

NATURE AND CAUSES OF RECIDIVISM AMONG THE PRISONERS: A STUDY ON TANGAIL DISTRICT JAIL, BANGLADESH

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Abstract

Recidivism is a serious problem in our country. It is necessary to know the causes, nature, and patterns of recidivists. This study examined the nature and causes of recidivism among prisoners in Tangail district jail. A cross-sectional research design was employed in this study. Structured questionnaires were administered to 27 prisoners, who were selected from the jail using a convenience sampling techniques. Most of the recidivists were male and average age is 30 years. Most of them were illiterate and lower class. Narcotic abuse, theft, and women and child torture and trafficking were the committed crime by recidivists. The study found that several social causes like broken family, lack of parental care, ethnicity, political contention and psychological causes like mental depravity, inferiority complex and lack of self-control are the underlying causes for recidivism. Furthermore, the phenomenon of recidivism is an outcome of many factors, including failure in parole and probation, ineffectiveness of correctional methods etc. The study recommends that to address the phenomenon of recidivism can be lessened by enhancing policing service, ensuring an appropriate, consistent and fair justice system, and by proving a safe, secure and human custodial environment as well as an effective community corrections environment.

Keywords: Recidivism, prisoners, community correction

Introduction

Recidivism is the reversion of an individual to criminal behavior after he or she has been convicted of a prior offense, sentenced, and corrected. It results from the concatenation of failures: failure of the individual to live up to society's expectations or failure of society to provide for the individual; a consequent failure of the individual to stay out of trouble; failure of the individual, as an offender, to escape arrest and conviction; failure of the individual as an inmate of a correctional institution to take advantage of correctional programs or failure of the institution to provide programs that rehabilitate; and additional failures by the individual in continuing in a criminal career after release. Crime is a social phenomenon. It is also an unsolvable problem ever since of human civilization, (Sirohi, 2004). According to Emile Durkheim, crime is a natural phenomenon, which is

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constantly changing with social change. But it is main concern that, which person does more than one offence in his or her life. It is a serious problem for any society or country. Now such recidivism is a major problem likes our country. Although punishments are given to the offenders but reoffending is quite common here. Rigorous punishment or social restriction are not prevented or reduce the crime or recidivism rates.

The English word "Recidivism" comes from Latin word "*recidivus*" means "recurring" from re- back. The term is most frequently used in conjunction with criminal behavior and substance abuse with "relapse" that more commonly used in medicine and in the disease model of addiction. In consequence the ever increasing recidivism is undoubtedly a crucial dilemma for penologist in the control of crime and rehabilitation of offenders. The terms recidivism connotes persistence indulgence in crime the jails in most civilizes country are full of prisoners and court rooms are jammed with under-trials. The offenders are locked-up, released, rearrested and re-sentenced. Recidivism" was first used in popular English literature. Concerned with the extent to which a person relapses into criminal activity for a second or further time, and is relatively understood, in term of its measurement, as the occurrence of the criminal event. This definition suggests that we form attitudes towards our recidivist do not change their behavior at a glance. However, the prediction of recidivism appears semantically border and may well include violence and dangerousness (Rahman *et al.*, 2009).

The term 'recidivism' is freely used to describe the general act of reoffending. According to Mannering (1958), criminological literature is repute with descriptions of the personality and background characteristics of recidivist's hypotheses as to why they persist in crime. In his opinion recidivists or crime-repeaters are often characterized as being basically anti-social, aggressive, highly competitive, and indifferent to well-being of others exceedingly egocentric (Mannering, 1958). However, it is also true, in the sense of criminal activities that it appears to be major social, economical and political issues today's Bangladesh characterized by increased crime. Recidivist criminal in Bangladesh may show direction or open new dimension for factors affecting criminal activities. Such as various socio-economic factors including growing population, high poverty level, lack of education, lack of supportive mechanism, higher population to police ratio, ineffective crime control strategies, weakness of law, lack of public awareness about crime, unplanned urbanization, industrialization and globalization can be attribute to high crime rates to both urban and rural areas. Recidivism is the term used to describe ex-offenders who return to prison as a result of continued criminal behavior. Within Bangladesh, the recidivism rate is quite high. There are several motivating factors leading to recidivism in Bangladesh as drug addiction, lack of education, lack of employment, impoverished lifestyle and discrimination. Most often when Bangladesh ex-offenders return to the community, they return to the same negative environment that they left, which is usually

plagued by drug addiction, criminal activity and economic depression. Today, in corrections, there is a tremendous amount of focus on the recidivism rate among Bangladesh.

