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## **EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON THE BEHAVIOR OF POCA PARTICIPANTS IN THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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### **Abstract**

*The Prevention of Crime Act (POCA) 2014 is an act enacted to deal with criminal activities such as gangs, organized crime, drugs, and human trafficking. The Act is intended to regulate criminals, gangsters, and individuals who threaten national security and related matters. Even though there are a lot of awareness programs was conducted by the government, the number of offenders under POCA still increased. The offenders of POCA has a lack of awareness about his future life and goals so that it's easy to get into the crime. The purpose of this study is to explore the behavior of the participant under the crime prevention act (POCA) based on the theory of Reality. This study used a quasi-experimental qualitative method. An interview was conducted with a randomly selected participant under this Act who received a restraining order at the Police Station, Gurun, Kedah, Malaysia. In this interview session, the researcher explored the participant's experiences, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The participant got benefits from this interview session. The participant gains awareness plans for the future, and be aware of the mistakes made. Participant also has thought to change*

*negative behaviors into positive ones after this interview session. In the future, researchers can observe the offenders' behavior after job placement. Job-related programs will help POCA participants to get awareness and achieve their goals in life.*

## **Keywords**

Reality Theory, Awareness, Goals, POCA, Malaysia

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## **1. Introduction**

This part discusses the main purposes of this study. This part discusses the introduction, motivation, reality theory, problem statement, and significance of the study.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Prevention of Crime Act (POCA) was enforced since 1959, enacted to deal with criminal activities such as gangsters, organized crime, drugs, and human trafficking. The Act was aimed to control criminals, members of gangs, individuals who threaten national security, and matters related to it (Ministry of Home Affairs [MOHA], 2017). People detained under this act are not barred from making 'Habeas Corpus' claims. Originally, POCA only took effect in peninsular Malaysia. However, after the amendment, this act was extended to Sabah and Sarawak. The enforcement of POCA is contributed to eradicating human trafficking activities in this country. Parliament reviews the relevancy of this Act every five years and assesses the enforcement (MOHA, 2017).

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (2013), an analysis of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) indicates that the crime indexes rate for offenses such as murder, gang robbery, and use of force or threat had increased. The Government of Malaysia executed actions to reduce the crime rate, including the introduction of electronic tagging under POCA laws (Hassan, 2018). POCA offenders need to wear an electronic monitoring device (EMD) which consists of a strap, a smart tag, and a beacon and tracks the offender's location and movement (Hassan, 2018).

The behavior of the offenders plays a significant role in the crime. The offenders must be aware of their behavior. So, they're not once again involved in the crime. The theory of reality is useful in giving criminals an understanding of behaviour since it focuses on behavior. If perspectives of Reality Theory are used in recovery practices, by making more successful decisions, offenders may be able to make improvements in their lives (Ryland, 2020). The theory of reality enhances the lives of criminals and motivates them to improve their negative behavior (Patkar, 2019).

In this study, the researcher examines the behavior of the participant who was sanctioned under the POCA in the context of Reality theory.

### **1.2 Motivation**

Kamaluddin et al., (2016) mentioned that criminal cases have been increasing every year despite punitive and harsh punishments being imposed on the offenders. Researchers have been attentive to crime and criminals such as Ismail (2008) conducted a study on the Policy of enforcement and prosecution of sharia crime in Malaysia and Nor, Kamaluddin and Sulaiman (2019) researched the Criminal Profile of Woman Prisoners in Malaysia. However, research on Crime Prevention Act Offenders (POCA) has been less attentive. This research intended to study the participant in the Crime Prevention Act (POCA) and provide a suggestion on the areas of improvements.

### **1.3 Reality Theory**

Reality theory has been identified as the related theory for this research work. Reality Theory was introduced by William Glasser in 1964. The basis for reality theory was a choice theory which explains why and how we work (Corey, 2005). Reality theory explains five necessities that humans need to have in their lives, such as love and belonging, freedom, power, fun, and survival. The primary aim of reality theory is to help clients to interact or reconnect with the people they've chosen to bring into their realm of quality (Corey, 2005). This theory also helps clients learn better ways to meet their needs. The basic human needs help to concentrate on careful preparation and set short-term as well as long-term objectives.

