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Social contexts of Crimes in contemporary Sri Lankan Society

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සංකල්පය

සමාජ වෙනස්වීම (Social Change) සමාජ විද්‍යාඥයාට අතිශය වැදගත් සංකල්පයකි. මන්ද සමාජ වර්ගව පිළිබඳ හදාරන සමාජ විද්‍යාඥයා සමාජ සංදර්භය වෙනස්වීම් මනාව ගලපා වර්ගව විග්‍රහ කිරීමට උත්සුක වන බැවිනි. එහිදී සමාජ ව්‍යුහාත්මක වෙනස්වීම් ඔස්සේ පුද්ගල හැසිරීම් රටාව තේරුම් ගැනීමත් අනෙක් අතට සමාජ වර්ගව සමාජ ව්‍යුහය වෙනස් කිරීම කෙරෙහි බලපෑම තේරුම් ගැනීමත් සිදුකරයි. කෙසේ වෙතත් වෙනත් සමාජයන්ට සාපේක්ෂව ශ්‍රී ලාංකීය සමාජය තේරුම් ගැනීම බහු සංස්කෘතික සමාජ සංදර්භය තුළින් සංකීර්ණ කොට ඇත. තත්කාලීන ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ අපරාධවල සමාජ සංදර්භය නැමැති මෙම පර්යේෂණ පත්‍රිකාව ප්‍රාථමික හා ද්විතීක දත්ත මූලාශ්‍ර ඇසුරුකොට විශ්ලේෂණය කරන්නකි. මෙහිදී තත්කාලීන අපරාධ රැල්ලෙහි සමාජීය සංදර්භය තේරුම් ගැනීම සඳහා අපරාධ හා සාක්ෂරතාව, අපරාධ හා දරිද්‍රතාවය, අපරාධ හා විවාහක අවිවාහක බව සහ අපරාධ හා වයස ආදී විචල්‍යයන් මෙම අධ්‍යයනයේදී විශ්ලේෂණයට ලක්කෙරේ.

මූලාස පද: සමාජ සංදර්භය, පුද්ගල හැසිරීම් රටාව, අපරාධ, ශ්‍රී ලාංකීය සමාජය

Introduction

The sociologists have studied the changing of the social structure through the behavior pattern of the individual. On the other hand these social behavior patterns affect to change the social structure among this dual activity, there are regular and inverse relation. Therefore researchers paid special attention for independent and dependent variables. In related to other societies, context of Sri Lankan society is in quite complex. This complexity has been established by the, multicultural religious and multi-ethnic groups.

Criminologists endeavor to document patterns of crime in order to understand the nature and extent of crime. While the public regards many crimes as random acts, criminological inquiry has been showed that crime is not randomly distributed across individuals or groups.

Criminological research on the patterns of crime focuses on the relationship of criminal behavior to dimensions of time and space and dimensions of social structure. Hence, the Criminology has paid close attention to a variety of contextual and structural dimensions that underlie the basic patterns of crime.

Research Methodology

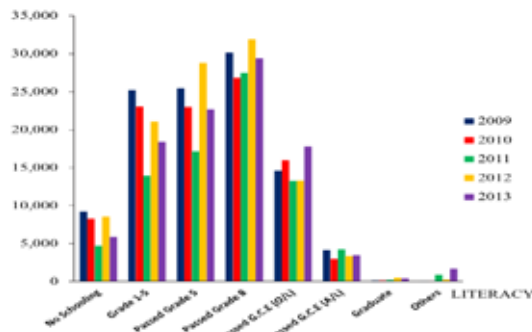
Therefore the main purpose of this paper was to analyze the complex variables such as Literacy, Poverty, and Marital status, with Crimes Trends and Patters in contemporary Sri Lanka. The characteristics of the prisoner were included in prison reports. Due to this prison reports used to realized economic background of the prisoners. More case studies depicted the correlation between the crimes and social background (Tittle, Villame and Smith 1978). However these studies were thoroughly criticized due to unable to analyze the social status conceptually (Braithwaite 1979). In spite of these criticizes social variables are the most suitable to understand social context of crimes. Hence, the researcher has used the available data of the prison department and the police administrative reports with the primary data to analyze the social context of crimes in contemporary Sri Lanka.

