An Investigation into the Causes of Crime Commitment by Imprisoned Women in Zanjan Province in 2009
(Social Pathology of Imprisoned Women)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to identify factors that influence crime commitment in imprisoned women, on the one hand, and their empowerment to avoid recommitting a crime and returning to prison, on the other hand. The main questions are: Firstly, what factors affect their commitment of crime? And Secondly, what factors are effective on the female prisoners' repetition of crime and return to prison? To find the answers to these questions, several research methods (qualitative and quantitative) were employed using questionnaires, deep interviews and educational classes to promote empowerment of women to return to life. Zanjan female prisoners formed our study population. Because the number of population in this study was low, the total population (33 persons per day, floatingly) were interviewed and attended the classes.

KEY WORDS: recidivism, individual and personality factors, economic factors, social and cultural factors, family factors, women's prison, the city of Zanjan.

RESULTS OF WORKSHOPS

Poor family relations are among the main causes of return to crime and crime environments. PCM workshops for strengthening religious beliefs were conducted. Solutions in order to prevent repetition of crime were presented.

Influential factors in crime commitment were: lack of good mood, lack of adherence to repent of sins, impatience and lack of forgiveness, lack of fear from God when doing sins, hopelessness to God, low trust in God and less remembrance of God in minds.

PCM workshops in the field of social adjustment, the most pivotal workshops, had three main purposes: 1. Prisoners awareness to the causes, effects and consequences of crimes 2. Change in the prisoners' attitude, from isolation, depression, hopelessness and deprivation towards hope, motivation, confidence and social and living skills for returning to life 3. Encouraging officials, families and intended resources to support prisoners, reduce their mistrust and create opportunities for them to live.

Results of workshops in the field of mental health also indicate that high depression, anxiety, low hope for the future and poor self-esteem are the most important factors contributing to the prisoners' poor mental health. In the field of mental health and it's indicators, promoting individual abilities of prisoners plays an important role in preventing their crimes. Questionnaires on above- mentioned variables was distributed among the population at two steps and according to "t" testing, post-test results had a growth of 95 % compared to pre-test results. It means that educational courses had been affective on the population, leading to reduction of the prisoners' personality disorders, consolidation of their relationship with their family members and promoting religiosity among them.

Statement of the Problem

Industrialization affected the institution of family through the growth of individualism, opening women's way to productive and social activities outside their houses, strengthening people's economic independence and accordingly decreasing their patience for each another, understanding, stabilizing, and increasing women's rights, legalizing the (almost global) right of divorce, urbanism, domestic violence, women's employment and its consequences, immigration from rural areas to urban areas, further social, economic and local activities, expansion of social contacts and relationships, reduction of men's influence in the family and many other similar factors. In fact, while managing to resolve many conflicts in the previous societies, industrial society caused to bring out new kinds of conflicts and tensions. On the whole, it may be said that the performance of the industrial society has been negative considering its effects on the preservation of family. This negativity has left its effects on the families in our society as well, because the investigation of the cases of those who have been imprisoned in the past or those who are now spending time in jails is

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indicative of the bitter reality that the majority of criminal and imprisoned women are either young or middle-aged and the trend in recent years has been towards even younger ages. Due to the society's social and cultural structure and the sensitive and basic role of mothers in families, women are labeled as criminals more frequently and more quickly than men and will face serious problems about their dignity and family. This issue will expose female prisoners to different psychological pressures such as stress and anxiety, depression and despair, isolation and family rejection, family disputes and problems, secondary marital problems, separation and divorce, emotional and educational problems of children, financial problems, poverty, helplessness and other emotional problems. All these problems prepare the grounds for the family to be broken up and to hurt other family members such as husband, parents and siblings and particularly her children. Such a family situation paves the grounds for future crimes by teenagers and children. On the other hand, due to their sense of loneliness and the need to relieve their stress, women are more exposed to be tracked by criminal groups, to return to recommitment of crimes or even repetition of the crimes more serious than before. The consequence of this situation will be an increase in the level of crimes as well as in the number of criminals as well as the calamities in human capitals of the society.

