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INVESTIGATING THE REASONS OF COMMITTING CRIMES BY THE CHILDREN OF KERMAN YOUTH DETENTION CENTER

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ABSTRACT

By simple random sampling method, 23 children (out of total 50) were selected from the Youth Detention Center of Kerman in 5 subcategories of violent crimes, non-violent crimes, sexual crimes, drugs and addiction and YSR (Youth Self-report) test and the structured clinical interview based on DSM-IV were carried out by the third year students of Residency. The mean age of the delinquent children at the Youth Detention Center shows that 90.9 % of these children are at the age range of 16-18 years old and only 9.1 % of them are 13-15 years old. The crime of robbery with statistics of 22.7% holds the first rank and the next ranks are for drugs and sodomy with 18.2%, dispute with 13.6%, homicide with 9.1%, fornication with 4.7 %, and rape, murder accomplice, destruction of properties and animals of other people with 4.5 %.

43.47 % of these children had addicted parents and this statistics shows the significant role of addiction on the creation of motivation for crime committing or showing antisocial behaviors. With regard to the frequency of the committed crimes, we can refer to robbery with 30.43 % and also to the sexual crimes (sodomy, fornication and rape) and drug possession with 21.73 % and finally homicide with 13.04 %. Conclusion: Suffering of more than 80% of these children from a type of the Axis II disorder in the time of interview is an indication of the urgent need of this social class for mental health care services.

Keywords: Youth Detention Center, Axis II Disorder, Addiction, Personality.

INTRODUCTION

Those people who live in a society are considered to be the capital and human resources of that society. Development of a society beside suitable financial resources is dependent upon the quality of the existing human resources and the children and adolescents as the major and most important part of these resources have a key role in this regard.

The right of enjoying human resources brings about certain obligations for the society. If these mutual rights and obligations are fulfilled together towards the realization of high goals, the concept of justice becomes realized indeed.

As the attention to the nutritional and health issues in childhood is tantamount to upbringing of the healthy human resources (from physical point of view), paying due attention to mental issues of the children will create consistent and normal behaviors in them and whenever this attention is paid to economic, political and cultural issues, this means that a relative comprehensive development has taken place in the society and otherwise this society will be witnessed to the damaging consequences which can be in some cases irreparable or compensated with high costs.

Delinquency is a biological-social-mental phenomenon for prevention of which various measures seem necessary to be adopted by the society (noncriminal prevention) particularly as

regards the children and adolescents who due to their specific physical and spiritual conditions should be prioritized over the adults. Particularly specific attention to the children and adolescents expands when the child enters the criminal domain and his behavior (action or refusal of action) leads to the violation of rules and laws, in this case he is not considered just as an ordinary child rather he will be described as a delinquent or pervert. Existence of a delinquent child is itself an evidence of the negligence of the society towards him and from this point of view the doubled attention of the society – particularly the governments – is of vital importance in the prevention of the delinquency of the children because such a vision guarantees the prevention from the increase of delinquency in long term. Delinquent child has not been defined in the international documents and instead of it the term juvenile criminal which refers to the child or adolescent who has committed a crime is used [1]. On the other hand, the special court for children is devoted to the crimes committed by the children and has different procedures. What has been adopted in the Criminal Procedure Law endorses this issue and requires the judge to open a special file for the child under the title of personality ID file in order to monitor the health, mental, social and family conditions of the child along with other factors with more precision. Finally, the results of the assessments handled by the relevant experts are delivered to the judge in the form of consulting theory. In this study which is focused on the assessment of the role of such variables addiction in the emergence of the criminal phenomenon of the child, contrary to the general studies and the written works as regards delinquency, we begin with a multiple view of the real personality of the children from the point of view of the psychology and sociology and then turn to explain the evaluated demographic variables and their relationship with the type of the crime they have committed. Then, the current study investigates the personality of the child using determinate and defined tools. Such variables as the child's addiction, parent's addiction, mental disorder conditions, residence place, etc. are studied and evaluated based on the type of the committed crime.

METHOD:

Samples

This study was conducted within 2 months in 2013 in the Youth Detention Center of Kerman. This center is home to 50 delinquent children whose sentence has been decisively issued by the court (other than the ones who have not been decided yet). The sampling was done using simple classified random sampling method and based on the inclusion criterion of residence in Kerman. The crimes were first classified under 5 major subcategories of violent crimes, nonviolent crimes, drug crimes, and sexual crimes by the computer center and among them, 23 children were selected in view of the above mentioned conditions and were put under their relevant subcategory.

Violent crimes include homicide, murder accomplice, dispute, destruction of the properties and animals of others.

Nonviolent crimes include robbery.

Durg related crimes include drug possession and addiction.

Sexual crimes include sodomy, fornication and rape.

Of course due to the close relationship of the addiction and robbery, many of the people in the nonviolent crimes had a history of conviction due to addiction and the other way round.



It is noteworthy that before the inclusion of the children into the project, the subject and goal of the study and the confidentiality of the data were explained to them and an oral consent was received from them for participation in the study.

Research Tool:

The tool used in this research is the clinical version of the structured interview based on the fourth edition of DAMIV for diagnosis of Axis I and II disorders which was handled by 2 third year students of residency.

DSM is a multi-axis system in the sense that the man who is suffering from a mental disorder can be assessed from five different points of view. The axis I and II are two representatives of the clinical marks which are described more in this study. In addition to the aforementioned tool YSR the behavior list for the children aged 11-18 was used. This scale was created by Eisenbach (1991) and was standardized by Habibi et al. (2009, 2008), Minaei (2005) and Kakabarai et al. (2008). YSR is a self-report scale for the youth aged 11-18. This scale includes two parts of merits and symptoms. Symptoms scale includes seclusion/ depression, body-related problems, depression/ distress, social problems, thinking problems, attention problems, delinquent behaviors, violent behavior and also the scale of other behavioral problems which includes inconsistent problems like behaving like the other sex, refusing to eat, fear of school, nail biting, nightmare, overeating, overweight and the like [Habibi Asgarabad et al., (2008), A study of the psychometric features of YSR, Journal of Psychological Sciences, vol. 7, no. 28, pp. 410-432].

Statistical Methods:

For statistical analysis of the data, SPSS and MINITAB were used.

