

aims to examine the challenges professionals face in implementing community-based interventions in the Jaffna district.

OBJECTIVE

- To identify the challenges faced by professionals implementing community-based interventions in the Jaffna district.
- To examine the strategies and practices adopted by professionals to address such challenges.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Community-based corrections are realized as an alternative to prison sentences, where minor offenders are monitored within the Community, helping improve rehabilitation and social reintegration. Contemporary criminology and social work studies highlight that just legal supervision isn't enough to change the behaviour of minor offenders. They emphasize the need for community support, family involvement, job opportunities, psychological Support, and social worker interventions. As community-based intervention has expanded, the professionals implementing it face various social, legal, institutional, and economic challenges. Specifically, Community-based correction officers, Probation Officers, Social Workers, Rehabilitation Officers, and Community Correction Practitioners play key roles in the rehabilitation and social reintegration process (Legodi, 2025). Social stigma has been identified as a major barrier in community rehabilitation. Individuals who have committed crimes continue to be judged based on their past criminal records, making social reintegration difficult. Societal negative attitudes remain a barrier to

employment, family relationships, and social participation for people who have started a new life. The role of social workers has shifted from just changing the criminal behaviour of minor offenders to also changing societal attitudes, building family support, and restoring community trust (UNODC, 2025). As a result, tackling social stigma has become a major professional challenge for social workers. Family support is seen as a key factor in the rehabilitation process. Despite this, some families distance themselves from those who have committed crimes due to social stigma, fear, and societal pressure. Without family support, social workers face challenges in boosting individuals' inspiration and creating long-term social reintegration (Legodi, 2025). Recent studies show that without family and social Support, the results of rehabilitation programs are limited, and social workers often need to step in with extra support measures (Mahlangu & Zivanai, 2024). Coordination with legal and administrative systems is important in community-based intervention. Although pre-sentence reports, individual assessments, and rehabilitation recommendations are not used enough, practitioners face difficulties in planning interventions according to a person's needs. They emphasize the need for coordination between judicial decisions and the rehabilitation approach. It is noted that for community-based corrections to succeed, strong links between legal institutions, social services, and rehabilitation organizations are essential (UNODC, 2025). The effectiveness of community-based intervention programs depends on adequate funding and human resources. Recent studies point out that Lack of sufficient funding, Lack of human resource capacity, limited training opportunities, and insufficient technological resources affect the performance of practitioners. Specifically, not having enough resources to provide services like employment support, skills development training, counselling, and ongoing monitoring is a major barrier to community-based corrections (UNODC, 2025). Community-based corrections workers face various stresses like dealing with the behaviour of people who have committed crimes, social resistance, administrative pressure, and Lack of resources. Recent studies point out that for correctional professionals, heavy workload, safety concerns, and Lack of organizational Support are key factors that increase occupational stress and burnout (Sánchez de Ribera et al., 2024).

Theoretical view

The Ecological Systems Theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) explains that a person's behaviour and development are shaped not just by individual factors, but also by the interactions of various ecological systems like family, social structures, education, justice system, politics, and economic systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In a community-based intervention process, officials don't just work with the person involved in the crime. They are supposed to coordinate with family members, community leaders, courts, police, non-governmental organizations, employers, and government agencies. In this case, the social stigma, Lack of family support, employment difficulties, Lack of resources, and insufficient institutional Support all show the influence of different environmental systems. So, based on Ecological Systems Theory, professional challenges should be understood not just at

the individual level, but as a result of structural factors arising at the micro, mezzo, Exo, and macro levels. Role Theory Bruce J. Biddle's Role Theory (1986) explains that when a professional expert takes on various social and organizational responsibilities, it can lead to role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload (Biddle, 1986). In this study, it was found that community-based correction officers simultaneously take on multiple roles such as Supervisor, Counsellor, Case Manager, Social Worker, Court Liaison Officer, and Community Coordinator. Additionally, following legal procedures, providing rehabilitation services, creating social acceptance, and preventing Recidivism all increase the professional pressure on officers. Because of this, Role Theory becomes a very suitable concept to explain the nature of professional challenges. Risk–Need–Responsivity Model the Risk–Need–Responsivity (RNR) Model, developed by Donald A. Andrews and James Bonta, is considered a highly influential model in the field of community-based rehabilitation and reintegration (Andrews & Bonta, 2010). According to this model, interventions for minor offenders should be designed based on their risk level, the criminogenic needs that drive criminal behaviour, and their ability to respond to the interventions. In this study, it was found that the Lack of pre-sentence reports, insufficient consideration of the views of individuals involved in the offence, Lack of family support, and employment challenges create difficulties for professionals in implementing person-centred rehabilitation programs. Based on the RNR model, interventions provided without properly assessing an individual's needs can affect rehabilitation outcomes and social reintegration.

RESEARCH GAP

Previous studies have mostly focused on the outcomes of community-based corrections, reducing recidivism, and rehabilitation models. But the practical challenges faced by practitioners implementing community-based corrections, especially in the context of developing countries like Sri Lanka, have been studied less. So, it's important to explore the experiences of correctional officers involved in community-based corrections and the social, legal, economic, and institutional challenges they face.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study follows a qualitative research approach and uses a descriptive qualitative research design. The purpose of this study is to gain a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by community-based correction officers implementing community-based intervention in the Jaffna District, as well as the strategies and practices they follow to address these challenges. Participants for the study were selected using the purposive sampling method. The sample were including 12 professionals directly involved in community-based interventions (community-based correction officers, social workers, counsellors, and related officials). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Information about the challenges that officers face, the reasons behind them, and the ways they handle them were gathered, and the collected data were analysed based on the Reflexive Thematic Analysis approach proposed by Braun and Clarke. Through this process, recurring concepts and themes

were identified and interpreted in alignment with the study's objectives (Legodi, 2025).

