

# **What are the inducing factors for Recidivism? A Case Study from Sri Lanka**

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## **Abstract**

Sri Lanka government similarly used the severe punitive methods but convicted and recidivist offenders have regularly boosted. In Sri Lanka, the average of convicted prisoners per year was 30,000 from 2009 to 2016 and 50% first offender 28.6% reconvicted and 21.2% recidivists and in 2016 increased to 30.4% reconvicted and 26% recidivists. Hence, this study mainly focused on why reconvicted and recidivists increased while existing judiciary severe punishments in the country? Thus, the main objective was to explore the causes of the increase of recidivists. The methodology used in this research is heavily drawn from criminological approaches to research, and theoretically driven by the deterrence theory. The study mainly based on official crime statistics and primary data collected through the Interviews, case studies, and case history form recidivists of Bogambara prison in Kandy. The study shows that Less severity of punishment practice in prison, No social and legal recognition establish after punishment, Rejection of community, Less opportunity for employment, Labeling as criminals, Corrupt politics, Minor offenders socializes to be grave criminals and Delay of the trial has been long term caused for increasing reconvicted and recidivist offenders in contemporary. Accordingly, the study proposes to practice accurately exist severe judiciary punishment to overcome those factors to reduce reconvicted and recidivist offenders' trends and to curb the crime trends in contemporary Sri Lanka.

**Key words:** Crimes, offenders, Recidivism, Punishment, Recidivists, Reconvicted prisoners,

## **1. Introduction**

Crime as a social problem can easily provide a positive impact on social ill-being. In that recidivism has taken huge attention in contemporary society which determines the social development among individuals. According to the literature, “recidivism is defined as the return of an offender to criminal behavior following conviction, diversion or punishment”. In the global context, the prevalence of incarceration rates is an outstanding trend. For example, the United States consists of 5% of the world’s population and it encounters about 25% of the world’s prisoners (Butorac, Gracin & Stanić, 2017). In any society, there are different crime control methods in order to manipulate crime rates through social control and legal control (institutional governing system).

In that, policing becomes the traditional way of arrest offenders and crime prevention techniques. But some scholars have disagreed with this system and mention that the most important crime mitigating endeavors are those preventing a young criminal’s first arrest from leading to re-offending behavior and later altercation with the criminal justice system. Literature notes the way law enforcement institutions control the first-time juvenile offenders has a straight implication to violate the law and when handled proactively along with the proper gravity this first police encounter can prevent the capacity of chronic offending (Schoeman,2010). However, some literature has emphasized adverse pull factors that cause to increase in recidivism. In that mentally ill offender, mostly women, are having higher rates of institutional misconduct, homelessness, substance abuse, and prior physical or sexual abuse. Specifically, researches have proved that mental illness is related to the high level of recidivism rates for criminals released from prison (Butorac, Gracin & Stanić,2017). On the other hand, scholars have mentioned that there is a high proportion of offenders released from prisons reoffend generally within a short period of three years after release. It means that most of the criminals are released from prisons only to engage again in more criminal activities and again return to prison. According to this factor, it indicates that prisons are not effectively contributed offenders to abandon their criminal past while increasing opportunities to continue with anti-social behaviors (GÓMEZ,2017).

A study relates to the factors influencing juvenile delinquency recidivism in the Sri Lankan context by using 83 delinquents including 43 females and 40 males have highlighted that theft/burglaries, disobedient to parents, trafficking, selling, and use of alcohol, attempt to suicide. Furthermore, most of the respondents have reported that specific areas where they highly experience obstacles such as lack of education, poverty, and fruitless family relationships. The study has recognized it as the major factors affecting juvenile delinquency as well as the factors of its recidivism. In addition, the majority of the delinquents have emphasized that the association with peers is highly influenced by recidivating even in the certified schools (Ranaweera, 2018). Homicide is an inhuman action that influences human society via different phases. According to the literature related to the Sri Lankan context noted that stress or frustration is the basis for higher rates of homicides in the country. However, this study further mentions that declining the social integration, disorganizing the social structure, contravention the customs, values, and norms, back warding the development of the country, increasing the fear to survival, an increase of accidents, rising the family problems, developing deviant behaviors, disregard the responsibilities are the influential factors which has created a significant impact on increasing homicide in the country (Jayathunga, 2010). Another study conducted in the country pinpointed that most of the offenders are suppressed from psychological wounds due to childhood experience of poverty, family background, joblessness, community disrespect, low educational level, and environments especially in slums are major causes of the increase of criminal recidivism (Perera, 2020).

