



## Risk Factors of Criminal Recidivism into Criminal Activities

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**Abstract:** *This study has focused on the risk factors of criminal recidivism. Criminal recidivism was measured in terms of relapsing into criminal behaviour or re-indulgence into criminal activities. Idealistically, prisons are places of recreation and regeneration but realistically, prisons inflict more harm to prisoners than is expected. There are factors in abundance available that negatively affect prisoners. The prominent among them are environmental factors which result in a high degree of criminal recidivism among prisoners. Since the objective of the prisoner's environment is to humiliate prisoners as much as possible, therefore, the resulting deviance among the prisoners is highly probable. Moreover, prisons are places of punishment for prisoners as a consequence of their involvement in crimes. They are subjected to a very harsh time so that they can refrain from crimes. However, this subjection results in furthering criminal recidivism as a result of the uncondusive environment in the prisons. The data was collected from 100 criminals who were rearrested by police for committing crimes repeatedly.*

**Key Words:** Risk Factors, Criminal Activities, Recidivism, Social Environment

### Introduction

Recidivism is derived from the Latin word *recidivus* which means recurrence. *Recidivus* is a noun which comes from the verb *recidere* which means to fall back. In this regard, recidivism means the behaviour of relapsing into past behaviour or activities. Recidivism is a result of a series of failures at different levels. This failure is attributed to an individual criminal indulgence, the environment, a sense of alienation, mental health disorder, abusive relationships, abuse of power, humiliation and the social environment where proper diet and education are considered a privilege (Nagin, 2009; 2012; 2013). Among these factors, the prison environment weighs more than any other factor. The common perception of the prison authorities that rehabilitation does not work has quite severe consequences for the prisoners. This perception has brought a gradual shift away from the policy of rehabilitation and deterrence to a more destructive approach. It is in fact the failure of the prison system to provide effective assistance to

properly manage the behavior of the prisoners abandon their criminal activities and never relapse again. There are various environmental factors which are responsible for the criminal recidivism of prisoners that require rigorous research to manage. On the one hand, prison plays the role of deterring prisoners from further indulgence in criminal behaviour while on the other hand, it increases the risk factor of criminal recidivism among them (Nagin, 2012). This research study focuses on the latter aspect of the prison's environment by analyzing criminal recidivist factors among prisoners.

The prison environment is an amalgam of different socio-cultural and socio-religious factors that influence prisoners' behaviour. According to Nurse, (2003) the common environmental factors that contribute to criminal recidivist behaviour are peer interaction, prisoners and staff relationship, isolation and lack of stimulation to engage in social activities, lack of opportunities to participate, stressful environment, frustration and sense of deprivation. These and certain other factors influence prisoners'

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behaviour and develop a sense of humiliation and deprivation among prisoners who dislike social engagement or participation which ultimately lead to recidivism and more severe crimes.

In many Western countries, there are proper arrangements and administrative provisions for recording and measuring criminal recidivism, however, the same is lacking in the developing world. In developed countries like the United States criminal recidivism is tackled through proper rehabilitation and training programs that are run in jails for the detainees and these rehabilitation programs have a significant impact on the behaviour of the criminals. In developing countries like Pakistan, jails are overburdened with detainees while the police department does not have any financial provision for running rehabilitation or training programs for the criminals. In addition, there is no proper record of recidivism in jails that could identify and measure recidivism. There are internal and external environmental risk factors responsible for criminal recidivism. These environmental risk factors included lack of rehabilitation programs, lack of recreational facilities for criminals, lack of psychological healing opportunities for criminals, lack of proper measurement and recording of criminal recidivism in jails, supply of drugs to criminals, inhuman behaviour with criminals etcetera.