Inclusion Criteria

- Participants in this study were selected based on the following criteria:
- Only officials who are directly involved in work related to community-based corrections were included in the study.
- Officials with at least one year of professional experience were selected.
- Those with experience in case management, supervision, counselling, social investigation, or rehabilitation activities under community-based correction orders were included.
- Only those who voluntarily provide written informed consent after fully understanding the purpose of the study were included.
- Only officials working in the district or study area where the research is conducted were selected.

Excluding Criteria

- The following people will be excluded from the study:
- Officials who are not directly involved in community-based intervention.
- Officials with less than one year of professional experience.
- Those who are unwilling to participate in the study or do not provide written consent.
- Officials who are on long-term leave, have been transferred, or have left the job during the data collection period.
- Those who cannot complete the interview fully.

Research Limitation

- Geographical Limitation: Since this study is carried out with Jaffna District as the focus, the findings obtained may not fully represent community-based intervention across all districts of Sri Lanka.
- Sample Size Limitation: As only a specified number of community-based corrections officers and related professionals are selected as participants in the study, there may be limitations in fully reflecting the experiences of all community-based corrections workers.
- Access to Participants: Due to the workload of Community based Correction officers, administrative permissions, and time constraints, there may be challenges in reaching all eligible participants.
- Disclosure Limitation: Some participants may hesitate to fully reveal information about institutional practices, management shortcomings, or professional challenges. This can place certain limits on the data obtained.
- Qualitative Method Limitation: Since this study uses a qualitative approach, the information gathered will be based on participants' personal experiences and opinions. So, caution is needed when generalizing the results.
- Time Limitation: Data collection and analysis are done within a specific study period, so any policy or practice changes over time might not be reflected in the research.

- Social Desirability Bias: Participants might respond in ways that present their Institution and professional practices in a positive light.
- Documentary Limitation: Some administrative documents, statistics, or internal institution information may be inaccessible. This can create limitations in the use of secondary data.
- Researcher Interpretation Bias: In qualitative data analysis, the researcher's interpretation can have a certain level of influence. To minimize this, proper coding and thematic analysis procedures are followed.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical Considerations: Since this study involves human participants, research ethics were followed at all stages of the study. Before starting the study, approval was obtained from the relevant Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) or Institutional Human Ethics Committee (IHEC). Clear explanations about the study's purpose, procedure, benefits, expected duration, and participants' rights will be given, and then written informed consent will be obtained. Participants will be informed that participation is completely voluntary and that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without giving any reason. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, participants' names, positions, and identities will not be revealed; instead, codes like P1, P2, and P3 will be used. The audio recordings, notes, and documents collected during the interview will be securely stored and used only for research purposes. The collected data will not be shared with third parties; after the research is completed, it will be safely stored or destroyed according to the organization's policies. All precautions will be taken so that participants do not experience any physical, psychological, professional, or legal harm by taking part in the study. The research findings will be used only for scientific and educational purposes; no information that can identify an individual or organization will be released.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Client Complexity

that client complexity is a major professional challenge encountered by community-based correctional officers. Minor offenders under community-based correctional supervision present diverse social, economic, psychological, and family circumstances, resulting in varying levels of risk and rehabilitation needs. Factors such as substance misuse, mental health problems, unemployment, limited educational opportunities, weak family support, poverty, and social stigma further complicate the rehabilitation process and require comprehensive professional intervention. The findings further suggest that consistent rehabilitation approaches are insufficient to address the diverse needs of minor offenders. Effective intervention requires individualized assessment, case planning, and coordinated Support tailored to each offender's situation. Still, increasing caseloads, resource restrictions, and the need to coordinate with multiple service agencies often limit officers' ability to deliver individualized rehabilitation services. These findings highlight the importance of person-centred practice,

inter-agency collaboration, and continuous professional development in responding effectively to complex client needs. *"Every offender has different contextual needs. Some struggle with drug addiction, some have family problems, and others have mental health issues. We cannot use the same approach for everyone."* (P3)

The participant's statement reflects the diverse and complicated nature of minor offenders' rehabilitation needs. It suggests that effective correctional practice requires flexible, individualized interventions that respond to each offender's unique circumstances rather than relying on standardisedstandardized rehabilitation strategies.

"Many of our clients face numerous problems at the same time. Addressing legal issues alone is not enough because they also need support for employment, family relationships, and mental health." (P8)

This statement indicates that minor offenders frequently experience multiple and interrelated challenges that extend beyond legal supervision. The participant's account highlights the need for holistic case management, where rehabilitation is supported through coordinated social, psychological, and economic interventions alongside legal supervision.

Organizational Climate

The findings of this study show that the organizational environment is a key factor that significantly affects the professional work of community-based Intervention officials. Supportive leadership, clear communication, cooperation among colleagues, fair distribution of work, and availability of resources all enhance employees' professional competence and job satisfaction. On the other hand, Lack of managerial Support, unclear policies, gaps in information sharing, limited participation in decision-making, and Lack of recognition increase professional challenges. Moreover, a positive organizational work environment boosts employee motivation, professional engagement, and the quality of rehabilitation services. On the other hand, a negative work environment can lead to issues like stress, burnout, reduced professional dedication, and high staff turnover. Therefore, a supportive organizational culture, transparent management, continuous professional Support, and policies that prioritize employee wellbeing play a key role in improving the effectiveness of community-based intervention.

"When you have the support of management and the cooperation of colleagues, you can handle even complicated cases with confidence" P8.

The participant's opinion expresses that a supportive organizational work environment enhances employees' professional confidence and efficiency. It highlights that management support and team collaboration are key organizational factors that help handle complex cases effectively. *"Sometimes policies are not clear. Our opinions are not given enough consideration in decision-making. This makes the work even more difficult,"* P3.