However, with regard to the trends of the recidivism, available information source has emphasized that in many cases, recidivism occurs within the first year of release, and approximately all recidivism occurs

within three years of release or completion of sentence, property crimes are the most common recidivism crimes. More than three-quarters of property criminals have previously been convicted of a property offense. Drug abusers, breaking and entering, and common assault are also constantly recurrent, violent offenders are least likely to recidivate, fewer than half of people convicted of homicide, sexual assault, and rape are convicted of another crime when they release from prison, age is an outstanding factor in reoffending rates. If an offender is earlier punished, there is a possibility; he or she is to recidivate. As a consequence, young criminals are also the most often recidivists. Men are more likely to re-offend than women in approximately every criminal category of offense, even when initial male-dominated offending patterns are taken into account, while recidivism for the same offense is common for certain modes of offenses (e.g., prostitution), recidivism can often occur with various types of offenses, the number of times an individual has been arrested is a good predictor of whether he or she will re-offend. Individuals with only one arrest are less than half as likely to recidivate as individuals who have been arrested more than 10 times; offenders who re-offend are more likely to face the stiffer penalties, particularly incidents where they committed the same offense. Recidivists are three times more likely to face the sentence of imprisonment than first-time criminals, however, there is a little differentiation in rates of recidivism among various states or provinces, recidivists are often sentenced to long-term probation than first-time criminals based on some factors such as education level and socioeconomic status, African, Americans and Latino/have more tendency to recidivate than whites in nearly every type of offenses (<https://marisluste.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/recidivism.pdf>). According to the current social context, recidivism is becoming the most influential factor to upgrade the crime rate in Sri Lanka. Specifically, with regard to the social transformations, lack of social inclusion mechanisms has increased the severity of recidivism. Hence, this study is aiming to identify the causes of the increase in recidivism in order to provide possible recommendations to reduce post imprisonment in Sri Lanka.

## **2. Review of Literature**

The epistemological meaning of recidivism is coming from the Latin word “residence”, which is meaning to fall back”. In-stream of the sociology of punishment and corrections (penology) and criminal justice system (police, court, prisons, etc) in the global context, the concept of recidivism has been known by different terminologies. In that, recidivism consists of re-arrest, resistance to rehabilitation, repeat offending, re-conviction, re-offending, re-admission, re-incarceration, repetitious criminal tendencies, among others. In the comprehensive terminology, recidivism interprets “relapse into crime and criminal lifestyle or activities by an offender who had once or more times been processed through the penal system.” In other words, it defines as “repeaters, incorrigible offenders and offenders beyond rehabilitation, recidivists are persons who repeatedly violate the law, get arrested and processed by the criminal justice administrators”( Sorochi, 2020).

