A REVIEW OF

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Despite the serious implications criminal psychology has for the elimination of possible threats to the stability and harmony of the social order, the empirical researches conducted in this area are scanty and limited. Very few psychologists have shown any serious interest in the area until the recent years. In the Indian setting, virtually no rigorous work has been undertaken covering recidivism. A brief review based on available literature is presented under the following subheads:

A. Personality and Criminal Behaviour.
B. Locus of Control and Criminal Behaviour.
C. Psychopathology and Criminal Behaviour.
D. Attitude towards Law and Criminal Behaviour.
E. Socio-Economic Status and Criminal Behaviour.
F. Parental Attitude/Home Atmosphere and Criminal Behaviour.
G. Differences between Recidivists and Non-recidivists.
PERSONALITY AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Personality is the sum total of the characteristics of the person which determine his dynamic adjustment to the environment. It lends uniqueness to human behaviour. It is expected that recidivists would differ from non-recidivists, and normals on different personality traits. Glueck and Glueck (1950) found that delinquent boys are distinguishable temperamentally from non-delinquents in that a larger proportion of the former were likely to be extroverted. The delinquents were also more likely than the others to show a mixture of extroversive - introversive trends; and they were less likely than the non-delinquents to manifest introversive trends. Carmen (1956) in his study found that ambiverted children are more likely than introverts, but less likely than extroverts, to become delinquent. The most frequent pattern of delinquency is one in which the individuals were extraverted children. Eysenck (1960) has summarized the evidence supporting this view holding that, because of the hypothesized greater inhibitory potential of the extravert as...
compared to the introvert, the extravert will seek arousal-producing stimuli so as to maintain an optimum level of arousal. The introverts, with hypothesized high excitatory potential, will attempt to avoid arousal-producing stimuli. Shanmugam and Sundari (1962) with the use of verbal projective technique have revealed that non-delinquents are more extroverted but the delinquents have a greater number of neurotic traits than the former.

Eysenck (1977) quotes a study by Andry whose study was mainly concerned with the personality correlates of recidivism in prisoners serving sentences not exceeding six months. He concluded that emotional disturbances (neuroticism), tough-minded extropunitive extravedt behaviour, and immaturity characterized recidivists. Kodanda (1987) compared the personality aspects of forty convicted murderers to forty recidivistic criminal non-murderers. The latter scored higher on extraversion and neuroticism, but the former scored higher on psychoticism. Dejong, Virkkunen, and Linnoila (1992) found that
violent recidivism was most strongly associated with impulsivity of the original crime in killers and attempted killers in the criminal population. Cookson (1994) found that habitual young motor thieves in custody had significantly higher scores on psychoticism and impulsiveness on EPQ(R). Tinklenberg, Steiner, Huckaby, and Tinklenberg (1996) found that subjects lowest in self-restraint had significantly higher recidivism. Richter, Scheurer, Barnett, and Krober (1996) found that recidivists as compared to criminals showed significantly worse results in the Verbal Scale and in Block design of the Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale. They also had a lower level of formal education.

Steiner, Cauffman, and Duxbury (1999) studied personality traits and their relationship to juvenile delinquency and juvenile recidivism in 481 incarcerated juvenile delinquents. They completed questionnaires assessing distress and restraint relating to personality characteristics. The research also used the youths' official records and official follow-up information.
from a sub-sample of 148 juveniles who were followed for up to 4.5 years after release. Results indicated a significant association between self-reported levels of distress and restraint and prior criminal behaviour, as well as behaviour during incarceration. In addition, 67 percent of the sample surveyed were re-arrested; personality traits measured during incarceration were predictive of recidivism rates, above and beyond the effects of such criminological factors as age and number of prior offences. Findings supported the opinion that juvenile delinquents are a heterogeneous population in terms of personality features and that these traits have discriminant and predictive validity.