Wants, Direction, Evaluation, and Plan or known as the WDEP system is a part of the reality theory. The WDEP system can be used to help clients explore what they want, possible things they can do, opportunities for self-evaluations, and design plans for improvement (Wubbolding, 2000). The system helps clients in satisfying their basic needs. Planning is effective when the clients determine that he or she wants to change their behavior. According to Wubbolding (2000), simple, attainable, measurable, immediate, involved, committed, and consistently done or know as SAMIC helps to make a good plan. In this study, Reality theory has been applied to identify the needs of the participant and help the participant to fulfill the needs. Reality theory helps to understand the behavior of the participant and changes the focus of responsibility to choose and choosing a subsequently achieve goals in his life. This theory was used in this study because this theory emphasizes behavior. Behavioral stress helps the participant to evaluate and change the behavior.

### **1.4 Problem Statement**

Malaysia is among the countries with a high index crime ratio. In 2018, Malaysia recorded a 273.8 index crime ratio which is relatively high (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2019). Offenders are subject to punishment based on the related Acts. Offenders who are convicted under Section 15 (4) of the Crime Prevention Act 1956 will be sentenced to expulsion from the district and restricted to a minimum of two years. In addition to the punishment of restrictions and the punishment of expulsion from the district, the offender would need to seek counseling services to make themselves

aware and to restore themselves. As such, behavior plays a crucial role in POCA, and exploring the behavior in the context of Reality theory is imperative.

More than 600,000 prisoners who are already at high risk of prosecution and recidivism are released each year (Jonson & Cullen, 2015). Either during or after incarceration, most do not receive recovery services relevant to their criminogenic (Andrews, Donald & Bonta, 2010). Reality theory therapy is a therapeutic choice that appeals to the client and is projected to have a more substantial impact on rates of recidivism. By applying the theory of reality, offenders can become aware of their lives, attempt to do what they need in their lives, and change their negative behavior.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The study was conducted to explore the participant's behavior. Punishment is not the only mechanism that brings changes in the participant's behavior. The outcome of this study can be embedded into counseling and correctional programs.

## **2. Literature Review**

This part provides a discussion about the previous literature. The literature is based on Crime Prevention Act (POCA) and Reality Theory.

### **2.1 Crime Prevention Act (POCA)**

A study conducted by Hassan (2018), explains the punishment based on the Prevention of Crime Act 1959. The purpose of this study is to determine the electronic monitoring device used in punishment under the Prevention of Crime Act 1959. This study is a qualitative study and researchers collect data through legal texts, legal journals, and even semi-structured interviews. The respondents of this study are three police officers from Bukit Aman. The findings of the study show that the use of an electronic monitoring device for offenders under the Crime Prevention Act can control crime and prevent offenders from committing crimes. This study also explains the role of the POCA and Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) in crime prevention.

A study on the involvement of extremism among the lower-class society in Malaysia was conducted by Nasir et al., (2019). A qualitative study with the design of the exploratory study was used in this study. The data was collected through interviews with former The Security Offenses (Special Measures) Act 2012 (SOSMA), POTA, and POCA detainees involved in extreme activities and the radicalization experts. The results of the study indicated that the factor of lower-class involvement in extreme activities is multi-variable. There are many factors including feeling threatened, confusion of knowledge, the narrowness of life, and others. These factors are related to each other and impact each other.

## **2.2 Reality Theory**

Law and Guo (2017), explains the effectiveness of choice-based Reality therapy in strengthening hope in recovery for women convicted of drug offenses in Taiwan. This study aims to test the effectiveness of choice-based reality therapy in strengthening hope in recovery for women convicted of drug offenses in Taiwan. 44 incarcerated women convicted of drug offenses were the participants in the substance involvement treatment program, who were randomly selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of equal size. The results of the study, obtained through the ANCOVA analysis, showed significant differences in the post-test scores for the sense of hope, as measured in the go subscales. The evidence presented in this study suggests that Taiwanese women convicted of drug crimes showed a substantially higher degree of optimism when they completed the selection-based reality therapy for substance abuse compared to those who had not yet entered the program. Hope was measured by their ability to set goals and overcome obstacles, and their persistence in pursuing the goals they set, energy for recovery, and their ability to set goals-based pathways. The findings highlight the value of reality therapy based on choice in increasing the hope of recovery for women convicted of drug offenses.