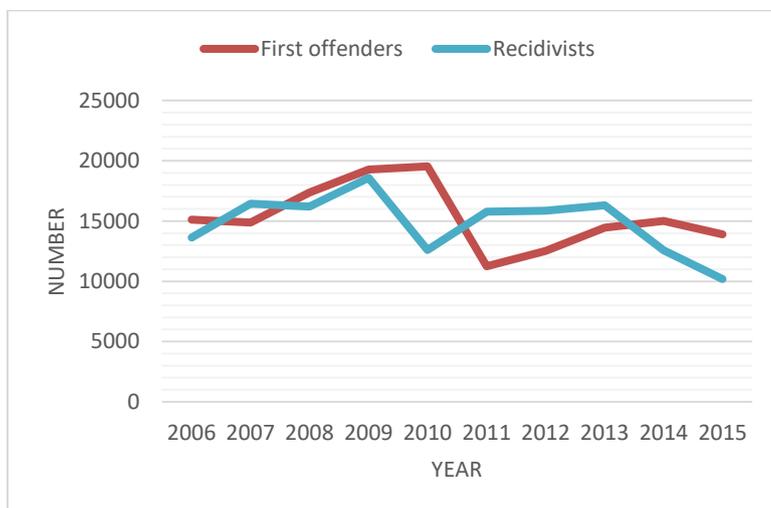
Crimes as a universal problem, most of the countries in the world are experienced negative feedbacks given by the crimes since their history. According to the study conducted in India and the United States which were former British colonies. During the period of 1950s to 1990s, there was a dramatic increase in Indian murder history. For instance, there were 55,726 encountered violent offenses in 1961, and by 1996 there were 243,574 recorded violent offenses. Equally, in 1986, there were 27,269 recognized homicides, which gradually increased to 37,671 in 1996. Even though the Indian murder rate is higher than the European countries, it is lower than the United States. For example, in the year 2004, India’s murder rate was 3.8 per 100,000, and the U.S. murder rate was 5.5, and the French were reported as 3.5. In addition to that, the whole of India has reported a lower level of violent offense than the United States. In the year 2004, there were 2 million-plus recorded violent offenses in India, which translated to a rate of 19.2 per 100,000. In the

United States, during 2004, there were 1.4 million violent reported crimes, which translated to a rate of 465 per 100,000 (Pasupuleti, Lambert, Jiang, Bhimarasetty & Jaishankar, 2009).

Another study carried out regarding the crime rates across the world has reported that the crime rate in Africa is high and also it says that half-a-million homicides committed with the global context in the year of 2012, and in that, only 5% occurred in Europe; 31% occurred in Africa; just next to the Americas' 36%. In addition to that, the author has recognized six African countries as among the twenty countries with the highest crime rates in the world. These countries are named South Sudan, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, and Libya. When homicide rates per 100,000 populations were encountered, Africa again ranked second to the Americas. For instance, along with the statistics from the victimization surveys in Africa (UNODC, 2010), the author has noted that in Rwanda, between the period 2003- 2008, out of the number of crime incidents recorded, 68.9% were offenses which were happened at the household level while 31.1% were personal/individual incidents. Furthermore, in other African countries, including Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Tanzania, and Uganda, robbery, corruption, consumer fraud, sexual assault, kidnapping, and property crimes involving car hijacking, theft of livestock, and burglary were prevalent, although to different degrees. Sri Lanka has recognized as "Ceylon" until 1972. Sri Lanka was under British colonialism which obtained independence from the British in 1948. It is now called an independent republic within the Commonwealth of Nations. With regard to the dissatisfaction related to the existing criminal laws, which caused the state uncertainty, the penal code in Sri Lanka was first established in 1883 corresponding to the Indian law. However, in 1898 criminal procedure code was established and later replaced by the administration of justice law in 1973. Again it was replaced by 1979, code of criminal procedure act and judicature act of 1978 as amended by the judicature act of 1979 (Karunaratne, 05/11/2020). After gained independence, Sri Lanka experienced a series of structural changes. Particularly, Open Economic Policy (OEP) in 1977 has led the space for the liberal market expansion and therefore both import and export economy was established. Later, the introduction of various poverty alleviation programs by different governments, the establishment of provincial council system as a method of decentralizing power structure, ethnic violence confronted in 1983 between Sinhalese and Tamils, Indo-Lanka Peace accord in 1987 and continuous youth rebellion movements occurred by JVP in 1989 caused for the multiple socio-cultural changes while increasing social problems in the country. Nevertheless, three decades of civil war ended up in May 2009 after defeating the LTTE regime (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) which later tended to create post-conflict challenges for the country's progress. With regard to the transformations that happened in the country, caste-free employment structure was also challenged and internal-external migrations were rapidly grown among individuals which led to the foundation for the emergence of class-based social systems in Sri Lanka. As a result of these transmissions, the life-style of the people, market characteristics, professional traits entirely changed and modernized, different sort of survival characteristics such as luxury motor cars, cosmopolitan life-styles, village expansions with colonies and schemes, irrigated and non-irrigated agricultural zones, commercial farmers and landless individuals ultimately increased the socio-economic disparities in the country while ensuring the class differentiations. How but Ekanayake (2016) has summarized some influential factors that led to the transformation of the Sri Lankan society and its analysis shows the most influencing factor as open economic policy in the context.