Like any other country, the problem of recidivism has reached alarming issue in Bangladesh in recent years. The statistics on crime in Bangladesh indicate a wide fluctuation in this country and the statistics of these crimes (number of registered case) throughout the year 2004 to 2008 according to Bangladesh police is very hazardous. The rate of the above mentioned crimes (number of registered case) every after 5 years increasing extensively. In percentage, they are 10, 64, 25, 41 and 5%, respectively in cruelty to women, narcotic, smuggling, theft, murder. To police this high rate of crime is closely interconnected with recidivism. On the other word recidivism is the most imperative causation of this increasing rate of crime (www.police.gov.bd). Recidivism is an important concept to behaviors and its performances. Researchers have outlined the relationship that recidivism has with critical behavioral factors, such as criminality, drug addiction etc. Therefore, it would appear the study of recidivism would be important. However, the concept of recidivism in policing has received a minimal amount of attention in Bangladesh. The apparent lack of empirical research addressing this concept with respect to recidivism allows for a variety of studies to be undertaken to examine behavior in criminal towards Socio- demographic characteristics, nature of crime and actual causes of recidivism. Recidivism has reached as an alarming issue in Bangladesh in recent years. Recidivism is a key issue on the criminal justice agenda. Preventing reoffending and reducing re-incarceration are, among others, key priorities for governments – and they should be, because the research clearly shows that a minority of offenders are responsible for the majority of crime. This study has been focused mainly on to understand recidivism in Bangladesh. The specific objectives are as follows: i) to know the socio-demographic characteristics of the recidivists, ii) to find out the nature and causes of recidivism in Bangladesh, iii) to explore the relationship between victim and recidivist offenders, iv) to show the trends of recidivism among the respondents, and v) to give some suggestions in this context.

Methods and Materials

Theoretical framework

Theoretical framework is necessary for better interpretation, generalization as well as for minimizing bias (Baker, 1999). Theoretically, recidivism happens when needs of different level are fulfilled. In reverse, dissatisfaction is the result of unavailability for meet up those needs. Psychologists Abraham Maslow proposed that all people seek to satisfy five basic kinds of needs: physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs (Maslow, 1954).

Social Learning theory helps in understanding human behaviour. By selecting an appropriate theory one has a road map of how behaviour may be changed and what to look at when evaluating the effectiveness of programmes. Sociological theories are effective to understand the changes that are observed in groups, but treatment is focused on the individual. Therefore, psychology, with its emphasis on individual behaviour, provides a starting point for appropriate theories to assist with programme development. Penologists think that when a person is confined for long time he or she will not return in society at easily because he divert from the normal society. He may be not suitable in normal society. Sometimes environment is support for crime again or recidivism and also for mental illness, emotional, self-minded, mental confused etc (Kader and Hussain, 2010). Social-learning theory, in its simplest form, suggests that increases in rewards for behaviour will increase the probability that a behavior will occur again (Bandura, 1971).

The Differential Association theory states that criminal behavior is learned behavior and learned via social interaction with others. They learn how to commit criminal acts; they learn motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes. And this the reason grows socially easier for the individuals to commit a crime again. The principal part of the learning of steady criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups i.e. within inmates. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime the process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning (Vold, 1958). Both of those theories can be explicit that why and how would be recidivist. Every person must be good. But sometimes wrong for need or unconscious mind. At a time it is normal of her life. It must be pre-anti social behavior. When he not care it to reform her behavior he may be do wrong again and again. This way they become a recidivist.

Analytical and conceptual framework

In recidivism analysis that seeks to identify correlates of reoffending. Insofar as a comparative analysis of recidivism rates is hampered by contextual and methodological inconsistency. Although a number of recidivism risk factors have been identified, the relationships between any single risk factor and recidivism is small. Offenders who are at the highest risk to re-offend require the most intensive treatment services if the goal is to reduce the likelihood of returning to prison. As this group is also likely responsible for the highest volume of crime, changing their behaviour through treatment will result in the largest decrease in criminal activities (Andrews, 1996). Overall, the result of this study provide a list of the factors that should be addressed in recidivism and they show that using risk assessment tools that combined different factors and both dynamic and static measures are the most effective tools for predicting the likelihood of new offences after release from prison. Sociologists and criminal justice scholars have found a direct

correlation between poverty and crime. Past behavior is the best predictor of future behavior (Doris, 2001). From this perspective, it is reasonable to attempt to prevent crime by preventing known offenders from continuing their criminal behavior. Additional responsible factors are lack of education, lack of parental guidance, psychological problems, and lack of proper rehabilitation, involve to gangs.