Results and Discussion:

1. Literacy and crimes

There were many studies have done to show the relation between crimes and the literacy. It was hypothesized that low level of education caused for crimes. This is only a hypothetic after the independent in Sri Lanka in related to the developed countries shows the education has developed certain extent. In 1946 literacy rate was 37.5 % and by 2012 it has rapidly increased up to 95.7% (Department of Census and Statistic 2012). In such a background, under mentioned graph depicts the relation between the crimes and the education in contemporary Sri Lankan society.

Figure: 1
Convinced Prisoners by Literacy 2009-2013



Source: Department of Prison

The graph elucidated the five year data from 2009 to 2013 and criminals were grouped according to their literacy qualifications. Crimes were fluctuated in every group within above period. Owing to the prison official crimes data it categorized into eight groups under educational levels. Such as No schooling, Grade 1- 5, Passed grade 5, Passed grade 8, Passed G.C.E. (O/L) examination, Graduated and others (Post graduate). In observation the relation between the crimes and education in Sri Lanka the most were reported Grade 8 groups and the others were Grade 1 - 5, Grades 5 and the O/L groups in respectively. Fifth and sixth groups were belonged to the No schooling and passed A/L examination groups. In crudely the most crimes rates were reported who passed Grade 8. Minimum crimes rate was reported who got through degree. To observe these states calculated compare with the population of each education level. The below table was calculated crimes rates according to education level per 100,000 populations.

Table: 1
Convicted Prisoners by Literacy in 2012, Crime rate per 100,000 populations.

Literacy	Population above 25 years	Convicted prisoners	Crime rate per population 100,000
No Schooling	561163	1920	342.15
Grade 1-5	2214793	5407	244.13
Passed Grade 5	1889721	5854	309.78
Passed Grade 8	2886830	8133	281.73
Passed GCE (O/L)	2303018	3834	166.48
Passed GCE (A/L)	1724574	1073	62.22
Graduate	358052	33	9.22
Other	112791	2137	1894.65

Source: Department of Prison

In 2012 owing to the table, there were 28,391 prisoners. According to the Department of Census and Statistic, highest proportion of population revealed that education level 24% were people who passed grade 8. Minimum was post graduates 1% of total population of country. One thousand eight hundred and ninety five (1,895) graduates represented per 100,000 populations. This was challenged to traditional crime hypothesis and these figures shattering away of it. In 2012 above 25 years old people were convinced prisoners among them post graduates. In 2011 two thousand two hundred fifty nine (2,259) were post graduates. In 2013 it increased up to 2,574 according to this statistics in related to 2012, four hundred and fifty seven (457) prisoners were increased, cause for this situation was the deviate the rule and regulation of the establishment cord apart from these were bribes and malpractices were discovered after the political party revolution or change. In Sri Lanka after the political changing these crimes appeared highly. The point of the classical criminalists (Southerland, 1940) crimes that done by high class people were not reported. They were deleted from official statistics. However these crimes were considered as unreported crimes. In a systematic study

of crimes by corporations, Sutherland presented a formal definition of white-collar crime as “a crime committed by a person of high social status and respectability in the course of his / her occupation”. In that sense these were white collar crimes. In Sri Lanka, in fact that if not comes new political party to power these crimes would be silence or unreported.

Apart from no schooling prisoners were three hundred and forty two (342) per 100,000 populations. And thirdly and fourthly there were reported Grade 5 and Grade 8 respectively and later Grade 1-5 reported. However 166 G.C.E (O/L) passed, 62 advance level passed and Graduates were reported. In relation to education and crimes in Sri Lanka shows that challenge the traditional criminological

Table: 2
Direct Admission to Training School According to Literacy

Literary	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
No Schooling	-	-	2	2	-
Grade 1-5	3	4	1	3	1
Passed Grade 5	1	5	7	3	5
Passed grade 8	8	23	18	8	23
Passed GCE (O/L)	6	-	-	-	-
Passed GCE (A/L)	8	-	-	-	-
Total	26	32	28	16	29

Sources: Department of Prisons

Reviewing focus our attention to this table figure out Grade 5 and Grade 8 passed were reported highest value during the time of 2009 up to 2013. In Sri Lankan society these groups have belonged to the minor staff in institution of government and private sector such as, sweepers, peons, and drivers. Some case studies revealed that these people obtained low salary. Although they imitate the high class people's life style (or pattern). Therefore their expectations were destroyed this was main cause for crimes of Grade 5 and Grade 8 rather than No schooling category.