It points out that unclear Department policies and the low participation of employees in decision-making can affect professional efficiency. This also shows that transparent

management and open communication are important in creating a healthy workplace environment.

Remote Supervision

Remote supervision shows both the opportunities and challenges in community-based intervention. Monitoring minor offenders and providing counselling through phone calls, video meetings, and other digital communication methods helps reduce time and travel costs. Also, these methods are found to be useful for easily reaching service users living in remote areas. However, there are numerous professional challenges in implementing remote monitoring. With fewer face-to-face meetings, it is difficult to fully assess the behaviour of minor offenders, their family environment, and Support systems. Similarly, building a trusting professional rapport, conducting accurate risk assessments, and directly monitoring rehabilitation progress also face limitations. Also, factors like Lack of technical facilities, internet connectivity issues, low digital literacy, and concerns about privacy and data security are seen as things that can affect the effectiveness of remote monitoring. So, instead of thinking of remote monitoring as a replacement for on-the-ground work, it is important to use it as a complementary approach, while ensuring proper technical facilities, clear practical guidelines, and ongoing training for staff.

"Not all service receivers have internet access or a smartphone. Because of that, remote monitoring cannot be implemented in the same way for everyone," P6.

This idea highlights that the success of remote monitoring is closely linked to a technological approach and access to digital resources. Inequalities in technology can create differences in service access and performance.

"It's possible to stay in touch with minor offenders through phone calls and video calls. But a big challenge is that you can't really see their actual situation or changes in behaviour in person to assess them," P8.

The participant feels that while remote monitoring makes communication easier, it also highlights the limitations in fully getting the information you would get from direct observation. Specifically, it shows that remote approaches have limits when it comes to accurately assessing things like behaviour changes, family environment, and rehabilitation progress.

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) Implementation

Evidence-Based Practice (EBP) implementation remains a significant professional challenge for community-based correctional officers. Although participants acknowledged that evidence-based interventions contribute to improved reintegration outcomes and reduced recidivism, integrating these approaches into routine correctional practice remains difficult. Institutional constraints, increasing administrative demands, limited access to resources, and restricted opportunities for professional growth were identified as major barriers to implementation.

The findings further recommend that effective EBP implementation depends on both individual competence and institutional capacity. Participants emphasized that research-informed interventions cannot be sustained without institutional commitment, supportive supervision, adequate staffing, and

access to appropriate intervention resources. Furthermore, Institutional resistance to change and continued reliance on conventional working practices were perceived as limiting the wider adoption of evidence-based practice. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening Institutional systems along with continuous professional development to promote the effective integration of evidence-based practice into community-based correctional services.

"We are trained on practices based on evidence. But because of heavy workload, limited resources, and organizational procedures, it's not easy to use them consistently in daily work." (P2)

The participant's statement suggests that the gap lies between training and practice. Even if officers receive knowledge of evidence-based Practice, Institutional and operational realities make it difficult to translate that knowledge into consistent professional practice.

"We know which practices are the best. But we don't have enough time, staff, or resources to implement them fully." (P7)

This statement indicates that the successful implementation of evidence-based practice depends on Institutional capacity rather than professional awareness alone. Participants viewed adequate staffing, sufficient time, and institutional resources as essential conditions for delivering evidence-based interventions effectively.

Role Conflict

The findings of this study indicate that role conflict is a significant professional challenge experienced by community-based correctional officers. Officers are required to perform diverse professional roles, including monitoring minor offenders, enforcing court orders, providing counselling, supporting rehabilitation, coordinating with families and community agencies, and facilitating social reintegration. Managing these multiple responsibilities often creates uncertainty regarding professional priorities and role expectations. The findings further recommend that increasing administrative responsibilities, staff shortages, limited institutional resources, and Department procedures intensify role conflict. These competing demands make it difficult for officers to allocate sufficient time and attention to each responsibility, affecting both case management and rehabilitation efforts. The findings emphasize the need for clearly defined professional roles, adequate staffing, continuous professional development, and Department policies that support effective role management within community-based correctional services.

"We are expected to monitor those who commit crimes, enforce court orders, and at the same time guide and encourage them towards change. Balancing these different responsibilities can sometimes be really tough." (P9)

The participant's statement indicates that community-based correctional officers are required to fulfil multiple professional responsibilities simultaneously. Managing these diverse expectations creates role conflict, requiring officers to exercise continuous professional judgement when responding to the varying needs of minor offenders.

"Some days we have to act like law enforcement officers. On other occasions, we have to act as advisers and social workers. Switching between these roles is not always easy." (P11)

This statement illustrates the multidimensional nature of community correctional work, where officers are expected to move between enforcement, counselling, and social support roles. Frequent transitions between these professional roles may complicate decision-making, increase role strain, and influence the effectiveness of service delivery.

Work-related Stress and Secondary Trauma

The findings indicate that work-related stress is a significant professional challenge for community-based correctional officers. As part of their professional responsibilities, officers are regularly exposed to minor offenders' traumatic life experiences, violent case histories, and emotionally demanding family situations through case management, supervision, and home visits. Continuous exposure to these circumstances can adversely affect their psychological wellbeing. The findings further suggest that Participants described experiences of occupational stress and emotional strain associated with repeated exposure to complex and traumatic cases. Personal characteristics, job-related demands, and organizational conditions were identified as key contributors to these outcomes. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening psychological support systems, professional counselling services, stress management interventions, and organizational wellbeing initiatives for correctional officers.

"We continually work with minor offenders who have shocking backgrounds, violent incidents, and complex family situations. Listening to their experiences and handling such cases emotionally affects us too." (P10)

This statement demonstrates that repeated exposure to minor offenders' traumatic experiences places an emotional burden on community-based correctional officers. The participant's account suggests that occupational stress extends beyond routine case management and may contribute to secondary traumatic stress among professionals.

