

Experiences of Adapting to Social Life of Female Convicts Benefiting from the Probation Process

Burcu Sari, Semra Saru

Faculty of Health Sciences, Anadolu University, Trkiye

Abstract:

The probation system is a method of criminal enforcement aimed at reintegrating individuals who have committed crimes into society. Probation aims to provide supervision and monitoring of offenders in the community, improve their living conditions, and prevent them from reoffending. This system aims to ensure the rehabilitation of offenders while keeping them under supervision without isolating them from society. While the literature indicates that probation services play an important role in the treatment and rehabilitation of offenders and their adaptation to society, it is also known that there are some issues in the functioning of the system. Factors such as stigmatization, difficulties in finding employment, and lack of social support increase the risk of reoffending and make social reintegration more difficult. In this context, studies emphasize the strengthening of social support mechanisms and the improvement of employment opportunities to increase the effectiveness of probation services. The issues and needs of female offenders during the probation process constitute the starting point of this study. When examining the general profile of female offenders, it is seen that they are generally marginalized economically and socially and struggle with issues such as domestic violence, poverty, and lack of education. When the specific needs and challenges faced by women in the probation process are examined in detail, it is known that the main issues they face in adapting to society include housing, employment, access to healthcare, and restructuring family relationships. The aim of this research is to examine the experiences of female offenders benefiting from probation in adapting to social life. In this context, it aims to identify the issues and needs of female offenders and evaluate probation services from the perspective of female offenders. The unique value of this research is that it will contribute to the development of gender-specific intervention methods by addressing the probation system based on the issues and needs of female offenders and will help develop recommendations for the probation system. This study was designed with a qualitative methodology, and the population of the study consisted of female offenders who were receiving supervision and monitoring services from probation offices in Turkey. The study group consisted of female offenders receiving services from the Eskiřehir Probation Office. Male offenders under the jurisdiction of Probation Offices were excluded from the study. Additionally, female offenders under the age of 18 were also excluded from the study due to their status as minors. In this context, 17 female offenders benefiting

from probation services were reached. In the research, a semi-structured interview form, prepared in accordance with the purpose and theoretical framework of the study, was used as the data collection tool. The interview form was structured into four sections: "Personal Information, Crime and Probation Process, Social Adaptation Experiences, and Expectations and Suggestions for the Future." During the data analysis phase, the interviews were transcribed into written form in an electronic environment, and descriptive analysis and content analysis were conducted using qualitative data analysis programs. The data collection phase was completed, and the findings were finalized and included in the abstract. Findings indicate that most participants perceive their economic situation as poor or average and express a significant need for economic support, although few benefit from institutional or informal financial assistance. Family dynamics show significant instability and emotional detachment, often coupled with socioeconomic challenges. Childhood experiences are varied, ranging from supportive family environments to severe neglect and abuse. Social interactions reflect both active participation and feelings of isolation, highlighting complex social dynamics. Housing conditions vary considerably, with most participants living in rented apartments with basic amenities. Women in probation face substantial gender-specific issues, including increased stigma, employment discrimination, and heightened family responsibilities. Recommendations from participants include enhanced educational programs, increased employment opportunities, financial aid, gender-sensitive policy adjustments, and measures to alleviate domestic responsibilities. These insights underline the necessity for comprehensive, gender-responsive approaches in probation services to effectively support female offenders' reintegration into society.

Keywords:

Probation, Female Offender, Crime, Needs.