Thus, adding personality measures to the assessment of criminal behaviour may aid understanding of how personality influences criminal activity and future recidivism. This understanding may be useful for targeting specific domains of functioning to develop more effective intervention strategies.
LOCUS OF CONTROL AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Rotter's (1966) concept of Locus of Control distinguishes between people with internal locus of control (who believe that they have control over the good or bad things that happen to them) and people with external locus of control (who believe that what happens to them is a consequence of chance, fate, or powerful others). Locus of control is a way of viewing the world that Rotter (1966) referred to as a generalized expectancy. In a study by Holein and Wheel (1982) it was found that violent young offenders show greater external control than older violent offenders. Bruce (1992) conducted a study to examine the association between 100 incarcerated men's explanations and various historically documented aspects of psychopathology. Patterns of pathological lying, lack of remorse and guilt, and lack of empathy, were significantly associated with failure to admit responsibility for their crimes. Independently documented histories of pathological lying were associated with subjects blaming their convictions on a faulty criminal justice system.
However, histories of failure to accept responsibility for their behaviour were associated with blaming someone else for their crime. They have a especially difficult time accepting responsibility for taking the life of another human being.

Tolman, Edleson, and Fendrich (1996) examined in their study, the ability of the theory of planned behaviour to explain men’s cessation of violent behaviour. This theory suggested that man’s viewpoint regarding his female partner and therefore his subsequent abusive behaviour will be determined by his perception of the expectations of others around him concerning violence, his evaluation of possible outcomes of abusive behaviour, and the degree to which he believes he can control his abusive behaviour. Of all these variables, perceived control appeared to be most important in understanding the husband’s intentions towards violence and their subsequent abusive behaviour. Richter, Scheurer, Barnett, and Krober (1996) in their study comprising 122 recidivists found that a low level of formal
education and the belief in external control by circumstances and powerful others are predictors of a high risk of recidivism.

The tendency for individuals to take greater personal responsibility for success than for failure, commonly referred to as the self-serving bias in attribution theory research, is one of the most robust findings in social psychology (Bradley, 1978). In the context of criminal behaviour, a self-serving attribution would be attribution to external causes because an internal stable attribution would deflate the sense of self of criminals. Whereas a normal individual accepts his impulses, desires, and acts as his own, a criminal denies this relationship and blames the environment for his acts. Perhaps, criminals can maintain a sense of personal adequacy, and justify their behaviour to themselves, only if they can attribute their negative acts and behaviour to chance, fate, or powerful others. Once labelled as criminals, the self-concept is lowered (Altalib and Griffin, 1994). Recidivists can continue criminal acts only as their attribution to
external agents such as luck, fate, chance, and/or powerful others gets stronger over a period of time.

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Psychopaths have deviant cognitive style and if psychopaths become criminals, then their crimes appear to be without rational motives and absence of any remorse and guilt. According to West (1963) habitual offenders may be classified into two categories: Mentally Normal and Mentally Deviant. Focussing on the Mentally Deviant habitual offenders, he further classified them into two categories: Active Aggressive Deviant and Passive Inadequate Deviant. Both subtypes have in common, a generalized instability, and a failure to cope with ordinary frustrations; but whereas the aggressives respond by hitting back at the environment, the inadequates tend to collapse into passive resistance and querulous dependency. Inadequates tend to be typically feckless people, grossly lacking in drive and initiative. They are always complaining and
demanding help from the authorities, without exerting any effort themselves. They tend to form a one-sided parasitic relationship with whoever will put up with them. They never seem to be able to fend for themselves. Their spinelessness and sloth suggests that they find social demands too much for them. They may be described as facile individuals who follow the path of least resistance. They accept everything from others and give nothing in return. In contrast to spineless inadequates, the aggressives are more actively defiant and rebellious, and are altogether more energetic and resourceful, but their energies are misdirected.