Madukwe et al., (2016), conduct a study about the effectiveness of reality therapy in the treatment of bullying among adolescents in Owerri North, Imo State, Nigeria. The research aimed at addressing adolescent bullying behaviors using reality therapy. This also mentioned age as a factor in the result of treatment. This study was conducted taking into consideration the prevalence of bullying among adolescents and the correlation between adolescent bullying and violent behaviors such as rape in adulthood. This followed a system of repeated steps, pretest, and post-test. Participants in the study were chosen from Comprehensive Secondary School Amakohia's junior and senior secondary sections in Uratta, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. The research lasted two months with two therapy sessions a week. For the study, 30 participants were selected using a purposeful sampling technique. The questionnaire was shared with selected students to assess the nature and frequency of their bullying behavior (pretest), after which seventeen reality therapy sessions were conducted using the same questionnaire before the post-test. A strong difference in bullying levels between pretest ( $m = 31.63$ ) and post-test ( $m = 11.47$ ) of bullies was observed on the relevant level of  $P < .001$ , as seen in the result ( $t(29) = 31.09, P < .001$ ). This research concluded that real-life counseling for managing bullying behaviors among young people and old adolescents.

## **3. The Objective of The Study**

The main purposes of this study are discussed in this section. The researcher provides research objective and research questions in this section.

### **3.1 Research Objective**

- a) To explore the participant using Reality theory.
- b) To examine if the goals and increase of self-awareness can be achieved through the session.
- c) To examine if the behavior change in a positive direction through the session.
- d) To examine if the participant can increase the confidence and self-responsibility through the session.

### **3.2 Research Questions**

- a) Is it possible to explore participant using Reality theory?
- b) Is the participant able to achieve goals through the session and increase self-awareness?
- c) Can the participant change the behavior in a positive direction through the session?
- d) Did the participant increase his self-confidence and self-responsibility through this session?

## **4. Methodology**

In this part, the researcher provides detailed information about the research procedures. This part explains the method that is used in this study.

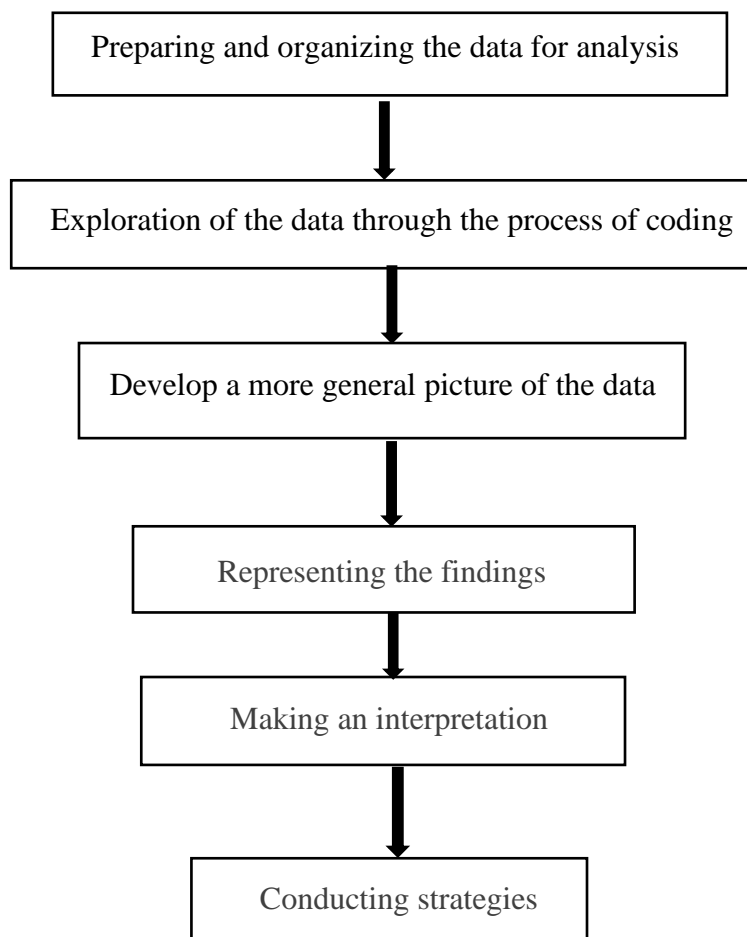
This study was conducted as an exploratory study on the behavior of the participant under the crime prevention act (POCA) based on the theory of Reality. This is a qualitative study. The qualitative study leads to analyzing the human condition and perceived situation in various ways (Bengtsson, 2016). An unstructured interview was conducted with the participant of POCA. There is no clear collection of predetermined questions in an unstructured interview, although the interviewers typically have certain subjects in mind that they want to discuss during the interview (Dana, Dawes, & Peterson, 2013). The researcher used open-ended questions in the session. Open-ended questions were used by the researcher to get more details about participants' thoughts, feelings, and opinions. The interview was recorded by the researcher to reflect on the substance of the interview and to produce the interview's "verbatim transcript." The verbal and non-verbal of the participant also observed by the researcher during the interview session.