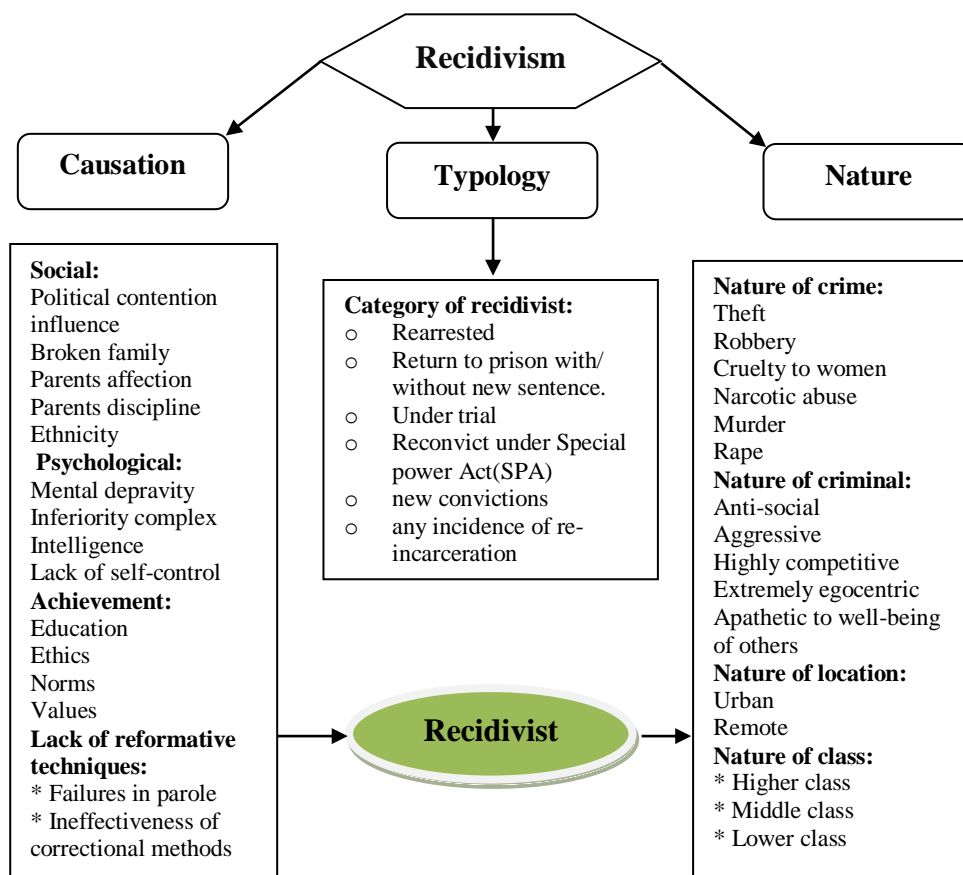


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of the study.

This study shows the overall idea of recidivism in the framework such as causation, typology and nature. Every factor has some special variable and those variables influence some indicators. Recidivism causation like as Social, Political contention, Formed organizational influence, broken family, Parents affection, Parents-discipline, Ethnicity. Psychological: Mental depravity, Inferiority complex, Intelligence, Lack of self-control. Achievement: Education, Ethics, Norms, Values. Inadequacy of reformative techniques: Failures in parole, Ineffectiveness of correctional methods. Category of recidivist: Rearrested, Return to prison with/without new sentence, under trial, Reconvict under Special power Act (SPA), new convictions, any incidence of re-incarceration. Nature of