Chockalingam (1973) found that recidivists when compared to non-recidivists showed greater degree of psychopathic deviation. Hare (1986) found that compared to non-psychopathic offenders, psychopathic offenders began their criminal careers earlier and committed more offences, but were just as likely to be paroled. In addition, psychopathic offenders' crimes were more aggressive and violent, and psychopaths were
more likely to be involved in violent behaviours while incarcerated. Finally, psychopathic offenders are more likely than others to violate the terms of conditional release. Pavelka (1986) administered MMPI to parolees and found characteristics indicative of long-term pathological behaviour, usually recognizable during early adolescence. Recidivism and other problems exhibited by parolees correlated significantly with unemployment, substance abuse and antisocial personality character. Repo, Virkkunen, Rawlings and Linnoila (1997) found alcohol dependence and antisocial personality were common among recidivist offenders. They had a history of long lasting enuresis during their childhood. They were younger at the time of their first offence and were more often intoxicated during their arson attempt. However, psychosis was a common diagnosis among subjects who had no record of recidivist criminal offences. This would imply that recidivism is related to anti-social personality but not to the clinical category of psychoses. Dutton, Bodnarchuk, Kropp, Hart, and Ogloff (1997) found greater recidivism in men with high scores on borderline
personality, anti-social personality, and avoidant personality for wife assault. Castellani, Wedgeworth, Wootton, and Rugle (1997) found that substance abuse is related to criminal offences. Elkins, Iacono, and McGue (1997) concluded that compared to temporary antisocial behaviour that ceases following mid-adolescence, persistent antisocial behaviour in adulthood is associated with lower IQ and achievement, more pathological personality characteristics, greater substance abuse, early progression along developmental pathways of antisocial behaviour, and increased risk for conduct disorder in offspring. Harris and Rice (1997) reviewed research on the prediction, management and treatment of violent persons published in the last decade. They found the factors most highly and consistently related to risk are historical, including age, sex, past anti-social and violent conduct, psychopathy, aggressive childhood behaviour, and substance abuse. Major mental disorder and psychiatric disturbance are poor predictors of violence.
Hanson and Harris (1998) found in their study that a greater proportion of recidivists (21%) than the non-recidivists met Hare’s (1991) criteria for psychopathy, which describes a chronic pattern of interpersonal relationships, a parasitic lifestyle, and criminal versatility. Salekin, Rogers, Ustad, and Sewell (1998) studied the relationship between psychopathy and recidivism among women. They found that egocentricity and verbal aggression were the best predictors of recidivism. Stein, Apter, Ratozine, Hareven, and Avidan (1998) found that even in highly anxious and depressed suicidal adolescents, high aggression leads to recidivism.

Blackburn and Coid (1999) interviewed 164 offenders in prisons with the structured clinical interview. Cluster analysis of the personality disorder criteria sets identified six diagnostic patterns i.e. antisocial narcissistic, paranoid-antisocial, borderline-antisocial, borderline-antisocial-passive-aggressive, compulsive-borderline, and schizoid. Most were identified as psychopaths with the use of Psychopathy Checklist - Revised (PC-R).
results also emphasized that dangerous offenders are heterogeneous in personality. Loucks and Zamble (1999) reports on a Canadian study that examined predictors of recidivism in serious female offenders, with attention to whether such predictors are common to both male and female offenders. A comparison of the study group of female offenders with a sample of serious male offenders for which similar data were available found similarities and differences. Both male and female offenders had disadvantaged social backgrounds, with a substantial proportion spending their first 5 years of life with adults other than their parents. Both groups reported leaving school early, having limited or no employment skills, and having histories of serious and repeated antisocial acts. There were major differences as well. There was a substantially higher rate of moderate to severe depression in female offenders and a much higher rate of suicide attempts. Female offenders were only half as likely as male offenders to have an alcohol abuse problem, but were twice as likely to have a problem with the abuse of other drugs. For the predictive aspect of the study, the
relationship of all variables with previous offending and also with
previous violent offending was investigated using multiple-
regression analysis. With both of these targets, psychopathy
was the pre-eminent measure. Other results for the two criteria
differed somewhat, but in both analyses, the significant
predictors included a self-reported tendency to express anger
outwardly and some measure of abuse. Approximately 5 years
after collecting data for the original study, records in the
Offender Management System were searched to determine
releases and readmission to prison for the original sample. More
than 80 percent of the original sample had been released by
then, on average, more than 3 years before the follow-up.
Recidivism was defined as a new conviction or a major violation
of release conditions that led to revocation of release. Just
under half of those who had been released were classified as
recidivists. The earlier data were analysed again, with recidivism
as the target. In examining the predictive contribution of all
variables together, psychopathy, previous criminal convictions,
and substance abuse by the father made significant
contributions. Again, psychopathy was the most important predictive variable. The analyses also indicated that there are considerable similarities in the factors that predict recidivism in serious offenders, regardless of gender.