2. Poverty and Crimes

There is a serious relation between the poverty and crimes. It is as old as the race. If the people were unable to fulfill their necessities by legal way it is a social deviant behavior. Researchers convinced this position caused to increase the crimes rate in the society. Though Sri Lanka has reached development in previous decades, but it does not show the reduction of crimes rate among poor people. I have deeply discussed this situation in the second chapter.

According to the above clarification poverty of Sri Lanka has been certain extent alleviated. Owing to the prison official data more than 50% of people imprisoned for default of payment of time. The poverty headcount index for 2012/13 was 6.7 and was decreased

from 8.9 in 2009/10. From 1990/91 to 2012/13 the long term overall poverty index has shown a downward trend. In 2012/13 approximately 1.3 million individuals were in poverty. For the previous survey year 2009/10 it was 1.8 million. This represents a 0.5 million decline from 2009/10 to 2012/13. The total poor households were 5.3 percent from total and it was approximately 0.3 million house-holds in 2012/13(Central Bank reports 2013).

Table: 3
Imprisonment for default of payment of fine 2004-2013

Year	Total Admissions of Convicted Prisoners	No. of Persons Imprisoned in Default of payment of Fines	Percentage to total Admissions
2004	26898	15666	58.2
2005	33034	16244	49.2
2006	28732	14723	51.2
2007	31306	15408	49.2
2008	33566	16868	50.3
2009	37872	19339	51.1
2010	32128	16061	50.0
2011	27018	15306	56.7
2012	28391	12045	42.4
2013	30760	16183	52.6

Sources: Department of Prisons

Above mentioned table depicts the percentage of imprisonment for default of payment of time. Therefore it is argued the large number of people imprisoned due to the poverty. They were unable to pay time, on the other hand majority of these were connected with the property crimes. In 2004, 58.2% imprisoned due inability of pay the time. In 2013 it became 52.6%. It shows directly affected the poverty for crimes.

To examine the connection between the crimes and the poverty, there are not statistics and income of criminals or offenders. However the income of the sentenced to death prisoners was reported. In table 4 depicts the income of sentenced to death prisoners 2009 - 2013.

Table: 4
Income of Sentenced to death Prisoners 2009-2013

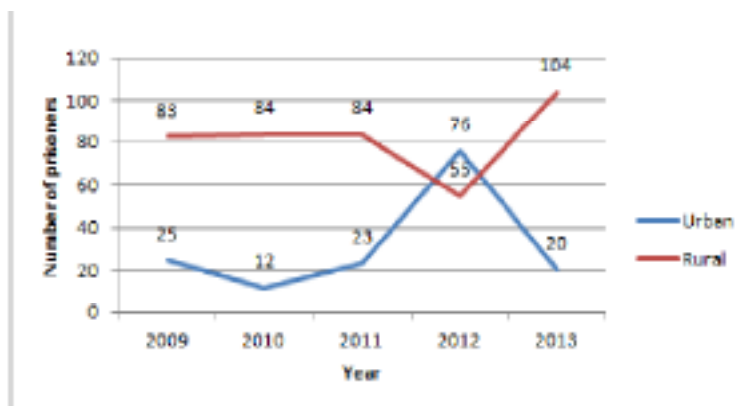
Income	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Rs. 250 & under Rs. 300 per month	48	6	24	32	19
Rs. 300 & over	57	88	72	87	95
No income	3	2	11	12	10
Total	108	96	107	131	124

Sources: Department of Prisons

It is difficult to obtain true comprehension above income categorization. Because depicting the income level in five groups no sufficient. Due to this categorization it was difficult to understand reality the position of criminals. But According to Official Poverty line at national level of Sri Lanka for 2016 is Rs. 3961(15 \$US) (Department of Census & Statistics) and that logic all above prisoners sentenced to death were under the poverty line.

From day to day due to the poverty crime wave has gone up, it did not show the real income but poverty affects the crimes. In observation they connection between crimes and poverty residence also played a major role. Poverty in Sri Lankan society in related urban areas, rural areas depicted the highest rate. Under mentioned figure 2 shows the direct admission of prisoners sentenced to death according to residence from 2009 to 2013.