The participant of this study was a man who received a restraining order at the Police Station, Gurun, Kedah, Malaysia. The participant was randomly selected from the Police Station, Gurun, Kedah, Malaysia.

## **5. Analysis of Data**

The researcher explains the analyzing and interpreting the data. The steps of analyzing and interpreting the data are discussed in this part.

The researcher used six steps in analyzing and interpreting the data from the interview session. First, the researcher prepared and organized the data for the analysis process. The interviews and observational notes were transcribed by the researcher. The researcher explored the data after prepared and organized data. The researcher explored the data through the coding process. After that, using the codes, the researcher developed a more general picture of the data. The descriptions and themes were built by the researcher from the data. The researcher also represented the findings through narratives and visuals and then interpreted the meaning of the results. Lastly, the researcher conducted strategies to validate the accuracy of the findings. The chart below shows the steps in analyzing and interpreting the data.



**Figure 1:** *Steps in Analyzing and Interpreting the Data*

The participant was observed during the interview session. The participant looked nervous at the beginning of the interview session. The participant also answered with less confidence and took the time to answer the questions. In the middle of the interview, the participant became active and start

to answer the questions with confidence. The participant also supports the researcher to collect the data.

## **6. Discussion**

This section discusses the finding of this study from the interview session. The researcher elaborates on the findings based on Reality Theory.

After interviewing with the participant, the researcher gets to know that participant has issues in survival and love and belonging based on Choice Theory in the Reality Theory. The participant faced difficulty in adapting Gurun, Kedah. The participant has difficulty adjusting at home and work. The participant lives alone in a rented room. The participant says that the participant feels lonely and there is no one to express his feelings. In the workplace, the participant must work hard and need to work daily to earn RM50. The participant has no friends in the Gurun, Kedah, and does not get along with others.

The participant also desperately wanted love from his family members. The participant felt a sense of loneliness when he is unable to spend time with his family members. The participant was unable to see his family members for one year. Participant family members were also unable to travel to the Gurun, Kedah due to their distant residence and work arrangements. This caused the participant to feel very lonely. The participant misses his family members very much.

After exploring the participant based on Choice Theory, the WDEP system was applied to the participant as an intervention. The purpose of WDEP is to see the participant's goals and help the participant to make plans so that the participant can achieve his goals. "Wants" strategy was used to understand the participant's wants or goals. The participant said that the participant wanted to meet with family members and would work in Negeri Sembilan after the ban. The participant will save money after starting work in Negeri Sembilan. The participant also said he would not associate with friends who were involved in the offense which has led him to be in the current situation. Therefore, the participant will move to Negeri Sembilan and work there.