crime: Theft, Robbery, Cruelty to women, Narcotic abuse, Murder, Rape. Nature of criminal: Anti-social, Aggressive, Highly competitive, extremely egocentric, Apathetic to well-being of others. Nature of location: Urban, Remote. Nature of class: Higher class, Middle class, Lower class. The study is a cross-sectional study indeed and quantitative in nature. In a cross-sectional study the population, is being studied, being observed at a single point in time. Data gathered from 27 prisoners through questionnaire method formed the data-set of the study. Data were analyzed as well as interpreted for descriptive purpose. The nature of the population was fixed. Study was conducted on the basis of the convicted and under trial recidivist in jail. For better representation, the entire recidivists are contracted for data collection and in-depth interviews in jail.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 summarizes the content of the Demographic characteristics analyzed in this paper. In this study the data was collected from 27 recidivists. From this table shows that, 11.1% of the respondents belong to the age limit 16-25, 44.5% of the respondents belong to the age limit 26-35, 29.6% of the respondents belong to the age limit 36-45, 14.8 % of the respondents belong to the age limit above 46 year. Thus, most of the respondents are aged less than 35 years. They are young, energetic and in high time of their career as illegal activities. However, from the table we observe that data are normally distributed. It is also found from this study that, the majority of the respondents of the recidivists are the illiterate and secondary school or secondary school pass. The average qualifications of the recidivists are Illiterate. Only small number is highly educated and qualified. Their percentages are very poor in the recidivist of the Jail. Quetelet (1796-1874) to statistical analyze was that some people were more likely to commit crime than others, especially those who were young, male, poor, undereducated. Young males were more likely to commit high level of crime under any circumstances. Quetelet (1796-1874) found that people with more education tended to commit less crime but tended to commit more violent crime. The majority of the recidivists' family member is nuclear family/ single family (33.4%), single/ nuclear families member 1-6 people with father, mother, brother, sister; followed by (66.6%) respondent's family member are join family. Their family members are 6-above person with father, mother, brother sister, wife, husband, son daughter. The urban people are more committing the crime. Because more resource and more opportunities. Crime dependent on geographical location like Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess's "Ecological theory of the Concentric Zone" explains that transition and working class homes are more likely to commit crime. According to Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D McKay, the social disorganization theory point out that urban and industrial area are faced more problem to crime cause no relation between two family or neighborhood. So, more opportunity makes more probability to commit crime.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Sub-categories	Frequency	Percentages
Age of the respondents	16-25 year	03	11.10
	26-35 year	12	44.50
	36-45 year	08	29.60
	Above 46 year	04	14.80
	Total	N=27	100.00
Educational qualification	Illiterate	12	44.40
	Primary	08	29.10
	SSC	04	14.80
	HSC	02	07.50
	Graduate	01	03.70
	Total	N=27	100.00
Family pattern	Nuclear family	09	33.40
	Join family	18	66.60
	Total	N=27	100.00
Residential area of respondents	Urban	19	70.30
	Rural	08	29.70
	Total	N=27	100.00

Social stratification

In general, it is seen that social status is one of the main reasons for the crime or recidivists. This study showed that high class people involved is the low rates of recidivists and lower class people involved is the high rates of recidivists. So poverty or economic factors also the main causes of recidivism. When a person follows the rules of his or her religious, he or she may be stay in long distance from illegal activities. This study showed that 55.5% recidivists are maintaining religious activities in sometimes and only 11.1% are fully try to maintain to the religious rulls.33.4% are not follow their religious rules. The economic theory of crime assumes that people weigh the consequences of committing crime. Some scholars using social-structural approach have explained recidivism in terms of the stratification structure of society. They focus on the impact of stratification structure conditions on criminal behaviour. This explanation holds that a criminal is a product of the social-structural environment which provides him his ideals and his goals. Italian scholar Fornasari who talk of the relationship between crime and poverty (Ahuja, 1996) Economic system thus provides 'climate of motivation' for criminal behaviour in again and again. Economic gain and opportunities must be considerable for crime.

Table 2. Social stratification and ritualism

Demographic characteristics	Sub-categories	Frequency	Percentages
Status	High class	01	03.7
	Middle class	08	25.5
	Low class	18	70.4
	Total	N=27	100.0
Religious performance	Regular	03	11.3
	Sometimes	15	55.5
	Never	09	33.4
	Total	N=27	100.0

Typology

Table 3 revealed the causes of recidivism. It is found that 55.5% crime was committed for economic gain and for the conflict committed was 29.9% also personal causes was 14.8%. Maximum crime was committed for economic gain and minimum for personal cause's also medium factor was conflict. But in the second crime show the why was committed, to look that 62.9% crime was committed for conflict and for the economic gain committed was 22.3% also personal causes was 14.8%. Maximum crime was committed for conflict and minimum for personal cause's also medium factor was economic gain. To this study point out first and second crime causes mainly changed in the time of recidivism. When a person committed the first crime was theft, but those person committed the second crime might be Theft, Robbery, Narcotic abuse, woman and child torture, trafficking. So causes of crime also change for nature and dimension of crime. Here the statistics showed that most of the difference first and second offences are 5.1-8 year then this difference is 2.1-5 year and lowest crime difference is bellow 2 year and up to 8 year. The most difference (51.7%) between committing first and second crime is 5-8 years.