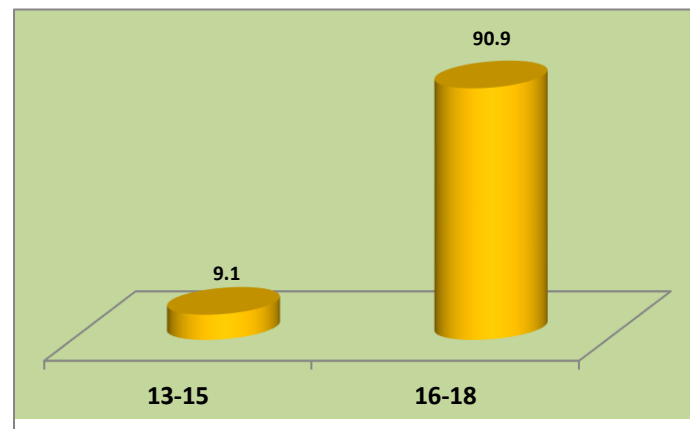
For calculation of the prevalence of the disorders in the whole prisoners, the raw value of the prevalence was assessed based on the percentage of every subcategory.

For comparison of the background variables and frequency of the disorders among various subcategories of the type of the crime, Chi-square test was used.

FINDINGS:

The charts of distribution of frequency of independent and dependent background variables related to the children at the Youth Detention Center

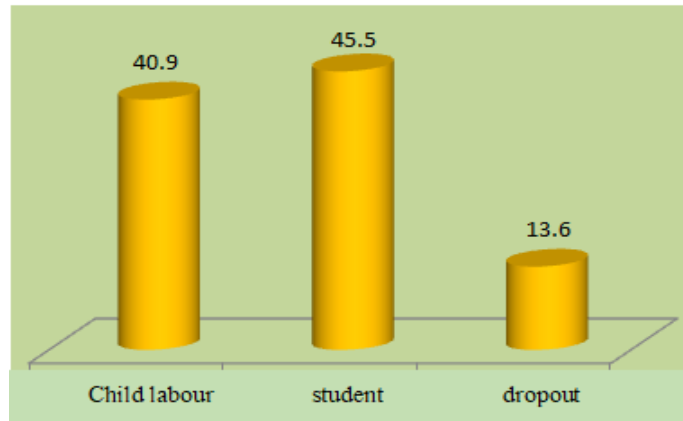
1- The chart of age range of the children at the Youth Detention Center



This chart shows the mean age of the delinquent children at Youth Detention Center. Accordingly, 90.9 % of the children are at the age range of 16-18 years old and only 9.1 % are 13-15 years old.

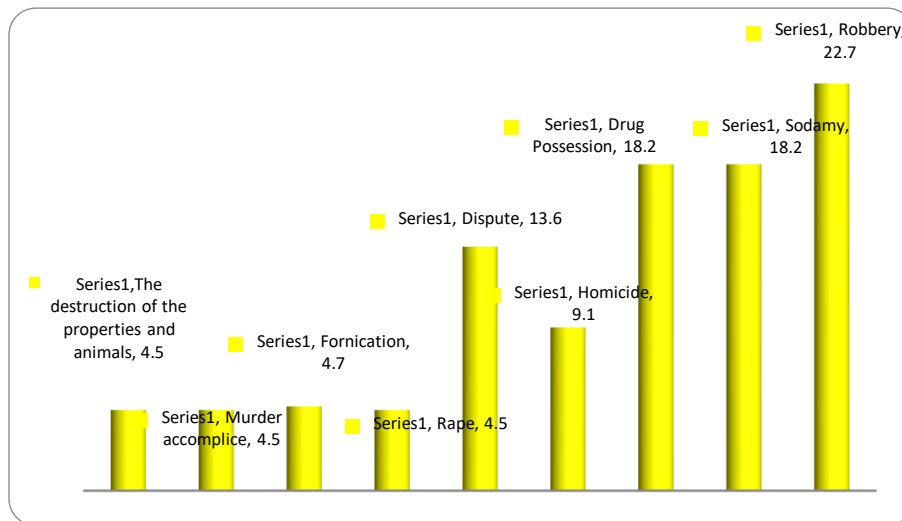
While the majority of the children included in the project (90.9 %) have an age higher than the puberty age and given the crime that they have committed most of which are violent, then this age requires specific educational and reforming plans.

2- The chart of the job condition of the children at the Youth Detention Center



This chart shows that the children kept in the Youth Detention Center at the time of committing the crime did not enjoy a suitable educational status and 40.9 % of them has ceased to pursue their education due to working and the rest have been forced to stop their education after being sent to the Youth Detention Center as there was no longer the possibility for pursuing the education.

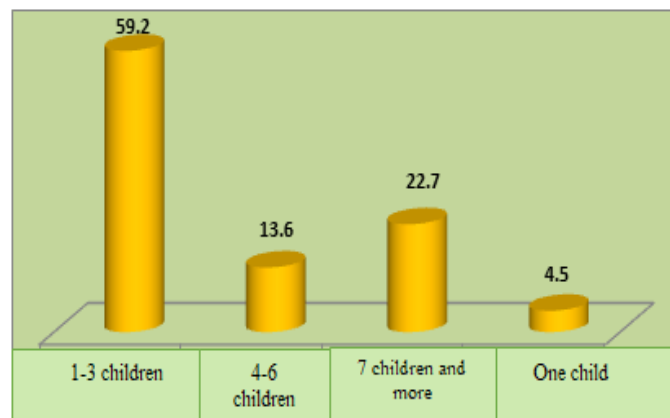
3- The chart of types of crimes at the Youth Detention Center



This chart shows the frequency of the crimes of the delinquent children at the Youth Detention Center. Robbery with 22.7 % holds the first rank of the committed crimes and then the order is as the following: the crimes of drug and sodomy 18.2 % and 13.6 %, fight 9.1 %, fornication 4.7 %, rape, murder accomplice, destruction of the properties and animals of other people with 4.5 %.

The number 44.7 % for robbery in these children expresses some points:

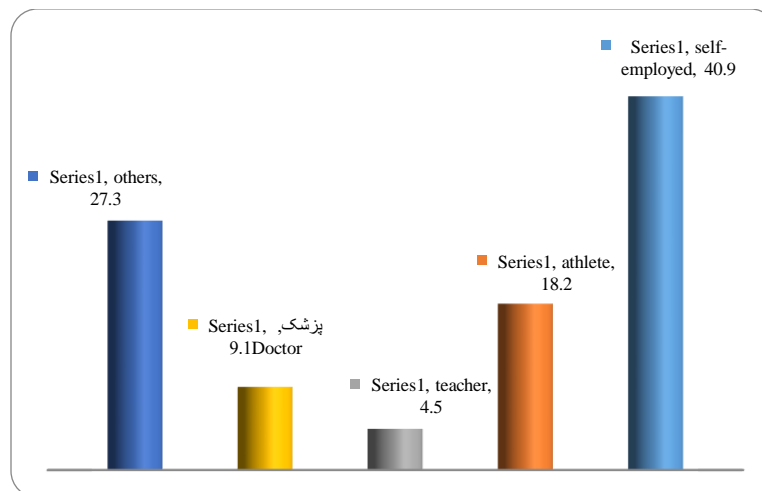
4- The chart of the number of family members of the children at the Youth Detention Center



The chart of the frequency of the population of the family of the children at Youth Detention Center shows that these delinquent children live mostly in the families of 1-3 children (59.2 %) and the second rank is for the families of 7 and more members.