Following Want, the "Direction" strategy was used to find out what the participant has been doing to achieve his wishes. The participant did not take any steps to meet with his family members because the participant was still under penalties. The participant contacted his aunt and asked for a job at his aunt's factory in Negeri Sembilan. The participant also has no contact with old friends. For the self-evaluation strategy, the participant's current behavior was assessed. The participant gave a scale of 5 out of 10 on the participant's efforts to get what he wants.



Finally, the “Planning and action” strategy was applied to achieve the participant's needs. Participant’s planning was made based on SAMIC. The participant said that he will meet his family members after the ban and spend time with them before starting work in Negeri Sembilan. This method will help the participant to gain love and calm his mind. Besides, the participant said that he will work hard in Negeri Sembilan and will not involve in any crime after that. This will help the participant to save money and become responsible as well as increase his confidence to move on with his life. Next, the participant said that the relocation of the place to the participant is more spirited and no longer a sense of loneliness. The participant also said that he can adjust to Negeri Sembilan as the place is commonplace and his aunt will help him if he is in trouble.

The participant's progress was not recorded in this study as the session was just an interview and no further follow up done. The researcher concludes the interview session after applying the Reality theory and WDEP system with the participant.

## **7. Recommendation**

This part discusses the recommendation to improve the Malaysian police performance with the example.

In this study, the researcher has a suggestion to improve police performance in Malaysia and to prevent crime. Technological innovation helps in crime prevention and crime management policies. Information-based technologies and material-based technologies have been linked to changes in the organization of police (Reichert, 2001). New technological innovations can be developed to prevent crime and to improve the performance of the police by establishing Smart Police Station. The first Smart Police Station was established in Dubai. The Smart Police Station is a self-service police station that operates 24 hours. (Dubai Police, 2020). This Smart Police Station offers 27 smart services online. Through this, the community easily makes a police report and can interact with police officers quickly if they have a problem. People who want to make a report do not have to wait long and can save time. The Dubai police station is the first institution to use DNA testing in criminal investigations, Electronic Fingerprinting, and Clean Desk Policy concept (Kovacs, 2019). The Dubai Police Force was also the first police institution to establish a department exclusively for human rights and the first institution to use the Global Positioning System (GPS). The Dubai police station uses high technology in the service and upgrades the service every year (Dubai Police, 2020). This police station is known all over the world for its high technology in the police service.