"Sometimes the workload gets really heavy. After meeting families or handling complicated cases, it becomes hard to separate personal life from work-related stress." (P8)

The participant's experience indicates that excessive workload and prolonged emotional involvement with complex cases can blur the boundary between professional and personal life. This suggests that workload intensity not only affects job performance but also has implications for officers' psychological wellbeing and work-life balance. The findings further reveal that resource-constrained work environments intensify occupational strain among community-based correctional officers. Heavy caseloads, staffing shortages, limited Institutional capacity, strict deadlines, and health-related risks reduce officers' ability to deliver rehabilitation services effectively. These conditions not only increase burnout and compassion fatigue but also weaken professional engagement, leading some officers to adopt a more passive approach to their work. Collectively, these findings highlight that sustainable rehabilitation practice depends not only on the commitment of individual officers but also on adequate

organizational resources, supportive working conditions, and effective workforce management.

Social Challenges

Lack of Social Acceptance

Social acceptance is a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of community-based correctional measures and the sustainable reintegration of individuals with offending histories. The primary objective of community-based corrections is to support individuals in rebuilding their lives within the Community and becoming responsible members of society. This process requires acceptance and Support from family members, neighbours, employers, and community institutions, as social inclusion provides essential opportunities for employment, relationship rebuilding, and positive identity formation. Individuals with previous offence histories often experience difficulties in gaining social acceptance due to stigma, negative perceptions, fear, and mistrust. Even after exhibiting indicative behavioural changes and participating in rehabilitation programmes, some individuals continue to be judged based on their past offences. Such negative social labelling restricts their opportunities for employment, community participation, and the development of supportive relationships, which are essential for successful reintegration.

One participant stated:

"Being accepted in society is a big challenge for many people. Even when they try to change their lives, people keep looking at their past with doubt. This makes them lose confidence in starting a new life." (P8)

This finding indicates that limited social acceptance affects minor offenders' self-confidence, motivation, and ability to rebuild their lives after rehabilitation. It also demonstrates that rehabilitation is not solely an individual process of behavioural transformation but a social process that depends on community recognition and Support.

Another participant explained:

"Even after completing rehabilitation programmes, individuals who have committed offences are not easily accepted by society. They continue to be judged based on their past mistakes. The biggest challenge we face is changing the attitudes of society. Family members and neighbours hesitate to accept rehabilitated individuals due to the fear that they may become involved in criminal activities again." (P4)

The above statement highlights that professionals involved in community-based intervention face challenges beyond individual behaviour modification. They must also address broader social barriers, including stigma, community mistrust, and negative attitudes towards rehabilitated individuals. These challenges limit the effectiveness of rehabilitation interventions and make sustainable reintegration more difficult.

From a social work perspective, social acceptance is an essential element of person-centred and strengths-based rehabilitation. Therefore, practitioners need to promote community awareness, reduce stigma, encourage family involvement, and strengthen social support networks. Developing an inclusive community environment where individuals are recognized for their capacity to change rather than defined by their past offences is essential for effective rehabilitation and long-term social reintegration.

Lack of Family Support

Lack of family support emerged as a significant social and emotional challenge in the implementation of community-based interventions. Family relationships and supportive networks play an essential role in rehabilitation by providing emotional encouragement, acceptance, supervision, and practical assistance. Such Support strengthens minor offenders' motivation for behavioural change and facilitates their successful reintegration into the Community. However, the findings indicate that some individuals involved in crime experience limited family acceptance due to their previous offences. Family members may distance themselves or hesitate to provide Support because of shame, fear, social pressure, or loss of trust. This Lack of acceptance can negatively influence minor offenders' emotional wellbeing, self-confidence, and willingness to participate in rehabilitation programmes actively. Furthermore, the absence of family involvement creates additional difficulties for rehabilitation professionals in developing effective reintegration plans and maintaining continuous Support for behavioural change.

"Sometimes minor offenders don't get enough Support from their families. Family members hesitate to accept them because of the mistakes they made. This makes them feel lonely in the rehabilitation process and struggle to fully engage in efforts to change" (P1)

This finding highlights that insufficient family support can weaken minor offenders' motivation and sense of belonging during the rehabilitation process. Without a supportive family environment, individuals may experience emotional isolation and difficulties in maintaining positive behavioural changes.

"Family support is very important for the successful rehabilitation of minor offenders. But some families stay away from them because of social shame, fear, or societal pressure. When family members don't provide emotional and practical Support, professionals face difficulties in encouraging them and helping them reintegrate successfully into society." (P11)

The above statement demonstrates that professionals involved in community-based interventions face challenges not only in addressing offending behaviour but also in rebuilding supportive family relationships. From a social work perspective, this emphasizes the importance of family-centred approaches, including family counselling, awareness programmes, and strengthening family support networks. Active family involvement can enhance minor offenders' confidence, improve social acceptance, and contribute to sustainable social reintegration.

Delays in Obtaining Social Inquiry Reports (SIR)

Delays in obtaining Social Inquiry Reports (SIRs) represent a significant administrative and operational challenge in the effective implementation of community-based intervention. A Social Inquiry Report is an essential professional assessment tool that provides comprehensive information about an offender's family background, socio-economic conditions, education, employment status, risk factors, social support systems, and rehabilitation potential. Such information assists courts and correctional professionals in making informed decisions and developing individualized rehabilitation plans according to the

specific needs of minor offenders. This study indicates that delays in preparing and receiving Social Inquiry Reports negatively affect timely decision-making and the initiation of appropriate rehabilitation interventions. When reports are not available within the required timeframe, professionals face difficulties in conducting comprehensive assessments and designing suitable correctional measures based on minor offenders' personal settings. Consequently, decisions may be made with limited background information, reducing the effectiveness of person-centred rehabilitation approaches.