Recidivism has also been associated with specific clinical disorders. Eronen, Hakola, and Tiihonen (1996) analysed data from forensic psychiatric reports to determine whether mental disorder and other factors were associated with homicide recidivism. 36 homicide recidivists were identified out of which 24 were alcoholics, 23 had a personality disorder, 4 had schizophrenia, and 2 had major depression. Data suggested that mentally abnormal offenders are over-represented among homicide recidivists in Finland. The risk of repeat homicide appears to be very high during the first year after release from prison. Barnett, Richter, Sigmund and Spitzer (1997) did a study whose purpose was to explore dangerousness and fire setting recidivism of mentally disordered fire-setters in comparison with mentally healthy arsonists. It was found that mentally
disordered fire-setters have a higher rate of recurrence of fire setting than non-mentally disordered fire-setters and commit fewer common offences other than fire setting. This also implies that psychiatric problems may lead to recidivism. Hanson and Bussiere (1998) also found that sexual offence recidivism was best predicted by measures of sexual deviance and to lesser extent by general factors such as age, number of prior offences etc.

However, Bonta, Law, and Hanson (1998) conducted a meta-analysis to conclude that psychiatric classification, as a disordered person does not predict recidivism. Their result showed that major predictor of recidivism was the same for mentally disordered offenders as for non-disordered offenders. Criminal history variables were the best predictors and clinical variables showed the smallest effects.
In view of such conflicting results it is of interest to study psychopathological variables as predictors of criminal behaviour and recidivism.

**ATTITUDE TOWARDS LAW AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR**

Attitude towards law is an important factor that shapes and maintains criminal behaviour. This attitude itself is a product of the interaction of criminals with other members of their subgroup. Akers (1977) postulates that the discriminative stimuli that operate in promoting deviant behaviour can be segregated into two classes. The first, “positive” discriminative stimuli are the signals communicating that certain behaviours are encouraged by the subgroup. The second, “neutralising” or “justifying” discriminative stimuli, neutralise the warnings communicated by the society at large that certain behaviours are inappropriate or unlawful. He opines they “make the behaviour, which others condemn and which the person himself may initially define as bad, seem alright, justified, excusable,
necessary, the lesser of two evils or not really deviant after all” (Akers, 1977, p. 521). These attitudinal cues, internalised from the subgroup rather than the larger society, serve to direct behaviour towards inappropriate ends. McGurk, Bolton, and Smith (1978) found that recidivists show a greater degree of extrapunitive hostility and score more highly on tests of social non-conformity. Recidivists had also begun their criminal careers at an earlier age than non-recidivists and had committed significantly more previous offences. Singh and Bose (1980) found that the recidivists were capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, but all of the recidivists shared an attitude of disrespect and defiance toward all forms of authority. Once a person has been labelled a criminal, the subgroup he belongs to reinforces his negative attitude towards law. Further, a significant amount of interaction of recidivists is with the law authorities and the legal system. Negative aspects of the organs of law are very dominant in their memory. Unfavourable legal interventions reinforce, maintain, and enhance their negative attitude towards law.
Socio-economic status is the position that an individual or family occupies with reference to prevailing average standards of cultural possessions, effective income and material possessions, and participation in group activity of the community. Status is a function of social interaction. It results from an acceptance, by the self and others, of the role the person plays in social interaction. Therefore, unfavourable conditions at the home front also emerge as an important variable. Though the socio-economic conditions of the family may not be considered as a sole causative factor, it is certainly one of the vital contributory factors to the re-offending of the individual in the rapidly changing socio-economic scenario in the developing Indian society. Reiss (1944) remarks that families of high socio-economic status are more effective in controlling the behaviours of members with respect to delinquency than families low in the socio-economic status. Huruwitz (1952) found that many investigations of criminal groups have shown an excess of
individuals coming from large families. According to him, there
can hardly be any doubt that one of the main reasons for this
correlation is the generally more difficult economic condition of
very large families, which are also frequent in the economically
and socially low classes of population. Mohan (1971) found that
convicts who belonged to lower socio-economic classes showed
greater tendency for mental breakdown and prison psychoses.
Male offenders could resist the undesirable prison conditions to
a greater extent than their female counterparts. Jacoby and
Kozie-Peak (1997) provide results of a longitudinal study of 27
mentally ill prison inmates released from Ohio State prisons.
They found that social support provided in, and after release
from prison was associated with higher quality of life after
release. However, it was not related to criminal recidivism.