Table 3. Typology of crime

Typology of crime	Causes of crime	Frequency	Percentages
1st crime	Personal	04	14.8
	Conflict	08	29.8
	Economic gain	15	55.4
	Total	N=27	100.0
2nd crime	Personal	04	14.8
	Conflict	17	62.9
	Economic gain	06	22.3
	Total	N=27	100.0
Difference between 1st and 2nd crime	Below 2 year	02	07.5
	2.1 - 5 year	09	33.3
	5.1 - 8 year	14	51.7
	Up to 8.1 year	02	07.5
	Total	N=27	100.0

Relation between victim and criminal

To this study point out that follow the pie chart 37.1% was known victim means known relation between victim and criminal and also that 33.3% was family member victim, 18.5% was stranger victim, 11.1% was unknown victim. D.P. Sing (1980) found that a large number of murderers had murdered their family members, followed by neighbors, friends, and others. Rajan and Krishna (1981) study on homicides in Delhi and Bangalore found that 22 to 39% victims get murderer by relatives.



Fig. 2. Recidivists and victims relationship in 1st crime.

Nature of trends

The graphical presentation show that recidivists first crime was 22.2 % in theft but second time it was 11.1 % and in robbery crime first time was 14.8 % but second time was 7.4% and also narcotic abuse crime this percentages was 33.3 to 25.9 %. So this three crime rates are decrease in first to second crime. Murder was equal rates to first and second offence. Rape, Child torture, trafficking such crime are increase in first crime to second crime. But rape rate was majorly increased this time.

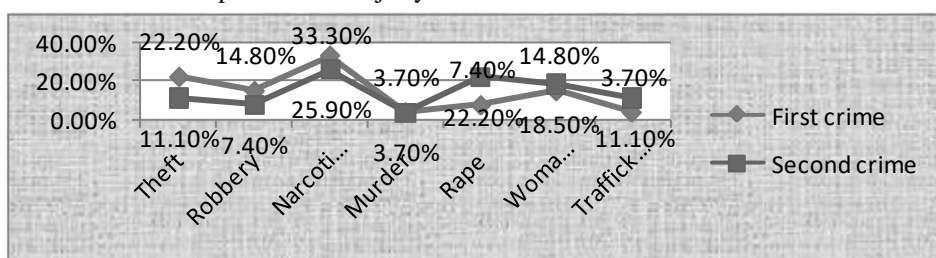


Fig. 3. Trends to changes in 1st and 2nd crime.

Conclusion

Recidivism is an interesting and useful conceptual tool for effective crime prevention strategies. It is a criminological concept that describes the phenomenon of criminal tendency, where a recidivist offender is generally identified as one who repeatedly engages in criminal activity. Criminal Justice System (CJS) system is also to be very

effective for enforcing the correction. The procedures of correction in CJS start from arrest and end with acquittal or imprisonment. But for the defects of the several steps it is not possible correct rehabilitee the offender. For every crime there are three basic elements: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and an absence of capable guardians. Recidivist offenders present an interesting dimension to this model because they are seemingly motivated to commit more crime, more often and are more resistant to regulatory responses that aim to prevent their criminality. Moreover, recidivist offenders are also likely to account for a significant proportion of reported and unreported crime, and initiatives aimed at reducing their offending have the potential to deliver sustainable reductions in crime rates across Bangladesh. Study founds both the internal (jail system) and external factors are accountable for the problem. Experts believe external factors more liable than the internal factors for recidivism. Some of these factors are instance formed organizational influence, political contention, unemployment, poverty, further prohibited influence, family isolation, and failure to adopt in society. These can be titled problematic social factors. Responsible internal factor is ineffectiveness of correctional methods in jail system. This can be divided into overcrowding, lacking of proper treatment programmes, defective correction of offender within jail, prison sub-culture. Recidivists more or less connected with family characteristics are available to recidivist family. These are extreme poverty, illiteracy, broken family, low standard of living etc.

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