### Rationale & Significance of the Study

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Many studies have already been conducted on the prison system in Pakistan and the recidivist behaviour of the criminals such as Nagin (2009; 2012; 2013), NACTA (2018), HRCP (2013), Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (1997), GOKP (2014), ICGA (2016), Arshad, (2019), Håkansson, & Berglund (2012), Andersen and Skardhamar (2015) and many more, however, none of these studies focused on the risk factors of criminal recidivism specifically in the prison environment in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This study is the first-ever study that focuses on the risk factors of criminal recidivism in the context of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In addition, this study focuses on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where criminal recidivism is a deliberate problem. Moreover, criminal recidivism is caused by many environmental factors that require rigorous research to identify the relevant risk factors.

This study is of greater significance for policymakers, law enforcement agencies, research centres and other academic institutions because it will highlight some new concepts for further research from which scholars and researchers in the relevant discipline will benefit. In addition, this study will bring

some valuable and calculated information forward and make it available to society and the state for applications. Moreover, this study fills two main gaps. The first one is the contextual gap which means the area where this study is carried out and the second gap is the literary gap which means that on this topic no researcher previously conducted research the way it is designed and titled. A number of research studies were conducted on this topic such as Nagin (2009; 2012; 2013), NACTA (2018), HRCP (2013), Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (1997), GOKP (2014), ICGA (2016), Arshad, (2019), Anders and Mats (2012), Andersen and Skardhamar (2015) but none of these studies focused on the study of risk factors of criminal recidivism in the prison environment. There is a real gap in the literature particularly no study was ever conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that focuses on identifying the risk factors of criminal recidivism.

### Purpose of the Study

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The objectives of the research are to investigate the environmental factors in the prisons that contribute to criminal recidivism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to collect data on criminal recidivist factors in the prison environment and to identify the strong contributing factors to criminal recidivism and to develop a model on how to control these risk factors of recidivism.

### Methodology

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This research study applied quantitative and to some extent qualitative research methods. The data was collected through a pretested structured questionnaire. All the respondents were physically accessed and they were selected randomly. The main findings of this study included peer pressure, staff-prisoner relationship and mental stress as highly significant factors that contributed to criminal recidivism of 100 samples 87 per cent revealed that staff relationship with them was brutal, 92 per cent revealed that they were highly socially connected with criminals or peer pressure in committing a crime was very high and 93 per cent revealed that high mental stress was the main factor that resulted in their committing and recommitting of crime.

### Review of Literature

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Repetition of offence (Recidivism) is the basic concept in the field of the criminal justice system; it refers to the individual's decline toward the behaviour of the criminals because it has been seen that after the punishments, the person comes out of prison they become habitual offenders which is a serious issue and

needs to be addressed to reform the laws and modes of punishments should be changed so that the practice of recidivism may at least be reduced if can not be eliminated. The National Institute of Justice reported that criminal acts caused the arrests of those criminals repeatedly due to the commission of offences of the same nature after their release from prison.

The Legal Information Institute reported that the word criminal justice is a broader term which refers to the legal procedures, legal institutions etc., and the policies to be implemented during the whole of this process. It can not be denied that despite being criminals and being violators of laws, criminals also have some specific and basic rights. Therefore, they must be prosecuted and sentenced as per law and by the state governing bodies.

Khoso and Kousar (2021), conducted a study on the theoretical and practical challenges to stop recidivism among teenagers in Pakistan. The data was collected in Karachi from three male teenagers. In this research, they identified a lack of administrative control, organizational problems, legal obstacles and challenges in identifying recidivism in teenagers. The purpose of this research was to find out the reasons which prevent teenagers from recidivism and the developing tendency of the youngster to re-offend. An interview was conducted among teenagers aged 15 to 18 years in the offender Industrial School in Karachi Pakistan under the supervision of the jail superintendent. In addition, detailed discussions were held with the executive of salvage and trial in Sindh province of Pakistan. However, these provisions are not functional to stop teenagers from reoffending. The research also revealed that detention cells are available but they still lack rehabilitation programs/schemes. This study recommended that there is a real need for accurate policy measures that mainly focus on criminal recidivism through different programs and training and sensitization of the police organization and the community members as well as judicial officials.