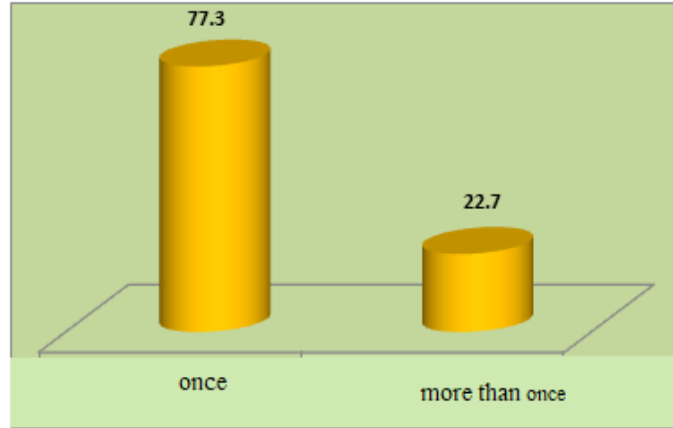
The number 59.2 % for the families of 1-3 children calls for more reflection. It is needless to state that the family has clearly failed to give the required knowledge to the child.

5- The chart of the favorite job of the children at Youth Detention Center



40.9% of these children have said that they like to be self-employed; while, 27.3% prefer other careers, 18.2 % athlete, 9.1 % doctor and 4.5 % teacher.

6- The chart of frequency percentage of the record of presence of the children at the Youth Detention Center

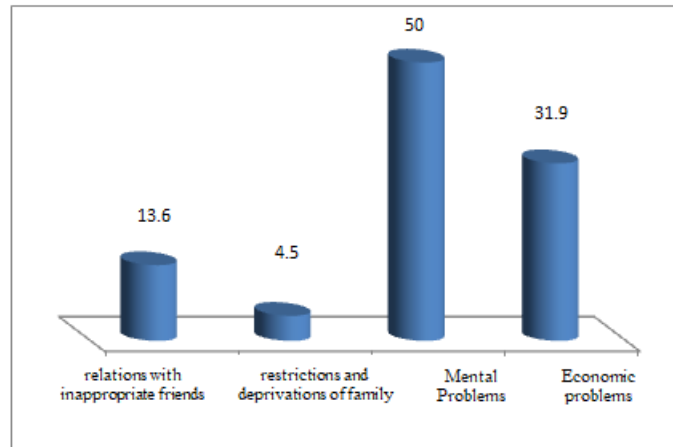


More than one time, one time

This figure shows the record of the presence of the delinquent children at the Youth Detention Center. 77.3% of these children are introduced to the center for the first time and 22.7 % of them have the experience of more than one time of the presence at the center.

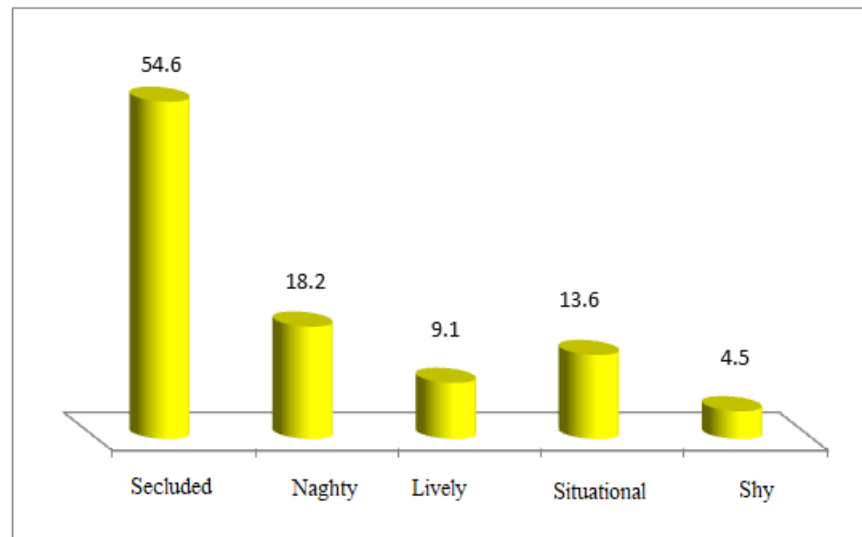
7- The chart of the frequency percentage of the guilty person in crime committing from the point of view of the child

8- The chart of frequency percentage of the cause of crime from psychological and social points of view



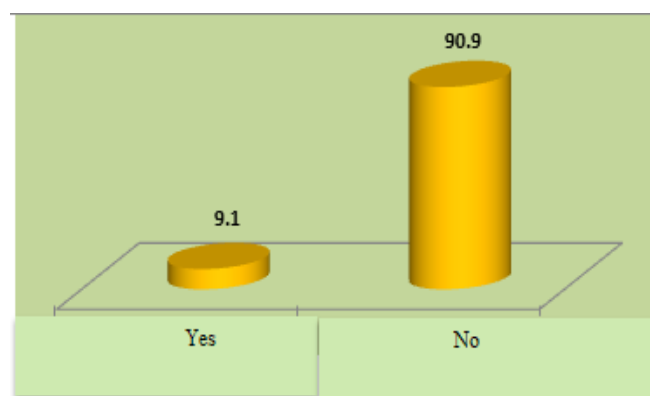
First rank is for mental problems with 50% frequency while the second rank is for economic problems with 31.9% and 13.6% for inappropriate friend and finally the restrictions and deprivations set by family with 4.5% holds the fourth rank.