In India, Singh and Bose (1980) found that all the recidivists
came from deprived socio-economic and cultural backgrounds.
Deviant labelling and societal rejection, and their espousal of
values learnt during their incarceration in prisons had led them
to become members of deviant and criminal subcultures, where they found the acceptance and support denied to them by the larger society. Trivedi and Tiwari (1997) in their study of habitual offenders found that 48.4% of the total recidivists came from totally poor families. One-fourth of them belonged to labour-class followed by business (21.4%), agriculturalists (17.8%), self-employed (9.8%) and service (9%). In face of the general social opinion that crime and delinquency is increasing among the rich, whereas studies show the opposite, it is of interest to study recidivism in relation to socio-economic status.

**PARENTAL ATTITUDE / HOME ATMOSPHERE AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR**

Family exerts a deep influence in the life of an individual. It not only gratifies an individual’s essential and non-essential needs but also transmits cultural values that socialise an individual and train him in survival patterns. Burt (1945) reported that the only child family is often assumed to present an unfavourable
situation with an increased risk for criminality in the child. The special risk of the only child situation cannot be attributed to economic factors alone, but it is associated with the danger of excessive indulgence, lack of contact with companions of his own age, and in general, an unwholesome, possibly neurotic development. Healy and Bronner (1950) found that 50% of the criminals were from homes characterized by unfavourable conditions. Gleuck and Glueck (1950) reported that 84.8% of the offenders released from Massachusetts Reformatory had been reared in homes in which there were other criminal members. According to Abrahmson (1960), the most significant finding was that families which produced criminals showed greater prevalence of unhealthy emotional conditions among the family members. A tense and pressured home atmosphere blocks the maturation of childish feelings and constructive potentialities, which the child may possess. In an atmosphere where insecurity produces more insecurity, antisocial tendencies will be made more acute and a child reared in such a home often becomes sensitised to criminal activities. He starts to
repress his painful memories about his early deprivations, but this repression results in free floating hostile aggressiveness, usually tinged with anxiety and guilt. Since, he is hurt emotionally, he tries to strike back by acting out his hostilities. Ganguly and Maitra (1966) in their research work were able to relate the parental role and family dynamics to the inadequate socialization of delinquent children. Sutherland (1968) found that 40% criminals come from broken homes. Chockalingam (1974) found that recidivism was a consequence of parental rejection, broken homes, vagrancy, and bad peer relationships. Singh and Bose (1980) reported that habitual offenders came from large families (with an average number of 6.5 members) with home environments ridden with interpersonal conflicts. They also reported that habitual offenders were intermediate children i.e. arriving between the first- and last- born child. Chockalingam (1983) found that inappropriate discipline, negative parental supervision, attachment to parent and runaway behaviour are predictive of adult criminal conduct.
According to Blumstein, Cohen, Roth, and Visher (1986) every crime requires three ingredients: a motivated offender, a suitable target and an opportunity. Crime is the result of complex changes in economic, social, and cultural factors such as unemployment, dysfunctional families, child abuse, poor education, community breakdown, economic inequality and substance abuse. These changes can be summed up as childhood factors of difficult temperament and poor social skills; family factors of poor parental supervision and discipline, substance abuse, family violence and disharmony, long-term parental unemployment, and abuse/neglect; school factors of school failure, deviant peer group, bullying, and inadequate behaviour management; life factors of divorce and family breakup, death of a family member; community and cultural factors of low income and poor housing, neighbourhood violence and crime, and lack of support services. Towberman (1994) found that family functioning contributed significantly to all dimensions of chronic delinquency. Abuse in foster homes, delinquency under the influence of peers and siblings, poor school
attendance, and early age at first adjudication were related to chronic delinquency. Sampson and Lamb (1994) found that family poverty inhibits family processes of informal social control, in turn increasing the likelihood of juvenile delinquency. Results show that erratic, threatening and harsh discipline, low supervision, and weak parent-child attachment mediate the effects of poverty and other structural factors on delinquency. Vernon (1995) reviewed research on the explanation of violent crime and the prediction of violent behaviour among male offenders. Some predictors of violent recidivism pertain to childhood teenage adjustment, separation from parents before the age of 16 years, elementary school maladjustment, early behaviour problems and juvenile delinquency. Trivedi and Tiwari (1997) found that 17.5% of recidivists have inherited their criminal proclivities from the members of their families. This apart, more than 10% of these recidivists are those whose family background was not known. They were generally destitute and could not get social protection in their family during their childhood and were obviously exploited by their
surroundings and odd circumstances in their adolescent age itself which promote them to indulge in anti-social activities under distress and hostility towards law of the land, in search of their bread and butter to maintain their livelihood in a rapidly changing socio-economic scenario. Firestone, Bradford, McCoy, Greenberg, Curry, and Larose (1998) found that more sexual recidivists, compared with non-recidivists, had been removed from their family home prior to age 16. Violent recidivists compared with non-recidivists were also more frequently removed from their homes prior to 16 years of age, and they showed significantly more problems with alcohol. Johnson, Dunlap, and Maher (1998) hold that very sizable proportion of juvenile delinquents and adult criminals come from backgrounds and family kin systems having deviant parents or kin. This study provides a focus upon the child-rearing practices directly observed by trained ethnographer during a case study of one highly criminal, drug-using household/kin network. Such households are well designed to "nurture" those persons who will be antisocial as children, delinquents as juveniles, and
become criminals, drug abusers, and prostitutes in adulthood—and who have very few chances to become conventional adults.