According to Tella and Schargrodsy, a study was conducted in 2013 on criminal recidivism after prison & electronic monitoring in Argentina. This study focused on the two groups which have the arrest rates. The individual's details of release from the prison & individual details from the electronic monitoring. Prisoners are dispensed to judges & variances through courts into large differences in the distribution of electronic monitoring to otherwise alike people. While using these particularities of the Argentine setting, they argued that there is a high negative effect on

criminal recidivism during electronic monitoring respectively to prison.

Hanson and Wallace-Capret (2004) examined the predictors of criminal Recidivism among male batterers attending public cure in about 320 male samples. The recidivism was evaluated by the fresh charges for the violence and for any other crime during the 5 year period follow-up. In this study, the variables associated with recidivism among male batterers were alike found for the other public such as youngster, substance abuse, unstable lifestyle and a history of crime. The finding of this study said that there was no proper proof which saw the possible criminals were deterred by the hope of the adverse consequences, even such as friends disapproving and officials such as job loss and being arrested. Along with this upholding the positive relationships with the cure providers was associated with the reduction of recidivism.

Murphy et al. (1998) investigated the prosecution & post-prosecution factors of a coordination society intervention approach to the male criminals of the adult local passion. This data was collected from 235 cases in which recidivism was considered by official immoral justice, throughout the period of 12 to 18 months after that the case was primarily handled by the Baltimore to the "Maryland State's Attorney's Local Violence Units". The court commands for the local violence counselling were related to significantly minor criminal recidivism for the destruction of public order of protection. The smaller criminal recidivism was also related to the collective effects of the up-and-coming prosecution, the probation period of monitoring, taking a court command to counsel them, the attending counselling intake, & the end of counselling of the individual. In this, the individuals with highly taking part in this intervention system had small recidivism rates even more though criminals with wide crime pasts experienced high intervention. The finding of this study suggested that to give proper support for the coordination of society intervention for the local crime perpetrators.

Katherine and Libeling (2018) study the relationship between recidivism and social climate and prison morale. This study was carried out in all the prisons which are in England and Wales through which official data on proven recidivism from the Ministry of Justice alone with the measuring the quality of prison life "MQPL". This study was carried out on the basis of 224 prison sample data collected from 2009 to 2013 period. The total prisoners 24508 numbers completed the survey. The researchers find out that each prison

recidivism found to the alike rates through the indication of the several dimensions of MQPL. Whereas the MQPL Survey measures include the relational, moral and organizational quality of the jail life for the criminals. The criminals on freedom of time were linked which is reliable with the theoretical expectation.

David et al. (2002) conducted a study to identify the mentally ill criminals in jails, where a few researches of the mentally ill criminals released from jail have been directed. This investigation discusses such public of mentally sick criminals the post-freedom services they had received, the fresh crimes they committed & the factors which is related to recidivism. The researchers took electronic files & obtained medical charts from the government corrections department which had to identify the mentally sick criminals who left the Washington state jails in 1996 and 1997. Several civil agencies identified the individuals on the basis of given data. Summary figures were calculated on subjects' characteristics & post-discharge results, & logistic regression analysis was used to find the variables that predicted opinions of new felonies & new crimes against individuals. The finding of this identified 337 mentally ill criminals which included men and women regardless of any crimes, identifies, the rates of drug crimes where 73 per cent of the criminals received post discharge and some were received clinically significant levels of facility throughout the first year after freedom. 70 per cent of the respondents were found in new crimes or supervision abuses while 10 per cent committed new crimes against individuals and 2 per cent were committed very serious crimes. Along with this, the young people involved in the past crimes & the Variables including misbehaviour in jail were connected with new crimes. The results of this study that the society mental health cure affects recidivism cannot be considered equally in the absence of greater levels of facility throughout the first months after discharge. This research identifies risk factors which have forecast new crimes at a level equivalent to that of put-out risk valuation mechanisms. The Instruction of less serious crimes which have precede crimes may deliver an initial warning for new crimes & the chance for strategic interference.