9- The chart of frequency percentage of the quality of the child's personality



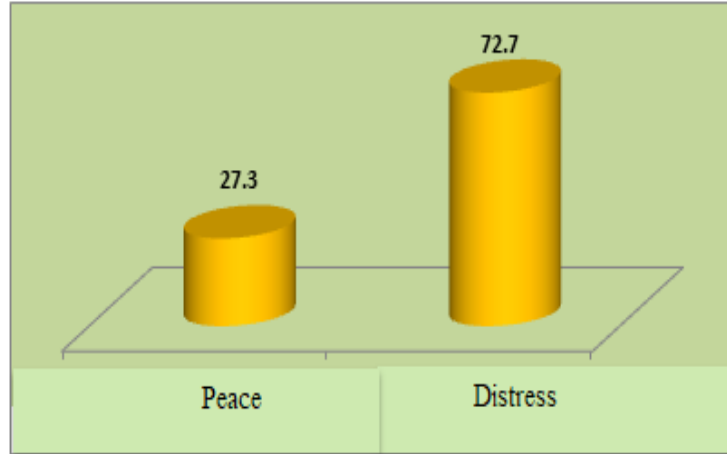
18.2% of the participants are naughty, 13.6% are situational, 4.5% shy, and 9.1 % lively. It is worrisome that 54.6% of these children have secluded personality and this is a sign of depression and a serious behavioral disorder.

10- The chart of the frequency percentage of the child's interest in his friends after being released from the Youth Detention Center



The statistics of this chart shows that 90.9% of these children are not interested in resuming their relations with their friends.

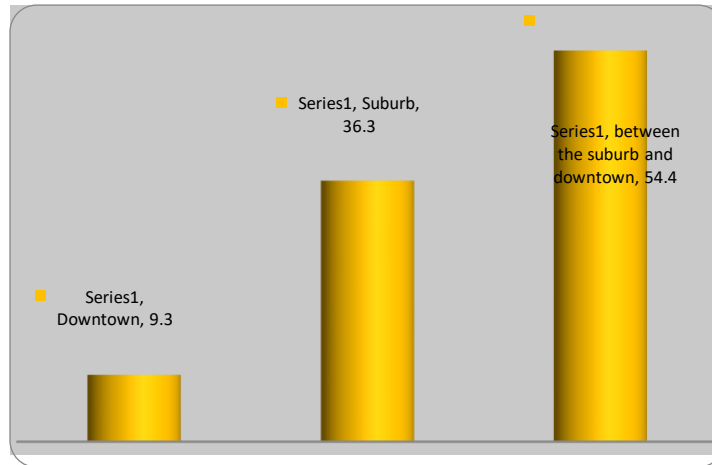
11- The chart of the frequency percentage of mental feeling of the child of the environment of the Youth Detention Center



This figure shows that 72.7% of the children at the Youth Detention Center have been suffering from distress and only 27.3% had a sense of peace. Of course, such a distress is natural to some extent.

Fear of having an indeterminate future is the source of such distress as many of these children wait for their sentence to be issued by the court. 27.3 % are those who have the experience of presence at the center.

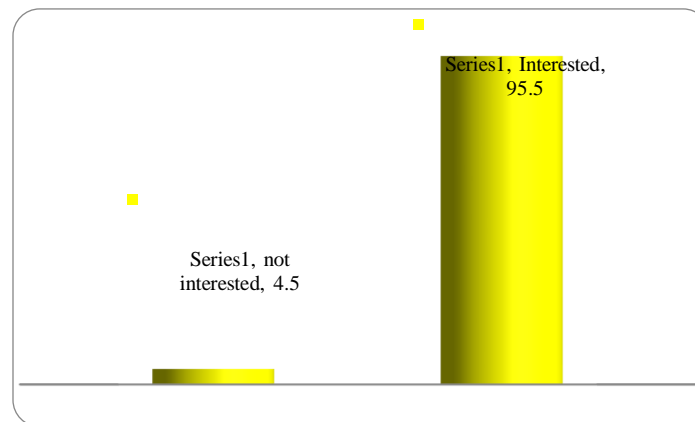
12- The chart of the frequency percentage of the residence place of the children at the Youth Detention Center



The conditions of the residence place of the delinquent child at the time of committing crime which is itself repetition of a tangible statistics in the research of the adult delinquents (including the women and men).

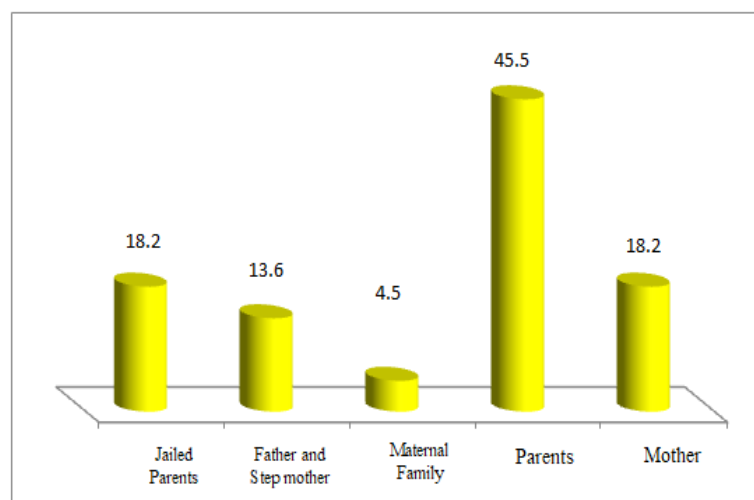
54.4% of these children have lived somewhere between the suburb and downtown and this shows that this region of the city is crime generating and this is a warning.

13- The chart of the frequency percentage of the amount of the interest of the child in cooperation with the social workers



Almost 100 % of the participants have expressed their interest in cooperation with the social worker. This shows firstly the close relations of the social workers at the Youth Detention Center with these children and secondly the fact that this sense of confidence and trust has continued to last and build a bridge between the two parties.

14- The chart of the frequency percentage of the condition of guardianship of the child

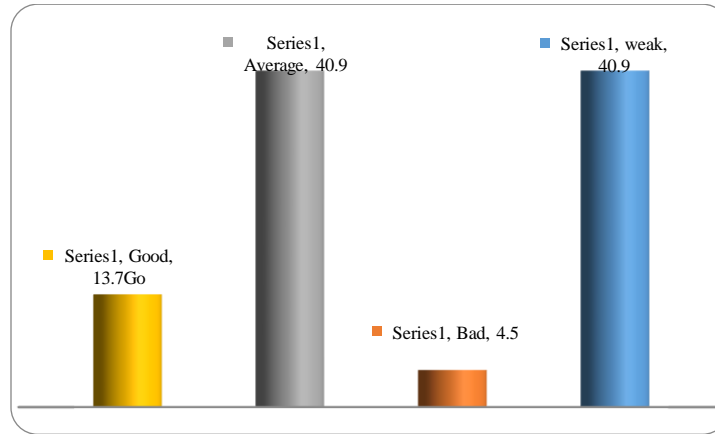


45.5 % of the children have said that they were living with their parents. 18.2 % lived with their single mother and their father was either in the jail or had passed away. 13.6 % lived with their father and stepmother and only 4.5 % of them lived without the presence of their parents (jailed) with the family of their mother. The high statistics of the presence of the parents at the time of committing the crime has been similar to the same scale in the adult female and male criminals and among the single people the highest statistics is for those who were living with their parents and this issue should be reflected upon and questioned that why those children who are deprived from the presence of their parents have committed more