"Preparing a social inquiry report takes a lot of time. Sometimes, there's a situation where we have to wait for the report from the court. Because of this, it becomes difficult to quickly start appropriate social rehabilitation measures for minor offenders." (P10)

This statement highlights that delays in the social inquiry Reports (SIR) process create practical difficulties for correctional professionals in initiating timely interventions. Even though these reports play a vital role in understanding minor offenders' conditions and rehabilitation needs, delays in their completion and submission can interrupt case management processes and postpone the delivery of appropriate support services.

"Social inquiry reports are really important for planning the background checks of minor offenders and the appropriate interventions for them. But delays in preparing and receiving these reports affect the ability to make timely decisions and plan rehabilitation. Sometimes, there's a long wait before starting the right interventions." (P3)

The Social Inquiry report is associated with factors such as heavy workloads, inadequate human resources, difficulties in collecting information from minor offenders and their families, transportation limitations, and administrative procedures. These challenges affect professionals' ability to conduct timely risk assessments, develop reintegration plans, and provide effective community-based intervention.

From a social work perspective, the Social Inquiry Report should be understood not merely as an administrative requirement but as a critical assessment mechanism that supports a holistic understanding of the offender's life circumstances. Therefore, strengthening human resources, improving coordination between courts and correctional agencies, and developing efficient case management systems are necessary to ensure timely report preparation and enhance the effectiveness of community-based intervention.

Stigma Related to Previous Offence History

Social stigma associated with previous offence history represents a significant practical challenge in implementing community-based interventions. Even if the primary aim of community-based corrections is to support minor offenders in rebuilding their lives and reintegrating into society as responsible members, individuals with prior criminal records often continue to be identified and judged based on their past behaviour. As a result, they may experience distrust, discrimination, and social exclusion from family members, employers, neighbours, and the wider Community. The findings of this study reveal that previous criminal history creates barriers to successful rehabilitation by limiting opportunities for employment, social participation, and

the development of positive relationships. Persistent negative perceptions from society may affect minor offenders' self-confidence, motivation for behavioural change, and willingness to actively engage in rehabilitation programmes. Therefore, despite their efforts to community-based corrections, some individuals struggle to establish a new social identity separate from their previous criminal label.

"Even after someone has committed a crime, society still sees them as the same criminal. Even if they try to change, their past criminal record becomes a barrier when looking for a job or socializing." (P9)

That previous offending behaviour often becomes a lasting social identity that influences how individuals are treated, even after completing or participating in rehabilitation processes. Such stigma restricts access to employment and social acceptance, which are essential components of successful community reintegration.

"Some people who come to community-based Intervention programmes have a prior criminal record. Their past offences create difficulties in the reintegration process. This is because community members and sometimes even family members continue to judge them based on their past behaviour. As professionals, we have to put in extra effort to build their confidence, motivate them for change, and create social acceptance." (P7)

The above statement highlights that rehabilitation professionals face challenges beyond addressing offending behaviour itself. They must also work towards restoring social trust, strengthening support systems, improving minor offenders' self-esteem, and reducing the negative impact of criminal labels. From a social work perspective, this emphasises the importance of a person-centred and strengths-based approach that recognises minor offenders as individuals capable of change rather than defining them solely by their past actions. Therefore, reducing stigma requires collaborative efforts through community awareness, family engagement, advocacy, and social Support mechanisms. Creating an inclusive environment that accepts individuals undergoing rehabilitation is essential for enhancing their participation, promoting sustainable reintegration, and reducing the risk of further offending.

Legal Challenges

Limited Consideration of Minor offenders' Preferences in Community-Based Correction Orders

Community-based correctional interventions are founded on the principles of participation, individual-centred practice, and reintegration. These principles require that correctional measures be tailored to the unique circumstances of each offender by considering factors such as personal preferences, family responsibilities, employment status, socio-economic conditions, and readiness to engage in rehabilitation. Such an individualized approach enables the development of realistic and appropriate rehabilitation plans that facilitate successful social reintegration. Minor offenders' preferences and personal conditions are not consistently incorporated into the process of issuing community-based correction orders. Although legal and administrative procedures guide decision-making, they often take precedence over individual needs and perspectives. Consequently, minor

offenders may receive correction orders that do not adequately reflect their family obligations, employment commitments, health conditions, or socio-economic realities, creating practical barriers to compliance and reducing meaningful participation in rehabilitation programmes.

"In practice, it's not always possible to issue social correction orders while taking into account the family responsibilities, work situation, or personal preferences of the minor offenders." (P8)

Community-based correction orders are frequently implemented through standardized administrative procedures rather than flexible, individualized assessments. The limited consideration of minor offenders' personal circumstances restricts the adaptability of rehabilitation measures and may reduce minor offenders' commitment to complying with correctional conditions, ultimately affecting the effectiveness of rehabilitation and long-term social reintegration.

"When giving community-based correction orders, the preferences, personal environments, and willingness of the people involved in the crime are not always considered enough. Although the legal process should take an individual's situation into account, in some cases, decisions are made without fully incorporating their views. This causes difficulties when implementing the order because their engagement and motivation to participate in the rehabilitation process may be low." (P5)

Rehabilitation should extend beyond legal supervision by actively involving minor offenders in assessment, decision-making, and rehabilitation planning. When minor offenders are excluded from these processes, professionals encounter difficulties in designing responsive intervention plans, fostering motivation, and encouraging sustained engagement. Incorporating minor offenders' views, preferences, and individual circumstances throughout the rehabilitation process promotes ownership, responsibility, and active participation, thereby improving the effectiveness of community-based interventions and supporting successful social reintegration.