Applegate et al. (1999) examined that the fresh generation prisons represent a fundamental reform to the management and structure style of traditional prisons. The assessments have examined the effects of this advance on the internal operations of imprisonment services although no study has yet observed the potential impact of fresh-generation

plans on the post-freedom criminal behaviour of prisoners. Researchers took 600 samples of prisoner's homes under observation directly and indirectly. The finding of this study showed that the modern generation model does not raise recidivism and it may decrease the post-freedom criminal in some circumstances.

Mulder et al. (2010) found various risk factors for criminal recidivism among the young population. Approximately 70 static and dynamic risk factors were related to family characteristics, some related to psychological functions while some social and environmental factors included peer pressure, substance abuse, psychopathology and behaviour during cure. These factors were evaluated with the young criminal profile of about 728 young criminals. The minimum time period of risk was 2 years according to the official reconviction statistics of the register recidivism. The criminals were divided into categories according to their criminal history with the opinion of the expert. Many risk factors responsible for recidivism include criminal behaviour, past records, the number of crimes committed in life has/the first young-age crime with the unknown victim of the crime in the past and conduct disorder. The family risk factors included criminal behaviour in the family, poor parenting skills, emotional abuse and physical history, involvement with criminal peers in life and lack of cure adherence including lack of coping plans and aggression during the cure. The unknown victim in the history of crimes, a record of criminal behaviour in the family, lack of cure adherence and the lack of coping plans were predictive of the serious reoffending that has been committed in his/her life. The finding of the study is the risk assessment and the bettering of the cure effect. The targeting factors through which to decrease recidivism include parenting skills, the environment where criminal activities are committed, lack of possible treatment adherence and problematic coping plans. The study identifies that there is still a need for more studies to identify the ground factors which reduce recidivism. For future research government officials should provide the proper support to the researcher so that they can identify the actual factor where the crimes are being. Why still recidivism does not decrease in society and still crimes are increasing day by day?

## Material and Method

This is mainly a quantitative research and up to some extent a qualitative study, that focuses on identifying the recidivist risk factors in a prison environment. A

quantitative research method is comparatively more scientific and authentic because it involves techniques that present the data in the form of numbers and figures that clearly reveal and measure the facts (Eyisi, 2016). In the quantitative research method, the researcher confines his study very easily to the questions under investigation. The data collection process under the quantitative research approach becomes very specific and prone to observations and analysis. In addition, under the quantitative research approach generalization of information becomes very easy because there lies a scientific process through which the data is collected and presented.

In this study, the data was collected in the form of a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from the literature based on the information collected from the review of the existing literature. A total of 100 questionnaires were filled in from the respondents. The target population for this research study was a number of prisoners rearrested in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for committing crimes repeatedly. The crime committed by the prisoners could be even minor but repeatedly indulging in the same behaviour was the prime characteristic of the respondents. The samples were randomly selected from the population. All the respondents were physically accessed and the questionnaires were filled in by each respondent by translating each question into Pashto. Since Pashto was the primary or first language of the respondents, therefore, they translated all questions for clear understanding. All the samples were taken from District Nowshera and data was processed manually.

## **Results and Discussion**

In this study, the main variables that were investigated included staff-prisoner relationship, peer pressure, mental stress, counselling and recreation. The staff-prisoner relationship plays a significant role in a criminal's behavioural adaptability. It was measured in terms of softness and brutality. Of 100 samples 87 per cent of the respondents revealed that staff behaviour with the prisoners is quite brutal and this brutal relationship results in rigidity in criminals' behaviour. The social life of the criminals becomes violent when they are dealt with violently. It has been a common interactionist perspective that individual behaviour is the output of the social surroundings. The "I" and "Me" relationship is usually defined by the process of social construction. An individual defines himself the way he is defined by others in the social world or an individual mental construct is the reflection of his being socially defined. It means that violence begets violence, not

peace. Criminal recidivism or the relapsing behaviour of the criminals has a strong association with his relationship. Constant replenishment of an individual mind with information of wildness, animality and violence results in relapsing violent behaviour. Therefore, criminal recidivism is associated with violent staff relationships with prisoners.