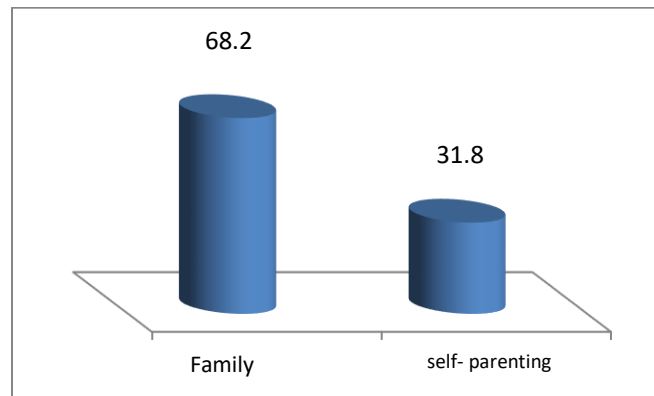
crimes and which conditions prevailed the families that their children have been led to this direction. What has been wrong with the parents and what is the source of negligence?

15- The chart of the frequency percentage of the economic conditions of the child's family



This chart shows the economic conditions of the family of the child before his arrest. Accordingly, 40.9 % of them have had average and weak economic conditions. The high statistics of the average and weak economic conditions is one of the reasons of forcing these children to work and earn money and also committing some of the crimes like robbery and drug possession.

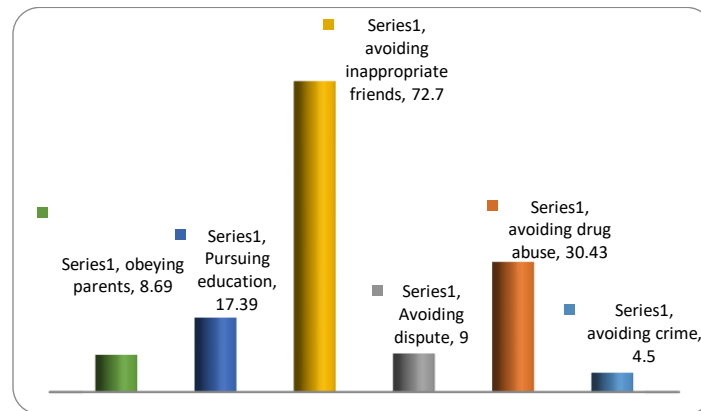
16- The chart of frequency percentage of the condition of provision of the needs of the life of the child before apprehension



68.2 % of these children have expressed that their life is financially supported by their parents but 31.8 % of the children are working and supporting their own life and this is really disquieting.

Self-parenting means that the child is forced to afford his own needs either via working or through such crimes as robbery and cooperation with drug dealing bands.

17- The chart of frequency percentage of the prescription of the child for living living with his peers

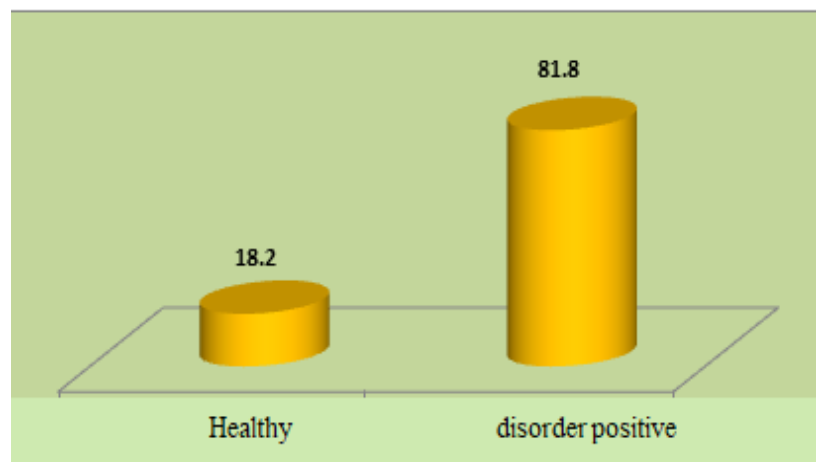


This chart represents the advice of the children of the target population for their peers outside the Youth Detention Center.

72.7 % of these children have advised their peers to avoid inappropriate friends, 30.43 % advised their peers to avoid the drug abuse, 17.39 % have advised their peers to pursue their education, 8.69 % have advised their peers to obey the parents, 9% have advised the peers to avoid dispute and 4.5 % have advised to avoid the crime.



18- The chart of frequency percentage of the mental health conditions of the children at Youth Detention Center

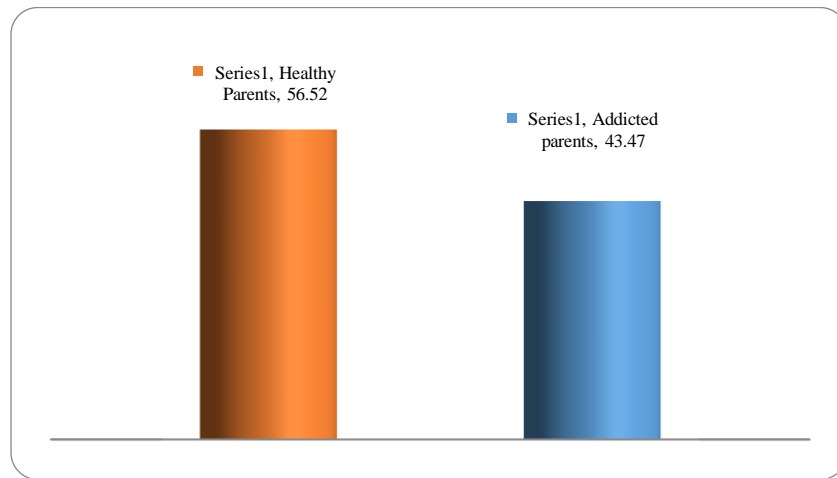


81.8% of the children have mental disorders and this is disquieting and shows the negative effect of the life and family environment during childhood on their mind and personality. The crimes committed by these children indicate the personality and behavioral abnormality and the existence of the mental disorder in them.