Non-Availability of Pre-Sentence Reports

The Pre-Sentence Report (PSR) is an essential assessment tool in community-based correction programmes, providing the court with comprehensive information on an offender's personal, family, social, and economic circumstances. It also evaluates criminogenic factors, rehabilitation needs, and the individual's potential for successful community reintegration. Such information enables courts to make informed sentencing decisions and supports rehabilitation professionals in designing appropriate intervention strategies. However, the findings of this study indicate that pre-sentence reports are not consistently prepared or utilized in community-based correction practice. This limitation weakens evidence-based decision-making and reduces the effectiveness of individualized rehabilitation planning.

"Because there's no pre-sentence report, the court often can't fully understand the real situation of the person who's committed a crime. This also makes it difficult to plan social-based rehabilitation programs." (P8)

This statement indicates that the absence of a pre-sentence report restricts the court's ability to consider the offender's overall

circumstances during sentencing. Consequently, rehabilitation interventions may not adequately reflect individual needs, reducing the effectiveness of community-based rehabilitation programmes.

"Pre-sentencing reports are really important. They help in understanding the background of the person involved in the crime, their family, social environment, economic situation, and the factors related to the crime. But in practice, these reports are not always obtained or given enough consideration before giving a sentence. When the person's circumstances aren't properly understood, it becomes hard for professionals to recommend suitable rehabilitation interventions and community-based correction programs." (P7)

This participant emphasizes that pre-sentence reports serve as an important source of professional assessment before sentencing. Their limited use weakens the integration of social work assessment into judicial decision-making and constrains the development of evidence-based rehabilitation strategies. These findings underscore the need to institutionalize the routine preparation and effective utilization of pre-sentence reports to strengthen person-centred rehabilitation and improve long-term reintegration outcomes.

Limited Legal Awareness among Minor offenders

Limited legal awareness is a significant challenge in the rehabilitation of individuals involved in minor offences. A sound understanding of legal rights, responsibilities, court procedures, and rehabilitation conditions is essential for successful community-based rehabilitation. The findings of this study indicate that inadequate legal knowledge hinders minor offenders' ability to comply with legal requirements and fully engage in the rehabilitation process. Consequently, legal education should be considered an integral component of community-based correction programmes.

"Many people in community-based rehabilitation have very little knowledge about their legal rights and responsibilities. Because of this, situations arise where they unknowingly violate the conditions set by the court." (P7)

This statement suggests that insufficient legal awareness contributes to unintentional non-compliance with court-imposed conditions. The finding highlights the importance of providing legal guidance throughout the rehabilitation process to promote informed participation and improve compliance with judicial requirements.

"People involved in several minor crimes generally have little knowledge about the law. Some of them don't fully understand how serious their actions are or the legal consequences of getting caught up in crimes again. Before they start rehabilitation programs, they need to be made aware of their legal rights, responsibilities, and legal procedures." (P8)

This participant emphasizes the need for legal education before the commencement of rehabilitation programmes. Strengthening legal knowledge at the initial stage can enhance personal accountability, Support informed decision-making, and encourage greater commitment to the rehabilitation process. These findings indicate that incorporating structured legal awareness programmes into community-based rehabilitation can

contribute to more effective rehabilitation outcomes and successful social reintegration.

Law Enforcement–Rehabilitation: Tension and Challenges in Implementing Evidence-Based Practice

The findings of this study indicate that community-based correctional officers experience a continuous tension between their law enforcement responsibilities and their rehabilitative role. While ensuring compliance with court orders and legal requirements is a fundamental responsibility, officers are also expected to facilitate behavioural change, rehabilitation, and the successful social reintegration of minor offenders. Managing these dual responsibilities often creates uncertainty regarding whether supervision should primarily focus on control or on supportive reintegration. Although evidence-based practices are widely regarded as essential for improving the quality and effectiveness of community-based interventions, their implementation in routine practice remains challenging. Organizational resource limitations, heavy workloads, insufficient training opportunities, limited administrative Support, and rigid institutional procedures restrict the consistent application of evidence-based interventions. Although participants acknowledged the value of combining traditional supervision with evidence-based rehabilitation strategies, they emphasized that translating training into routine professional practice requires more than individual competence. Sustained organizational commitment, supportive leadership, adequate resources, and continuous professional development are necessary to facilitate the effective implementation of evidence-based practices.

"We need to make sure that the minor offenders are following the court orders. At the same time, we should guide them and help them get a new lease on life. Balancing these two responsibilities in practice is really tough." (P6)

This statement illustrates the competing expectations placed on community correctional officers. Participants described the challenge of simultaneously fulfilling enforcement responsibilities while maintaining a rehabilitative and supportive role, resulting in role conflict during routine practice.

"We get training on evidence-based practices. But because of heavy workload, limited resources, and organizational procedures, it's not easy to use them consistently in daily work." (P5)

This quotation suggests that barriers to implementing evidence-based practice are primarily organizational rather than individual. Participants perceived that those structural constraints, rather than a lack of knowledge or willingness, limited the consistent integration of evidence-based practice into everyday correctional practice.

Economic Challenges

Lack of Financial Resources in Rehabilitation

Adequate financial resources are fundamental to the effective implementation of community-based rehabilitation programmes. Financial Support enables the delivery of vocational training, livelihood assistance, counselling services, community awareness initiatives, and other rehabilitation interventions. The findings of this study indicate that financial constraints remain a

significant barrier to the successful implementation of community-based correction programmes. Limited funding affects service coverage, restricts operational activities, and reduces the capacity of professionals to respond to the diverse rehabilitation needs of minor offenders. These challenges also hinder programme expansion, inter-agency collaboration, and the long-term sustainability of rehabilitation efforts.

"It's really hard to carry out rehabilitation activities properly because there isn't enough financial support. Due to budget limits, we often have to cut down or postpone many planned activities." (P3)

This statement illustrates that financial limitations disrupt the timely implementation of rehabilitation activities and reduce programme consistency. That reliable financial Support is essential for maintaining uninterrupted rehabilitation services and achieving planned programme objectives.