Gendreau and Goggin (1999) confirmed by a meta-analysis that family rearing practices i.e. lack of supervision and affection, conflict, and abuse are predictive of recidivism.

The influence of mother and father taken together, and individually, in the home also has an impact on the psyche of the child and ultimately becomes an important factor underlying future adult behaviour. McCord (1979) found that multiple regression and discriminant function analyses indicate that six variables describing family atmosphere during childhood, viz., mother's self confidence, father's deviance, maternal affection, parental aggressiveness, parental conflict, and supervision, have an important impact on subsequent behaviour.

Chockalingam (1984) examined the relationship between parents’ marital life and childhood home life of 70 adult male habitual offenders. He found that a majority of offenders had
run away from homes during childhood. It was concluded that because of frequent parental quarrels or desertion of one parent by another, children might react by running away from home and indulging in delinquent behaviour.

McCarthy (1990) reported that family research studies confirm that abusive parents tend to be undifferentiated partners who compete with each other and with their children for attention and nurturance. The emotional atmosphere in such families facilitates ego deficits like those of the borderline personality as it moulds the child's efforts to avoid anxiety. Devaluation, loss, and defenses against mourning partially account for depression and paranoid traits in abused youngsters. Some abused individuals project their rage and later become paranoid or antisocial, whereas others fragment or retain infantile defenses.

Bandura and Walters (1959) studied 26 boys with histories of anti-social aggression, most in the care of Probation Officers, with a matched control group of boys who were neither
particularly aggressive nor particularly withdrawn. The mothers of the aggressive boys were less effective at socializing their children and their sons were more attached to them than to their fathers. Both parents, but especially the father, tended to encourage aggression outside the home but to suppress it with punishment at home. They also made greater use of punishments and such verbal assaults as ridicule and nagging, and they reasoned less with their sons. Yates, Beutler, and Crago (1983) found evidence to suggest that early paternal influences are stronger than maternal influences in fostering violent criminality.