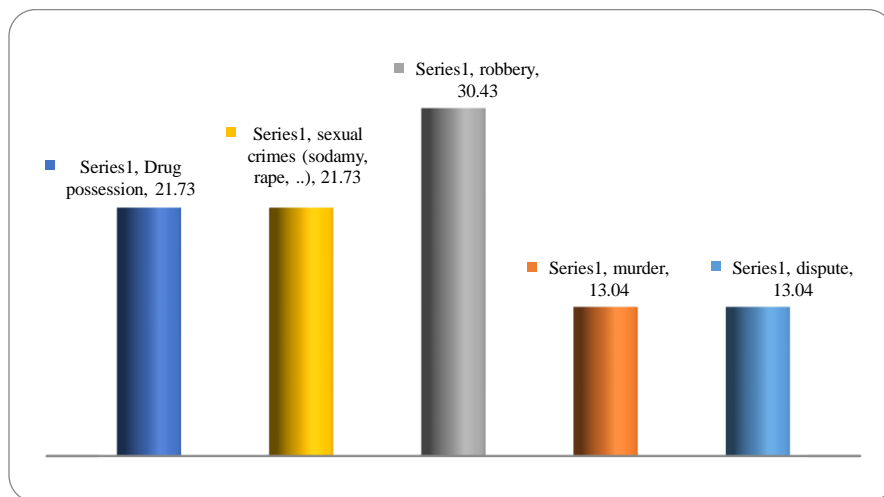
19- The chart of frequency percentage of various types of mental disorders in the children suffering from mental disorders at the Youth Detention Center

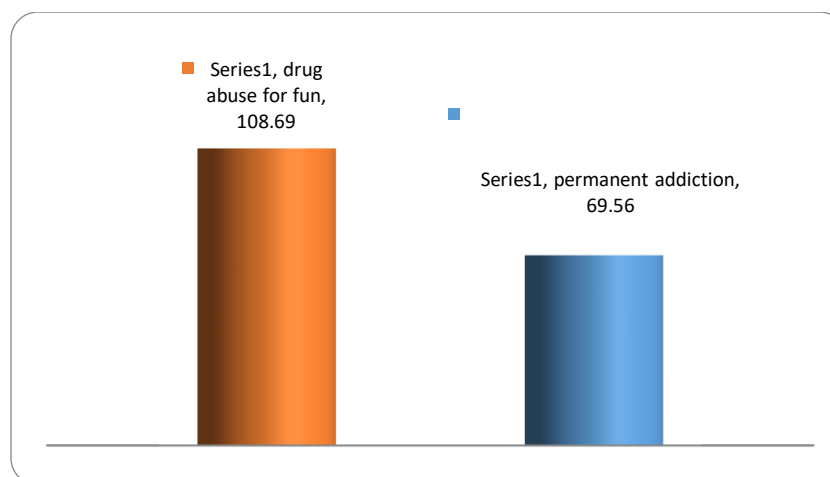
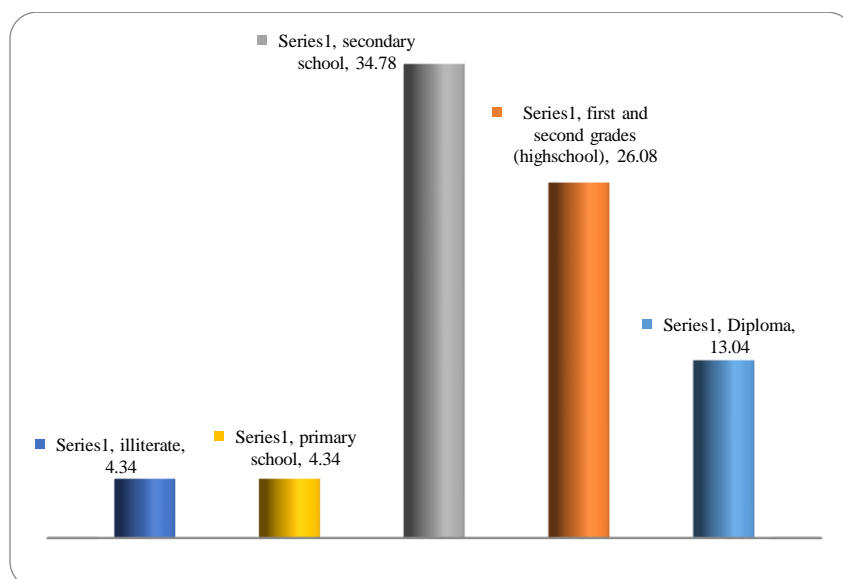
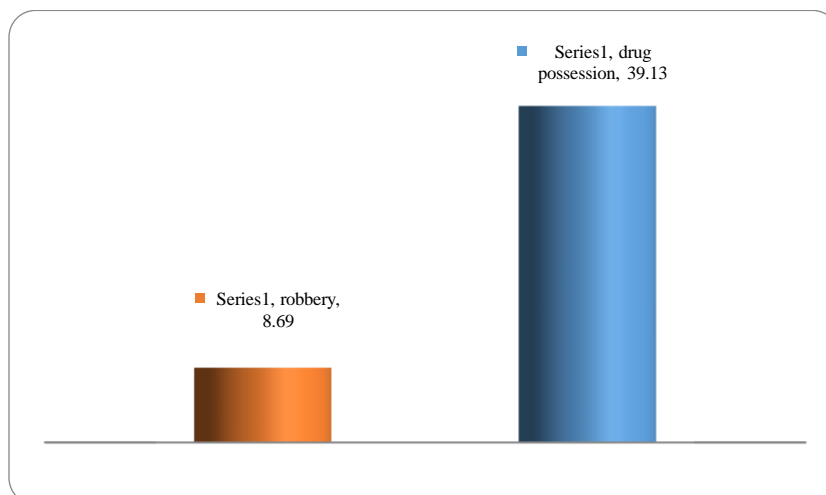
These statistics show the frequency percentage of different types of mental disorders in the children of the target population at the time of crime committing. 36.4 % of them suffer from bipolar personality, 31.8 % suffer from depression, 31.8 % suffer from behavioral disorder, 13.6 % suffer from borderline disorder, and 18.1 % suffer from antisocial character disorder. Through considering the crimes committed by these children, we found out that there is a significant relationship between the type of committed crime and the mental disorders in the children.