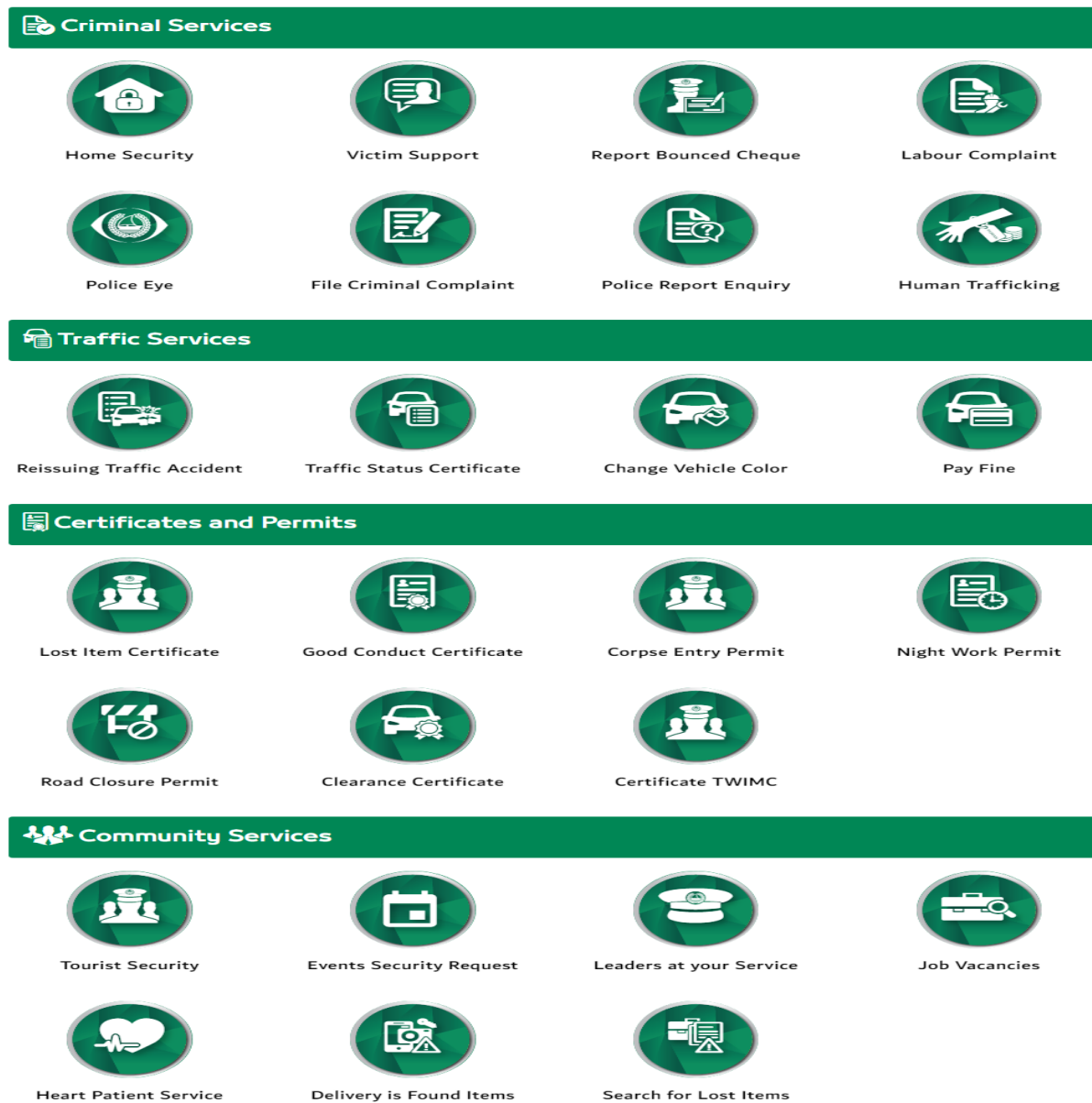


**Figure 2:** *Smart Police Station*



**Figure 3:** *Places of People to Make Police Report*

There are Four Categories of Services Commonly Offered by Smart Police Stations as Shown In Figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Smart Police Station Service

Criminal service is one of the services offered by the Smart Police Station. In this service, users can get support for victims, check problems, make complaints about work, file complaints about crimes, and make police reports. The second service is the traffic service. In this service, users can report on road accidents, make an application to change the color of the vehicle, and pay. Next are certificate and permit services. Users can apply for certificates for lost goods, certificates of good behavior permit for night work, and release certificates. Finally, community service where the smart police station offers security services for tourists, requests from the community, services for leaders, applying for vacant positions, and services for the heart patients (Dubai Police, 2020).

Therefore, the Malaysian police station needs to set up a Smart Police Station so that the community can make a police report easily and simply. Malaysia could reach third place in the world if it set up a Smart Police Station. Smart Police Station not only facilitates the community but also simplifies the work of police officers. Smart Police Station and embracing technological expertise in a criminal investigation can improve the standard of police service in Malaysia.

## **8. Conclusion**

This section concludes the overall study, limitations of this study, and the future scope. In conclusion, the participant in this study gains awareness and plans for the future. The interview session which was carried out has a positive impact on the participant. During the interview, the verbal and non-verbal participant was observed. The participant looks nervous and took some time to answer the beginning of the question of the interview. The participant starts to active and answers questions with confidence in the middle of the interview session. The participant also expresses his problems in this session and be aware of the mistakes made. Participant also tries to change negative behaviors into positive ones. There are two research limitations in this study. First, the researcher only focuses on offenders of the Crime Prevention Act (POCA) and cannot be generalized to all offenders. Second, the researcher chooses only one respondent and focused only on one place. In the future, researchers can observe the offenders' behavior after job placement. Job-related programs will help POCA participants to get awareness and achieve their goals in life.

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