In this study, peer pressure was measured in terms of individual engagement with criminals. A criminal's company matters more than any other factor. In this study, 92 per cent of the total respondents revealed that they usually had a company of criminals or they get engaged with criminals in the prison. When more criminals get in contact with an individual, it has a strong impact on his behaviour. New networks of crime and criminals open new avenues and opportunities for crimes. Moreover, new criminal opportunities and friends remain a motivation for criminals to indulge in criminal behaviour. It means that peer pressure plays a significant role in criminal recidivism.

In this study, 93 per cent of the total respondents revealed that they were in high mental stress. Since there are no opportunities for criminals to refresh themselves or get themselves entertained with, therefore, there is huge stress in the prison environment. Mentally sound people have more opportunities for social engagements while mentally stressed people usually get socially secluded. Huge mental stress has been one of the main causes of criminal recidivism. In addition, there were no opportunities for counselling for the prisoners in jail. In this research study, 12 per cent of the respondents revealed that there were proper counselling sessions but that sessions were basically spiritual and they were conducted by one of the prisoners who had some knowledge of Islam. This counselling was totally informal and usually took place in the mosque situated inside the prison. Spiritual healing or counselling was basically a process conducted by the prisoners themselves and there were no arrangements for psychological counselling for prisoners in jail. A total of 88 per cent of the respondents revealed that there was no arrangement for psychological counselling for prisoners which has been one of the high-risk factors of criminal recidivism.

Lack of recreation was another high-risk factor in criminal recidivism. Of 100 samples 16 per cent revealed that there was recreation opportunity for them but they considered watching television as a recreational facility. The rest of the 84 per cent revealed that there was no opportunity for recreation

in jail for the prisoners. Recreation usually plays a significant role in recreating human psychology and physique. Recreation is one of the main factors that make criminals engage in activities that build their brain, physique and relationships more productive. In most developed countries, recreation opportunities

are ensured for every single criminal arrested or rearrested for committing crimes, which plays a significant role in making them socially responsible citizens. However, these facilities are lacking in developing countries which results in a high rate of criminal recidivism.

**Table 1**

*shows details of variables and responses of the respondents in percentages*

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage	Chi-square St.
Staff-Prisoners' Relationship	Brutal	87	.87	12.857 (0.004)
	Soft	13	.13	
Peer Pressure	High	92	.92	12.954 (0.000)
	Low	08	.08	
Mental Stress	High	93	.93	12.975 (0.000)
	Low	07	.07	
Counselling	Yes	12	.12	12.987 (0.000)
	No	88	.88	
Recreation	Yes	16	.16	9.965 (0.000)
	No	84	.84	

The data, presented in the above table, shows the findings of the respondents. The main variables measured in this study included staff-prisoner relationship, peer pressure, mental stress, counselling and recreation. The chi-square statistics show that every single factor measured in this research study has a strong significant impact on criminal recidivism.

## Conclusion

In this research study, the main variables that were investigated, included staff-prisoners' relationship, peer pressure, mental stress and recreation. It was found in this research study that peer pressure is one

of the high-risk factors that highly contribute to criminal recidivism. This factor is comparatively stronger because this factor can never be avoided or removed totally. In every prison, there are criminals arrested and rearrested for committing some crimes and this provides an opportunity for the criminals to make their social network with other criminals or to adapt to the pressure imposed on them by their fellow criminals. The second significant factor was the staff-prisoners' relationship which highly contributed to criminal recidivism. Other factors that contributed to criminal recidivism included a lack of recreational facilities, lack of psychological counselling and high mental stress.



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