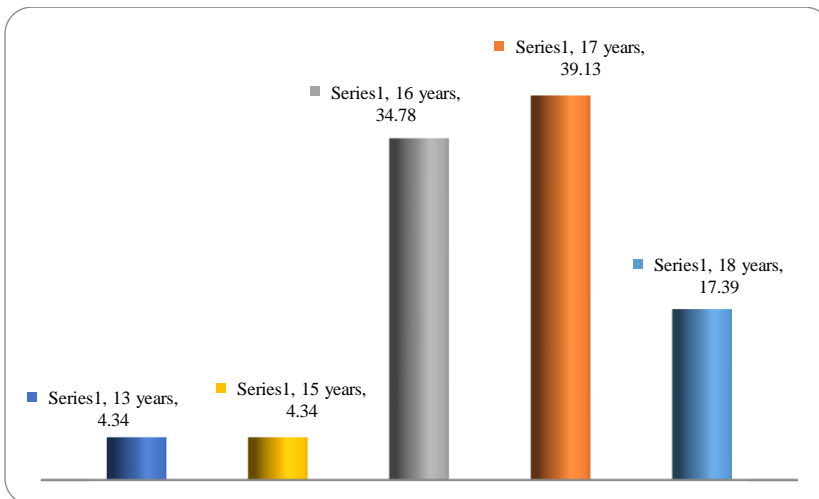
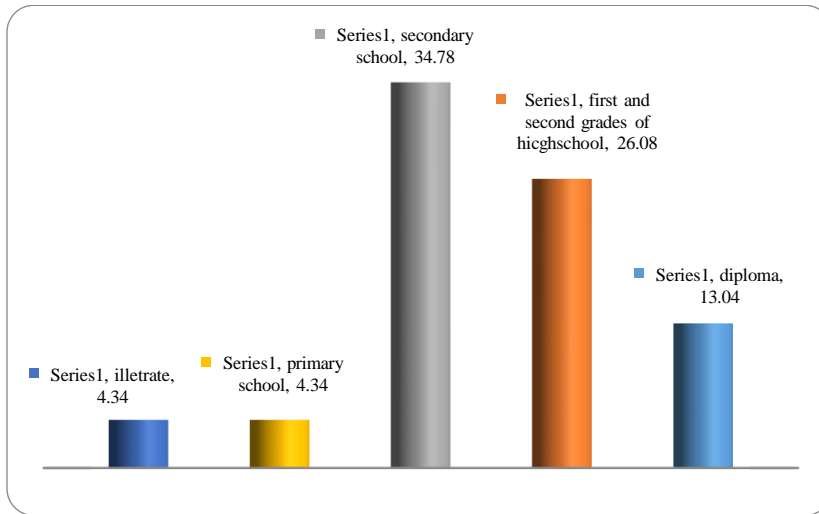
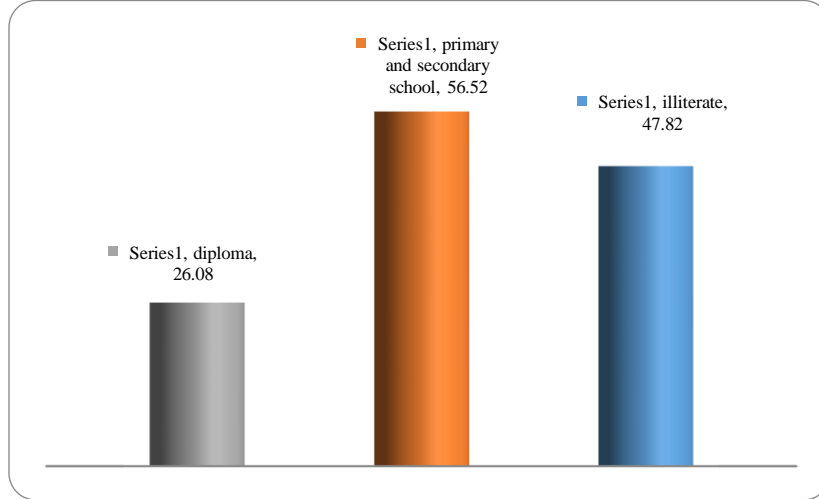
The chart of the frequency percentage of the variable of addiction in family

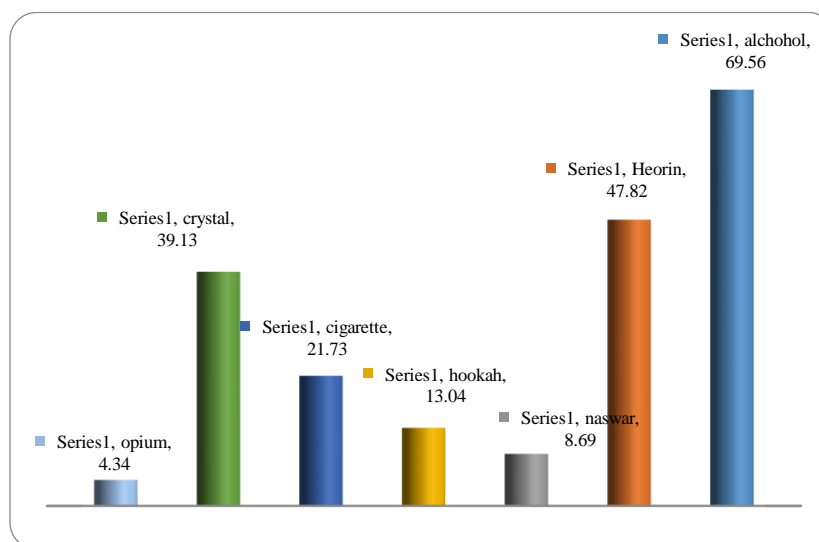


The chart of frequency percentage









DISCUSSION:

Addicted people are emotionally immature, hostile, distressed and have irritating feelings. Moreover, these are distressed individuals who feel insufficient and lonely. It is through these reactions that one can diagnose “neurosis” and “neuroticism” inclinations in them.

Crime commitment by the addicted people is due to the weakness of the human relations in them. This is why their general sense of security and social importance is endangered because most of the addicts are forced to embark upon inappropriate paths like theft, rape and murder. The results of the studies show that all age groups are not equally exposed to addiction rather the more one gets older, the more the grounds for addiction decline.¹

There is no doubt that some of the delinquencies are interrelated with economic conditions, e.g. prostitution, begging and some kinds of robbery, mental disorders and alcoholism. For example, in Italy poor families constitute 60 percent of the population and their crime rate is 85 to 90 percent.

Ricardo has alluded to the reducing role of poverty. Alfred Marshal in his work entitled *Economic Theories of Capitalism* writes: "it should be argued that in poor environment particularly in the populated areas economic poverty leads to the destruction of human potencies". Crime, prostitution, corruption and more vices are indeed rooted in poverty. Dutch William Bonger based on his studies has reached the conclusion that criminal mindset in juveniles is originated from their economic conditions and class conflicts.