"One of the main challenges we face in community-based rehabilitation activities is the Lack of financial resources. Many rehabilitation initiatives, like counselling, skill training, follow-up visits, and community awareness programs, need enough funding. But since financial Support is low, it's difficult to provide continuous and effective services to individuals under community-based Correction." (P2)

This participant highlights that financial constraints affect the overall capacity of rehabilitation professionals to deliver comprehensive interventions. Insufficient funding limits the flexibility to respond to individual rehabilitation needs and weakens the continuity of Support throughout the rehabilitation process. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening financial planning and establishing sustainable funding mechanisms to enhance the quality and effectiveness of community-based intervention programmes.

Limited Support of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are important stakeholders in community-based intervention, contributing to vocational training, psychosocial counselling, livelihood assistance, community awareness, and social reintegration. Their involvement complements the efforts of government agencies by addressing the diverse rehabilitation needs of minor offenders. Even if, the findings of this study indicate that NGO participation in community-based correction programmes remains limited in both scope and continuity. As a result, rehabilitation professionals often experience difficulties in mobilizing external resources and maintaining comprehensive support services for minor offenders. These constraints weaken inter-agency collaboration and may affect the sustainability of rehabilitation outcomes.

"We have very few independent organizations (NGOs) that support us. Most of them just organize one or two events and then back off. After that, we are left to handle everything ourselves." (P8)

that NGO involvement is largely temporary rather than sustained. The absence of long-term partnerships increases the operational burden on rehabilitation professionals and limits the continuity of community-based intervention.

"Non-governmental organizations play a key role in community-based rehabilitation through social assistance programs, counselling services, and livelihood support. But, not getting enough funding and institutional Support makes it hard for NGOs to keep providing these services. Because of the Lack of resources, we face challenges in connecting rehabilitated people with the necessary support programs and social services." (P1) that financial and institutional constraints significantly influence the capacity of NGOs to sustain rehabilitation services. Limited organizational resources reduce access to essential support programmes and weaken collaborative rehabilitation efforts. The findings, therefore, highlight the importance of establishing stronger institutional partnerships, improving resource mobilization, and developing sustainable funding mechanisms to enhance the effectiveness of community-based intervention programmes.

Economic Reintegration and Livelihood Challenges

Economic reintegration is a key foundation for the long-term success of rehabilitation efforts. A lack of opportunities to earn a stable income not only limits individuals' ability to become self-reliant but also threatens the sustainability of rehabilitation outcomes. Therefore, an integrated organizational approach that combines community-based correction programmes with employment and livelihood support is essential.

"Waiting for the Divisional Secretariat Office to support the livelihood of minor offenders is very minimal" (P7)

Institutional Support for livelihood reintegration within community-based rehabilitation programmes is inadequate. The absence of comprehensive economic empowerment initiatives can negatively affect both the sustainability of rehabilitation efforts and the successful social reintegration of minor offenders. The need to strengthen coordinated, sustainable, and multi-sectoral support systems that promote employment, vocational development, and long-term livelihood opportunities.

"Creating job opportunities for people under social rehabilitation is one of the big challenges we face. Many employers hesitate to hire them because of their past criminal records. Even after completing rehabilitation programs and showing positive changes, getting stable employment is still tough. Without job and income opportunities, their process of reintegrating into society becomes even more challenging" (P5) Creating employment opportunities for individuals undergoing community-based rehabilitation is one of the major challenges faced by professionals. Access to stable employment is crucial for achieving economic independence, rebuilding self-confidence, and facilitating successful social reintegration. However, criminal records, employer discrimination, and social stigma continue to restrict employment opportunities for rehabilitated individuals. Consequently, professionals involved in community-based rehabilitation are required not only to facilitate behavioural change but also to advocate for employment opportunities, engage employers to reduce discriminatory attitudes, and promote greater community acceptance. These additional responsibilities highlight the need for stronger collaboration among correctional agencies, employers, government institutions, and the Department of

Community-based Correction to ensure sustainable reintegration outcomes.

Delayed financial Allowance for Community Based Correctional Officers.

Community-based community-based corrections efforts to work effectively, timely financial and administrative Support is essential. The officials who took part in the study pointed out that delays in funding create significant challenges in fulfilling their professional duties and ensuring the continuity of rehabilitation services.

"There's a delay from the Department in giving us travel allowances to supervise the contractors. Not just that, when funds are being given for event plans for defaulters, there's also a delay in providing the allowance for the coordinators. There is even a situation where we cannot get the specified money from the Department until the end. Small office expenses and yearly salary increment that should be provided by the Department are also not being done properly. Up till now, our office has been without necessary supplies"(P4)

Department financial management affects not just personal financial benefits but also the Department's operational efficiency. Such management lapses reduce the Department's ability to implement community-based community-based corrections programs as planned effectively.

"Delays in receiving allowances are one of the challenges that Community-based correction officers face. We have to carry out responsibilities like conducting field visits, monitoring supervisors, preparing reports, and coordinating rehabilitation activities. But because the allowances come late, there are practical difficulties in continuing our work effectively. Providing allowances on time is important to ensure the officers' motivation and the continuous delivery of services," P10.

Timely financial Support emphasizes being a key institutional backing for maintaining officers' professional engagement, continuity of fieldwork, and the quality of community-based intervention.