Keenan (1994) holds that that the effort by developmental psychopathologists to understand the etiology of antisocial behaviour has resulted in several significant findings. First, aggressive behaviour is highly stable from early childhood into adolescence and adulthood. Second, parental factors including rearing practices and parental psychopathology, are correlated with childhood behaviour problems.
Mukherjee, Rayachaudhuri, and Maitra (1969) examined the impact of father-absence in early childhood upon personality functions and resulting criminal behaviour in a group of criminals with the help of biographical interview and personality inventories. Findings revealed that the personality development depends upon the total personal situation rather than on any isolated variable such as father absence or presence. Martin, Cloninger and Guze (1987) found that familial criminality and maternal hysteria were also associated with an increased risk of serious and persistent recidivism. Pederson (1994) found that perception of low care by mother was the strongest predictor of delinquency.

Thus, faulty role models, broken homes, and unfavourable attitude of parents towards their children, lead to a mental make up which is inclined to behaviour characterized by criminal and antisocial activities.
DIFFERENCES BETWEEN

RECIDIVISTS AND NON-RECIDIVISTS

The factors responsible for the continuance of criminal behaviour are the focus of interest in the present research for they lie at the root of the knotty problem of identification and rehabilitation of criminals. According to Exner (1974) as far as the prognosis of offenders is concerned, the factors that separate the recidivists from non-recidivists, are genetic influence, increasing tempo of criminality, bad conditions in the parental home, bad performance in school, failure to complete studies, irregularity on the job, onset of criminality before 18 years of age, quicker relapse into crime, psychopathic personality, and bad conduct in the prison/institution. He also found that offenders’ chances of recidivism are greater the more previous convictions he has, the shorter the time since his last conviction, the younger he is, and the younger he was when first convicted. Men have higher conviction rates than women, and offenders against property generally have higher
reconviction rates than those committing offences of violence. He felt that the majority of habitual offenders are not impelled by mental drives but are merely vocationally oriented individuals who develop a scheme of life in which property crime is the principal source of gain.

Cressey (1978), who uses the word 'career criminals' for recidivists, holds that this idea should not be interpreted rigidly as to suggest that these offenders do nothing but commit crimes. There are periods in which these individuals pursue legitimate occupations. The offender’s decision to return to crime may be based on a variety of factors, such as the nature and type of the individual’s employment, the availability of criminal opportunities, peer influence and pressure, and commitment to crime.

Broome, Knight, Hiller, and Simpson (1996) in their research based on a sample of 279 recidivists examined several elements of substance abuse treatment process and how they influence
recidivism. It was found that the important factors in recidivism are the personality correlates and social support systems instead of demographic factors. Geissler (1998) concluded that with respect to recidivism, inmates with more deviant conduct relapsed sooner, more frequently, and more seriously. Morentin, Callado, and Meana (1998) found that heroin abuse and dependence was the most important risk factor for criminal recidivism. Also males showed more violent activity than females. The study implies that substance abuse implying risk-taking behaviour is related to recidivism.

In India, Channabasavanna (2000) conducted a biopsychosocial study of habitual criminals at National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, Bangalore. This study was conducted on 50 criminals divided into two equally sized groups of habitual and non-habitual criminals. They used a datasheet for personal information of the subjects, genetic analysis of their families, personality assessment through the Temperament Character Inventory and various measures of neuropsychological
assessment. The study points to the presence of personality deficits. These deficits manifest as problematic behaviour in the interpersonal domain. Behavioural deficits often tend to be long-term, affecting the interpersonal domain, and thus perpetuating the problem. The presence of family pathology has also been found to be an important factor in this study.

An overall global look at the review of literature as presented above reveals gaps and non-uniformity in the empirical work undertaken. Particularly, it is required that factors distinguishing recidivist and non-recidivist criminal behaviour be identified so that the identification, treatment, and rehabilitation of criminals at greatest risk can be enhanced in a significant way. This points to a need for further explorations in this area.