Alcohol abuse by the children and adolescents eliminates the retentive mechanisms and the child or adolescent commits antisocial actions under its influence. Continuation of alcohol abuse leads to the retardation in the abuser and causes antisocial, immoral and delinquent behaviors (Ahadi and Mohseni, 2008).

Similar results have been reached in the study conducted by Parivar et al. in Kerman entitled “The reasons of delinquency age reduction among children”, 27.3 % of these children are said to have at least one addicted parent. 50 % of these children have lived in villa houses and 31.8% in rented villa. Most of these children have degrees of secondary school at most. Among

¹ Social Pathology, Sutudeh, Hedayatollah, Avaye Noor Press, Tehran, 2004, pp. 193, 194, 196.



the crimes, drug possession is in the first rank and then robbery and addiction occupy the second rank [Parivar, The reasons of delinquency age reduction in Kerman, 13].

In Iranian law, contrary to the law of those countries where the trade of alcoholic drinks is free, no regulations have been adopted for supporting the adolescents. The legislator would have thought that mere prohibition of it for the general public and its criminalization is enough. However, for the reason of considering an action as a crime cannot guarantee people's avoidance of it. For this reason and given the special condition and vulnerability of the adolescents, we need to adopt supportive regulations and suitable criminal policy for Iranian juveniles.

According to the statistics, alcoholic drinks have had the highest rate of crimes committed by the under 18 children who have been brought to the Child Judicial Complex of Tehran in 2001.

Robbery: Robbery is one of the more prevalent crimes committed by the juveniles. Although robbery is of lesser rate as compared to alcoholic drinks and drug abuse, according to the statistics and numbers, the most popular crime among the adolescents is various forms of robbery, store theft, pickpocketing, and purse theft. The theft of transportation vehicles like bicycle, motor and car which are appealing for the adolescents is popular too. According to the statistics related to the crimes committed by the children under 18 years old who have been introduced to the child judicial complex in 1999 and 2001, robbery and its various types are the most popular crimes committed by the adolescents (Shamloun, Bagher, children criminal justice, 2008, 114-115).

Intentional assault is very popular among children and adolescents. This type of crimes is seen more in the 16-20 year old adolescents because in these ages the juvenile are undergoing through serious crises due to their puberty and we know that most of the male adolescents are violent in this age and easily react and enter into quarrel and fight with others.

Of course, the effective causes involved in this crime can be mental diseases or insult and mockery and also revenge.

It needs to be mentioned that aggression and violence in most cases lead to assault and intense assault among children and adolescents.

B- Destruction of Personal Properties and Financial Damage

This crime is one of the the crimes committed by the male adolescents in urban areas and villagers rarely commit it. In various ages and in every social class, adolescents encourage each other to do dangerous actions for fun that leads to destruction of public properties like destroying the seats of cinema and different public halls and public vehicles, breaking the lamps of public crossings, destroying traffic signs and historical monuments. These are popular actions that are done by adolescents in international level. Every year a heavy damage is imposed to the individuals and the governments. In the US in Chicage every year \$400000 is spent for repairing the destructions done to public places by children and adolescents. Every year more than 22000 glasses and doors are broken in the US. Repairing the damage done to parks in New York costs \$222.400 every year.

The reasons of these crimes despite many studies that have been conducted are not clear but addiction to drug and alcohol intensify these crimes. Generally speaking, education and promotion of the level of culture in every society can be effective in prevention of the crimes against the properties.



Among the reasons of addiction, one can refer to physical causes (inheritance, gene, race, gender, age, physical status in view of the use of pain killers), mental causes (mental disorders, sudden emotions, mental pressure resulted from urban life, sense of loneliness, lack of affection, depression), social causes (family environment conditions, aggression, fraud, lack of integrity in family, lack of parent, negligence, lack of emotion, lack of recreational facility, addicted parents, being in touch with the addicted people and inappropriate people, urban immigrations, low level of education, prostitution and corruption, access to narcotics and even sometimes excessive care due to absence of father, economic causes (poverty, unemployment), geographic environment (living in the cities near the borders through which drugs are trafficked), and political environment (plundering national resources of the colonized countries).

Vulnerability of the youth to narcotics in recent years has turned to a big problem. Drug abuse and its trade particularly for the young boys and girls are clearly tangible. Violence, particularly street violence, are mostly originated from drug abuse and its illegal trade.

Drug abuse leads to the increase of delinquency. On the other hand, all activities that produce these drugs for the consumers are described as drug trafficking and lead to the increase of big crimes (Abachi, Maryam, Criminal Law of Children, Majd: 2008: 91, 92, 93, 94, 96).

Addicted people are emotionally immature, hostile, distressed and have irritating feelings. Moreover, these are distressed individuals who feel insufficient and lonely. It is through these reactions that one can diagnose “neurosis” and “neuroticism” inclinations in them

The crimes committed by the addicted people are due to the weakness of the human relations in them. This is why their general sense of security and social importance is endangered because most of the addicts are forced to embark upon inappropriate paths like theft, rape and murder. The results of the studies show that all age groups are not equally exposed to addiction rather the more one gets older, the more the grounds for addiction decline¹.

What Should be Done!

As mentioned earlier, most of the prisoners are addicted and it is interesting to note that most of the thieves are addicted too. On the other hand, statistics show that unemployment has also a direct relationship with robbery insofar as Yazd Province where unemployment rate is lower than other provinces has lesser statistics of theft. Addicted person must be considered a patient and not a criminal and for his medication and returning him to his family and society, we must come up with suitable solutions.

- 1- Informing the children, enriching the free time of the youth, paying attention to the logical desires of the young generation, establishing emotional bonds in family and encouraging the children to do their religious obligations
- 2- We need to know that as long as the narcotics are used, these drugs are imported via different ways into the country. Then, along with effective actions for confronting the drug traffickers in borders, the research centers must be supported in order to conduct substantial research on the reasons of the youth interest in drug abuse.
- 3- The main way of confronting with narcotics is eradicating addiction and the motivations that lead the youth towards it. When a society consciously decides to quit drugs and confront with the distribution and sale networks, the narcotics market will lose its customers and addiction will be eradicated from the society.



- 4- Public education and prevention from addiction must turn to a general culture in the society and prior to everything, the needs of the youth who constitute the majority of the addicts in the country, the roots and causes must be identified.
- 5- The most effective and practical social institution for keeping the youth away from the addiction is the family. The government must adopt effective measures for providing the required knowledge for the families.

(Social Pathology, Sutudeh, Hedayatollah, Avaye Noor Press, Tehran).

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