5. DISCUSSION

Community-based corrections are an approach aimed at helping people who have committed crimes to rehabilitate, reintegrate into society, and reduce Recidivism. However, social workers, Correctional officers, and rehabilitation professionals who provide these services face various practical challenges. In this study, social stigma related to a previous offence history was identified as a major challenge in the reintegration process. People who have committed crimes still face negative views from society even after their reintegration. This creates obstacles in employment, family relationships, and social participation. In the study conducted by Ramokolo-Kutu (2024), social workers involved in parole and community reintegration work found that they mainly face challenges like low social acceptance, Lack of resources, and difficulties coordinating with multiple organizations. Similarly, the Correctional practitioners who took part in the current study said that rebuilding the Community's trust and freeing individuals from a criminal label are their main professional responsibilities. In the rehabilitation process, family support is considered an important social resource. But because

of family members' fear, social stigma, and mistrust, people who have committed crimes often don't get enough Support. Family and community support are important for the successful social reintegration of minor offenders. Especially, correctional practitioners and rehabilitation workers face difficulties in connecting services to an individual's needs when there is no family support. So, instead of an approach that only changes the individual in community-based community-based corrections, an approach that includes the family and society becomes necessary. In this study, it became clear as a legal issue that pre-sentence reports, assessment of individual needs, and participation of minor offenders were not adequately considered. The study by Alward (2024) shows that in a community supervision setting, procedural justice and the trustworthiness of officers increase the cooperation of service recipients. Because of this, including the circumstances and opinions of minor offenders in the legal decision-making process improves rehabilitation outcomes. In community community-based corrections work, financial resources, human resources, and institutional Support are important. In this study, resource shortages for rehabilitation activities were found to affect the service delivery of social Correctional officers. In the study by Savoia, Stern, and Testa (2024), they highlighted that officials working in social reintegration programs emphasize the need for mental health services, interdisciplinary collaboration, and adequate support systems. Also, the research by Balzarini and Loudon (2024) points out that training, confidence, job satisfaction, and organizational Support are key factors affecting the performance of correctional practitioners. Community correction officers have to take on both supervision and rehabilitation responsibilities at the same time. This creates professional stress. Wilson and Applegate (2025) note that the professional approaches of community correction officers are influenced by the balance between their job duties and rehabilitation goals. Because of this, it's important to provide Correctional officers with continuous training, supervision, and organizational Support.

6. FINDINGS

1. Social workers face challenges in reintegrating minor offenders into society because society tends to ostracize them.
2. They encounter difficulties in gaining family support for helping minor offenders return to normal life, making it hard to bring about lasting change in them.
3. People with previous criminal records struggle with reintegration because society and family members are reluctant to trust them, and because of their associations with other minor offenders.
4. Since Pre-Sentence Reports are not given enough attention, minor offenders are rehabilitated with difficulty when it comes to getting their cooperation in reintegration into society.
5. Because minor offenders don't have proper knowledge, facing difficulties in fully implementing community-based corrections activities reduces the involvement and interest of professionals in community-based corrections efforts.

6. Due to the Lack of financial and human resources, rehabilitation programs for minor offenders are often implemented in a fragmented way, making it challenging for practitioners to carry out quality rehabilitation work.
7. Practitioners also face difficulties because community-based correction departments don't get cooperation from voluntary organizations to carry out the social interventions needed for the rehabilitation programs for minor offenders.
8. Even after minor offenders are given a second chance at life, employers are not ready to hire them, so Correctional officers face challenges in fully rehabilitating minor offenders and socially reintegrating them.
9. When incentives and travel allowances for Correctional officers are delayed by the Department, it is observed that many Correctional officers face financial difficulties in performing their duties.
10. The fact that training for Correctional officers is not provided continuously is seen as a challenge in improving their work efficiency.

Recommendation

1. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are being proposed.
2. Raising public awareness regarding rehabilitation programs for minor offenders.
3. Implementing rehabilitation programs by incorporating the contributions of families and the Community, and engaging them as stakeholders.
4. Emphasizing the preparation of Pre-Sentence Reports (PSRs) within the judicial process and the necessity of basing decisions on these reports.
5. Implementing rehabilitation programs tailored to the circumstances and nature of each offender, while taking their views into account.
6. Ensuring that individuals undergoing community-based rehabilitation are provided with clear and structured information regarding the relevant legal provisions at the outset.
7. Securing Support from voluntary organizations and relevant government agencies to obtain the resources necessary for carrying out community-based rehabilitation activities.
8. Continuously providing stress management and skill development training to community-based rehabilitation officers and personnel working in the rehabilitation sector.
9. Implementing integrated rehabilitation projects by involving other organizations in the rehabilitation process.

7. CONCLUSION

This study shows how community-based Correctional workers face various social, legal, institutional, and economic challenges while carrying out their professional work. Specifically, factors like social stigma, Lack of family support, the negative impact of a criminal record, Lack of social acceptance, insufficient use of pre-sentence reports, not taking the opinions of minor offenders adequately in the decision-making process, Lack of resources for rehabilitation activities, poor collaboration with government-independent organizations, difficulties in creating employment opportunities, and delays in institutional Support and payments

for staff directly affect professional operations. Research findings emphasise that community-based rehabilitation is not just a process focused on legal supervision. It should be a comprehensive reintegration approach that integrates social work, psychology, family support, community participation, multidisciplinary collaboration, and institutional Support. Its success doesn't depend solely on the individuals involved in crime trying to change. Rather, it also relies on the coordinated contributions of their supporting families, community organisations, the justice system, government agencies, and community-based service providers. So, community-based community-based corrections workers need to have enough human, financial, and technical resources, ongoing professional training, quality supervision, organisational support, and cross-sector coordination to effectively carry out their professional responsibilities. At the same time, it's important to have awareness programs to reduce social stigma, counselling plans to increase family involvement, job placement efforts, and policies that encourage social reintegration. Finally, to improve the effectiveness of community-based rehabilitation, instead of approaching the challenges faced by professionals at an individual level, they should be treated as social, legal, institutional, and policy-level structural challenges and addressed with integrated approaches. Such approaches will enhance the quality of community-based rehabilitation services, support the successful reintegration of minor offenders into society, and strengthen long-term crime prevention efforts.

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