Figure: 2
Direct Admission of Prisoners sentenced to death According to residence 2009-2013



Source: Department of Prisons

Owing to the prison statistics from 2009 to 2013 admission of prisoners sentenced to death from the rural residence were upper than the urban residence. In 2009 there was 76.8% of rural residence and remaining part from the urban resident. But 2012 showed that increased of urban residence up to 58%. Totally in related to the urban people mere rural people were conveyed to crimes. Factors that affect to these crimes were collapsing of etiquette or moral values, extended family, mother immigrate to Middle East countries in search of jobs, fathers addicted to drugs. When we are comparing the crimes with the education, poverty and social status, traditional criminological theories were challenged. For instance the post war era in Sri Lankan society most of the educated people have shown upper crimes rate rather uneducated people in the community.

3. Marital status and Crimes

Crime is a young person's activity. Indeed, researchers have observed that age is the best predictor of criminal behavior. The relationship between age and crime is curvilinear. Criminal activity increases with age into adolescence, peaks in late adolescence or early adulthood, and then declines fairly quickly with age and continues to decline more slowly to death. This pattern generally holds regardless of sex, race, and class, as well as across time periods and places, leading some to argue that the age crime relationship is invariant (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1986).

Criminologists have used the term "desistance" to describe the termination of criminal behavior as age increases past the peak offending years in late adolescence or early adulthood (Laub and Sampson 1993). Although most offenders "age out" of crime by early adulthood, a small percentage continues to offend over the life course. This observation has sparked interest in the role that age plays in distinguishing between different types of offenders. Contrary to the age invariance position, research on the effects of age at first offense and the trajectory of crime over the life course suggests the existence of distinct types of criminal careers that vary in terms of onset, duration, and intensity. Individuals who become involved in crime at an early age and those who have contact with the legal system earlier in adolescence are more likely to become chronic offenders or "life-course per-sisters." Laub and Sampson (1993) have shown that even among early-onset and chronic offenders, desistance from crime is possible. Research in this realm has also verified that the most common type of criminal career is "adolescent limited," meaning that criminal behavior is generally confined to the adolescent and early adult years, at which point desistance rapidly occurs. Owing to the above clarification youth were doing abundance of crimes without any discrimination such as sex ethnicity and class. This state can be understood by the Sri Lankan society.

Table: 5
Direct Admission of convicted Prisoners According to Age groups 2009-2013

Age group	Year				
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Under 16 years	11	5	102	19	0
16 and under 22 years	2070	2000	1538	1802	1711
22 and under 30 years	13276	7316	5794	6087	6897
30 and under 40 years	13376	9857	8738	8663	10595
40 and under 50 years	5919	8566	7098	7513	7788
50 and under 60 years	2182	3479	2952	3529	3110
60 years and above	1038	905	796	778	659
Total	37872	32128	27018	28391	30760

Sources: Department of Prisons

According to clarification of Gohtredson and Hiyschi (1986) connection between age and crimes exist in curvilinear examining the age of convicted prisoners during the time of 2009 to 2013 belong to the age group 22 to 40 years, When the age become low level crimes increased. When the age has become high similarly crimes also have been increased. This view was convinced by the Sri Lankan society.

Over the years, three methods for preventing crimes have been used and those can be divided into three parts as Punitive, Defense, and Interventionist. The criminologists have illustrated that Punitive methods are based on the assumption that criminality and crime rates can be reduced by making people so fearful of being punished for committing crimes that they will refrain from doing so. The idea is that inflicting severe pain on offenders both reforms those who are punished (specific deterrence) and prevents others from committing crimes (general deterrence). Much of the legislation aimed at doing something dramatic about a crime problem is simply an attempt to increase the severity or certainty of punishment (Beckett and Sasson 2000). Deterrent theorists hypothesized that when the certainty, severity, and celerity of criminal sanctions are high in a population, criminal behavior can be reduced.

Conclusion:

In abstract, this paper proposes that Certainty or risk of penalty of Independent variables which is measured by arrest rate of Sri Lankan community as the proportion of arrested individuals prosecuted was high in the community while Severity: maximum sentence provided by law (e.g. Sentenced to death, or capital punishment), proportion of convicted offenders sentenced to prison. Official crime rate known to Department of Police and Department of Prison had been increased. Criminological research over several decades and in various nations generally had been concluded that enhancing the certainty of punishment produces a stronger deterrent effect than increasing the severity of punishment. But case studies of convicted prisoners and recidivists increments have been proved that the necessity of enhancing Certainty and Severity of punishment in Sri Lankan community to curb crimes for the betterment of entire community.

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