Mirihana Police Division consists of 1.03 % of the total crimes in Sri Lanka and it has no reported murder incidents in the year, 2013. Grave crimes in Mirihana such as robberies which nearly has increased by 40 percent. In addition to that, robberies and housebreak, theft incidents are encountered by more than 50 percent. Most of the crimes related to incidents in Nugegoda area are encountered in Mirihana because it is a major commercial center. Most of the robberies, cheating, and breaking of shops and theft have reported

from the commercial centers. When compared with the commercial clusters of the area, the rest of the part is reported as fewer crime cases, and also it has an inconvenience in recognizing crime clusters. However, high-density crime areas are located in the Southwestern portion of the police division due to the larger commercial clusters, Educational Institutions, and many workplaces, etc. which are located approximately to the high-level road. In addition to that, low-income dwellers have also resided near to the reservation of the railway line and parallels, running with highway road. These factors are the major causes of many crimes reported within the division. According to the study, in Sri Lanka, the natural environmental factors are silent components of the crime in urban settings. Especially, some highlighted features such as the built-up environment, including road network, low-income households, commercial clusters as well as a high-density population are dominated (Ratnayake, 2015). However, prison information mentions that 90% of prisoners have sentenced to short-term imprisonment. But most of them do not have adequate time to learn skills or vocational training and therefore, they put into the cleaning or kitchen group. A parole or work release system is not available for these people. Long term prisoners who are imprisoned for a long time encountered as 10% (convicted prisoners) fall into this group. The highest admissions of convicted prisoners have belonged to age between 22 and 30. As are the un-convicted prisoners and the convicted prisoners also have a low literacy rate. Many of the convicted prisoners are married and this is a common situation every year. The reconvicted and recidivist rate has gradually increased in the recent past. In the year 2008, it was more than 52 percent. By the next decade's data elucidate the decline and fluctuation of the total number of offenders, but it shows a further increasing the recidivism of the country. In the year 2016, it was more than 56.5 percentage reconvicts and recidivists. Therefore the study concern why recidivism increase gradually and what are the inducing factors for recidivism?



**Figure 1:** First offenders and Recidivists in Sri Lanka 2006-2016

Sources: Department of Prison 2006-2016

But within the literature, it has noted that the existing judiciary system is in a pressurized moment. According to the 18th constitutional amendment in 2010 tended to reinforce the executive power over the judiciary and therefore the president has the power to appoint the judges for the supreme courts, civil courts, and courts of appeal, and also the attorney-general. In addition to that, threats and attacks towards the judiciary power, delays in the processing incidents, and criminal impunity are major obstacles for law enforcement in the country (Schuster, 2012). Available literature has mentioned that some problems faced by prisons in Sri Lanka with drug offenders. As the study revealed, it is necessary to keep separately other

offenders from drug abused criminals but due to the overcrowding of the prisons are suffered from admissions of a large number of drug-addicted offenders, many of the prison officers are subjected to be harassments, threatens and bodily harm inside the prison, officers are supplying drugs into prison have been noticed and this is the main problem for the emergence of a lot of fresh issues and further prisons are selling drugs inside the prison and lot of gang warfare and various violent take places in the prison (Kuruppu, 2020). As per the above literature noted, current correctional mechanisms are by far existed under huge threats from the aspects of political, environmental, and prison systems. In addition, the existing social environment and structural changes have significantly impacted the increase of recidivists in Sri Lanka. Not only in the Sri Lankan context but also global context is experienced criminal behaviors among citizens which brings the worst consequences for social development. Hence, offenders are becoming vulnerable in terms of attaining their behavioral modifications and reshaping. Thus, this study is trying to find out the key challenges faced by recidivists in modern society, and how they adapt to society, and what are major causes to increase recidivism in Sri Lankan context.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This study employed criminological approaches to the research, and theoretically, it was driven by the deterrence theory. In order to deal with the research topic, primary qualitative data were collected via case studies, interviews, and case history from recidivists of Bogambara prison in Kandy under the purposive sampling method. The thematic analysis was successfully utilized within the primary qualitative data analysis process. In that, themes were identified manually and organized into a manner in order to address the research objectives.

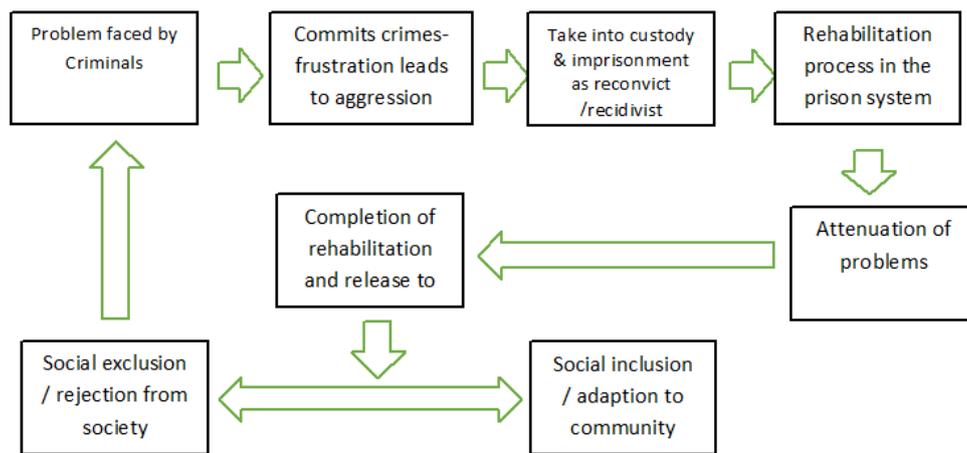
In the secondary data collection, this study paid attention to the global and Sri Lankan recidivism situation through extensive web searches by selecting literature from 2000 to the present. In that, official crime statistics, index journal articles, and reputed published books were major information sources. Under two different steps, data have been analyzed. The first step involved the identification of various drive factors related to the re-offend. The second step used to recognize the most influential pull factors causes an increase in recidivism. Finally, overall data analysis was comprehensively concerned in order to generate possible strategies to control the recidivism.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

This chapter analyzes the research findings which tend to addresses the research objectives. Collected data were analyzed in a manner in order to recognize the factors influencing the recidivism and causes of such challenges in the Sri Lankan context. Therefore, the inductive approach has been adapted to the study in the case of themes generation and data interpretation.

#### **a). Social exclusion affecting the socialization process**

In the study, it was able to identify the different factors conduce for the recidivism. In that, the correlation between social exclusion and the socialization process is highly affected by criminals to reintegrate with the social structure. As the study recognized most criminals are experienced a range of social, economic, and private challenges that leads to constraint their social integration. Most of the obstacles have risen in the offender's social environment, domestic sphere (family), and the professional environment



**Figure 2:** Community correctional System and recidivism in Sri Lanka

Source: Author's analysis

Case 1: "I came to prison for the second time. Previously I was addicted to the drug. I was punished in the prison for three months. When I went to the home, everybody started to suspect me. Even when I go out, they ask "did you use heroine today". Actually, i had given up. But if I talk to a friend they blame me. They scolded me without my fault. So I thought "why I ask bad things without doing anything wrong" so secondly, I started to use drugs".

According to the above-mentioned case, the respondent has revealed that he has addicted to the drugs and therefore, he has punished by the law. With regard to the legal framework, if there is a crime, there is a punishment. It is inevitable. In the law enforcement process, this respondent has experienced relevant physical punishment for his drug addiction. But after his legal punishment, he has to face a critical situation. In the family functions, it becomes the basic unit of the society which determines the future of an individual. Understanding the role of the family and social ties among family members are conducted to predict the individual's future involvement in crimes and potentiality to involve in post imprisonment. Specifically, with regard to case 1, his family has adversely impacted him to reintegrate with society. Continuous suspicious among family members, abusive family environment, lack of parental supervision to behavioral modifications and parental neglect has comprehensively influenced to create the possible risks caused for future criminal behavior. As a consequence of that, frustration, loss of trustworthiness towards closers, future uncertainty has created a significant impact on post criminality. Hence, the often hypothesized theory emphasizes that individuals from positive and enriching families have positive implications towards loving relationships, organized living backgrounds which is less likely to pursue the life of criminals. Unlikely, individuals who grew up under different parenting methods, as well as ignored family atmosphere, might show future criminal behavioral tendencies. According to this theory, the respondent's post imprisonment has been caused by loss of basic function of the family such as emotional security and the sense of belongings. Because family is the primary place where individuals maintain their personal identities. So lack of family contribution to reshaping personality development eventually results in delinquency. In that, increasing unnecessary doubts instead of proper guidance, level of acceptance of the members and relatives within the domestic sphere has hugely impacted to become victims of the recidivism. Not only the families but also the professional environment, community of the particular individual belong and marriage has the potentiality to portray some disadvantageous factors for recidivism.

Case 3: “I have two children. I came to this prison because of the homicide. I killed my wife because of her extra marital relationship. I have almost completed my punishment duration and i have only one year to be released. But my children directly say “don’t come to our home” because their love affairs have broken up due to my murder”.

Case 4: “I am from Colombo. We grew up with step- father. He was a little bit rich and rowdy person in our area. He has also been in the prison. I also wanted to become a rich person and I used to sell drugs. This is my second time in prison. The first time I wanted to change my career and I found many jobs. But nobody gave me a job. They were afraid to offer a job for me. One thing is my father’s history and another one is my drug business. So I stop my effort to find a new job and I continued the same career with my friends”.

As case 3 and case 4 mentioned, every criminal behavior has shown a reaction which has negatively impacted their late socialization process. According to case 3, the offender’s criminal activity has hampered his children’s future life. Their relationships have been collapsed due to their father’s murder. Hence, he has to stay away from his own children. In case 4, criminal behavior has affected personal achievements. Especially, his step-father’s criminal history and respondent’s criminal activities have emerged vulnerability in the existing job market. Particularly, within the current social structure, there are limited opportunities to rebuild the behaviors. With regard to case 4, social response for the criminals impact their recidivism. Because of their offense, they are not accepted by the job market. So the decrease of acceptance in the employment sectors and rejection from the community-based relationship building are influential factors for the social inclusion of the criminals.

**Table 1. Social exclusion indicators on recidivism**

Concepts	Dimensions	Indicators
<b>Social exclusions</b>	Family situation	Level of acceptance of family members Marriage situation
	Housing situation	Type of housing Access to social housing Urban / Rural
	Interrelations	Societies’ degree of acceptance Degree of acceptance of friends, peers
	Occupational status	Qualifications opportunities Degree of acceptance of the job market obstacle to develop qualification
	Relations with institutions	Degree of acceptance at the level of institutions

Source: Author’s analysis

Amidst the sociological consanguinities, this situation has widely impacted. Because society has a fear to accept such people and society predicts these people unnecessarily. Specifically, the anxiety of committing additional crimes with the influence of previous offenders is raised as an outstanding obstacle for the pro-social behavior of the individuals. Therefore, lack of accessibility for employment opportunities, lack of acceptance to build new social relationships, and long-term rejection from social inclusion have encountered as causes of an increase in the recidivists. Furthermore, strain theory and the social learning theory have provided dimensions to recognize criminal behavior. The strain theory suggests that criminality occurs as a result of the social structural forces. The social learning theory reflects criminality as a learned behavior. In

both case 3 and 4 shows the social influence for the increase of the recidivism. The statements such as “don’t come to our home, they were afraid to offer a job for me and i continued the same career with my friends” emphasize the severity of the recidivism due to long-term experience of social exclusion and sanctions for the socialization process.

#### **b). Socio-cultural interpretations of recidivism**

The differentiation of people based on their behaviors is highly associated with social and cultural factors. In most of the communities where everybody practices different types of beliefs, traditional activities, customs, linguistic pattern, as well as cultural elements interpret and provide various interpretations regarding the criminality of the individuals. Amidst this complexity, culture pinpoints generalizations towards human behaviors. As a consequence of that, people have social norms and values to define “good people” and “bad people”. In these cultural perceptions, criminals are viewed as unfortunate individuals and unnecessary weight for positive social mobility. In most cultures, especially, prejudice, discrimination, and stigmatization are the pull factors that cause marginalization of the criminals from a large society. It restricts the social opportunity to become a correct person. General perceptions towards recidivism like, “they are dangerous”, and “they are useless people” eventually cause to exclude them from social participation. Not only that, name-calling particularly, “Kudukaraya, Ganjakaraya, Mineemaruwa, Hora, Bebadda and Rasthiyadukaraya” are the terms which directly cause to diminish the self- esteem of a particular person and also irrespective to the gender, this stigmatization and marginalization are heavily experienced by them. In some cases, not only the real person but also the whole family would become victims of this marginalization. Hence, society gives a separate identity for the entire life span of the particular person which adversely impacts the opportunity seeking process of the recidivists. Owing to this situation, they themselves feel that they are an invaluable and disadvantaged groups of people. Case 8: “Some of my friends say, please don’t call me because our parents do not like to have contacts with you, even some of my colleagues in the sport society in the village do not look at me. One day i forcibly talked to them and asked why not you all spoke with me. Then they say, if we talked with you, it would be a problem for us. So please stay away from our society”

Case 10: “Even our family also views me as a burden. They always say that i destroyed their dignity. My father tells me that he gets fear to keep my younger brother with me. Because he feels that I will mislead my brother. I left my home”.

At the same time families that consist of individuals who have committed crimes are also labeled and that cause to limit their social participation, not due to the identities given by society. Furthermore, social structure, on the one hand, demonstrates how recidivists are seen as vulnerable because of their committed deviant behavior. In that language plays a crucial role in giving meaning for such people based on their single fault within the Sri Lankan society. Social exclusion theory can be effectively utilized in order to understand how culture brings challenges to the recidivists by its nature. The social exclusion theory, it explains the social exclusion of the people through different directions such as social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. These components have restricted the potentiality to participate in social activities and social interactions. It gradually tends to increase social disengagement among recidivists. In the local language, criminality refers to “anti-social behaviors of the people which directly differentiate the people who are normal from the abnormal in terms of behaviors. In that case, this study was able to provide clues about how such socially fixed identities bring negative and invalid social identity for the recidivists.

For instance, as the study found out, the term “Kudukaraya” is a particular term which is used by villagers in order to highlight the selected respondent from a large society. On the one hand, according to the labeling theory, it is labeling that person based on his offense. On the other hand, through the language, socio-

cultural factors construct such meanings for the recidivists in order to exclude them from the broad society. As a result of their offense, recidivists experience long-term underestimation even from their families which is the worst situation for post imprisonment. In addition to that, the social constructionist model can be effectively used to recognize the social exclusion of recidivists in society. As it explains, physical (infrastructural facilities) and psychological factors are the major causes of the criminal behaviors of the individuals. Because most recidivists have neglected by their own social environment which badly affects to improve the criminal personality. As the study recognized, recidivists who live with poor social and psychological standards such as frustration, anxiety, social isolation, marginalization, name-calling (labeling), and lack of social interactions have significantly impacted to reduce their social rehabilitation.

### **c). Inadequate administrative efficiency**

This is a major reason for the social exclusion of the recidivists in the social context. Especially, poor social solidarity and lack of social cohesion, lack of collectivism, shortage of empathetic views towards the recidivists among people, and insufficient intervention in the community-based organizations (CBO) in the village levels have increased the stratifications among community members even in the same community and insufficient state-level administrative networks reduce opportunities to get awareness regarding recreational opportunities available for the criminals. Nevertheless, the disparities between rural and urban sectors have decreased the entire criminal empowerment to find out alternatives in participating in social activities at large.

Case 12: “We are very poor people. I was worked as labor. But our family income is not sufficient to survive. We asked for the Samurdhi (monthly allowance given by the government for poor people) even. We did not get that opportunity. Suddenly my wife was sick. It was cancer. I wanted to cure her. For that, we needed a lot of money. That’s why I started to theft and drug selling. But I cannot collect the whole amount. I caught by the police”.

Case 10: “I do not have a future ambition. I am not married. I do not have a family. Nobody cares about me. I do not have a job. So prison is a very peaceful place for me. I can eat; I can spend time with others. Even though I have skills in terms of painting, electrical works, I could not find a job. So like to spend my life like this”.

According to both cases, it highlights that recidivists have suffered from severer social problems such as unemployment, poverty, and disparities in welfare distribution. As Marx described, the economic system can determine both positive and negative specific components in the society such as market expansion, accessibility for the social needs of the people, quality of life, health security, education, and crimes. With regard to the market expansion, prices of the commodities, prices of the tablets, and medical payments have been increased rapidly. Further, current consumerism has been also changed according to the market requirements. As a result of that, electricity, technology, transportation, and other infrastructure facilities hugely influence not only the health-seeking behavior of the individual but also specific aspects such as climbing the social ladder, statuses, class system, etc. Money has become a major aspect of determining the entire life journey of people. Since most of the recidivists are economically deprived, they do not have the capacity to access such needs. Therefore, they tend to ignore the existing social norms and values and try to find out alternative and illegal pathways to face social transformations. Therefore, as Marx explains, since the economy has led the foundation for all other elements in the society, recidivists become a vulnerable group of individuals in terms of obtaining social needs to achieve the minimum standards of living. Even though Sri Lanka has legitimized the legal framework of recreating offenders by providing rehabilitation services and relevant punishments, their social inclusion is still underestimating which later can affect to increase the grave crimes.

Both physical and social well-being are ultimately involving to distinguish the entire psychological well-being of the recidivists so that, insufficient social and physical development will be negatively influenced by their psychological stability. As the study noted, the great majority of recidivists are mentally isolated. Since they do not have a proper income, accessibility to basic needs, and long-term psychological discomfort has widely affected them to feel frustration and hopelessness. Further, it has created emotional distress that influences their deviant behavior as well. Especially, these mental, physical, and socio-cultural challenges are developed day by day among these people because of the absence of social integration. Though current law and order tend to focus on punishment and rehabilitation of the recidivists, there are not sufficient pathways to address their social inclusion.

### 5. Conclusion and recommendations

With regard to the structural transformation that happened in the Sri Lankan context, the entire life span of the citizens was subjected to be changed. In that colonialism, class stratification, open economic policy, civil war, educational changes, independence, political movements, and rural and urban differences have significantly impacted in order to ensure both positive and negative social dimensions. But mostly negative results have been attracted by individuals that are directly impacted to increase the crime rates and recidivism in Sri Lanka. Basically, issues in social integration due to the minimum level of community acceptance, lack of skill development during the punishment periods, uncertainty, political influences towards the law enforcement, stigmatization and vulnerability corresponding with social exclusion, lack of contribution of the rehabilitation programs during the reintegration process of the offenders, psychological discomfort along with the social stigmas and also lack of severity of the punishments have adversely affected to increase the recidivism. Hence, establishing strong punishment mechanisms in the prison system, change the public attitudes regarding the offenders, policy reforms to establish the community-based correctional system, enhancing the opportunities to achieve the needs of the released offenders are possible strategies to reduce the crimes' prevalence from contemporary society.

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