Dealing with the theoretical aspects of this subject will be even more necessary when the extent of delinquency in the community exceeds the tolerance level of that society and it is starting to be a matter of concern for the people. Proposing the concept of social disorganization and irregularity, Emile Durkheim and Robert Merton and pictured a world of social relations that was developed especially in 20th century. Once a society is undergoing rapid changes, most people feel some sort of confusion; the traditional rules and norms seem valueless to them and the new real values are yet to be stabilized. In such a society, two social structures are still available (the traditional structure and the new one). As a result, some would obey the traditional structure and some would follow the modern one; however, the majority of people are confused between these two social distances. They think according to the traditional structure, but act based on realities and new structures. Therefore, it is difficult for families to adopt themselves reciprocally to such a situation, while this adjustment is the requirement for having compatibility and to survive collective life (Sarookhani, 1993: 126).

As a result, due to this confusion over life's problems and issues as well as because of not observing social norms and thus committing crimes, some people are imprisoned. On the other hand, since prison is a special social environment formed by a group of delinquents, it affects the quality and quantity of prisoners' behavior and could also deviate the way they satisfy their needs and induce them to adopt particular approaches to achieve their goals.

Therefore, based on these norms, criminals are punished and those who conform are rewarded. A way to punish the criminals is to imprison them and so being imprisoned is linked to the goal to modify the behavior of the criminals – i.e., re-education of the criminals in order to change them into citizens obedient to the law. In fact, imprisonment is one of the ways to punish criminals and protecting citizens against them. It also helps to teach accustomed to order and conformity to people. However, the main principle of the prison system is "to improve" the individual in order to make them perform their proper roles in the society. A question that needs to be considered is whether prisons have really had such an effect on those who have spent a certain period of time in prison (Giddens, 1994:152).

In order for the prisoners to conform their behavior to social norms, prisons tend to widen the gap between prisoners and society. Prisoners need to adjust themselves to the wholly different world "outside" and the habits and attitudes that are learned in prisons are mainly opposite to what actually needs to be learned. For instance, prisoners might hold grudges against ordinary citizens; they might learn to accept violence as an ordinary issue; they might establish contacts with other criminals with past records and keep these contacts even after being released, thus acquiring the criminal skills about which they did not know anything before entering the prison. Therefore, recidivism -repeating the crimes by those who spent time in correctional institutes for criminals or in the prisons- is worryingly high. More than 60% of the people who are released after spending some time in prison are re-arrested within four years after their first crime. The actual quantity of re-commitment of crime is probably even higher, as some people who resume criminal behavior are probably never arrested (Giddens, 1994:152).

Theoretical Background of the Study:

-Major theoretical approaches to social deviations:

The explanation and analysis of all approaches is beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, while describing a number of these approaches, the sociological approach is eventually selected as the theoretical framework used for categorization and is explained in the following:

A. Psychological Approaches

Most psychologists justify deviation in terms of personality disorders. In other words, some kinds of personality show greater tendency for deviation in comparison to others. Sigmund Freud has divided the self into "Id", "ego" and "super-ego". Id shows the unconscious, inherent, propelling, and un-socialized part of self. Ego represents the conscious and rational part of self and it is known as the "goalkeeper" of personality.

Super-ego is a part of the self which attracts cultural values and acts as the conscience. Those who are adherent to this psychological school believe that disorderly behavior occurs once the uncontrollable and highly active "Id" appears less active than the superego. Meanwhile, the ego remains indifferent and plays no role in guiding the person's behavior (Koen, 1993:164).

-Theories of Freud about frustration, feeling of injustice, and aggressiveness:
Freud is one of the followers of the theory of frustration and aggressiveness theory and believes that human is born with a death instinct. Once this instinct is internalized, it will appear as the punishment and self-reprimanding and in extremist cases, it may lead to suicide. Once, this instinct is externalized, it is manifested in the form of enmity, violence, harassment, vandalism, destruction, and murder (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:162).
        Freud thinks that this aggressive force needs to be released by some means and if not released, the person will feel boredom, lethargy and restlessness.
This theory is very similar to "hydraulic theory" that states if the aggressive force is not gradually decreased, an explosion will be highly likely to happen. Freud insists that society is a vital necessity to control and overcome the anger instinct in human beings and helps people to avoid the destructive effects of this force by turning the anger instinct into a useful and desirable behavior. According to Freud and some other psychologists, anger and aggressiveness are the result and product of undesirable situations and conditions such as depression, bankruptcy, pain, grief, despair and the like. However, among all painful and undesirable situations, helplessness, feelings of having unfair treatment and frustration are the main factors for aggressive behavior. On the other hand, observation of other people's aggressive behavior will lead to learning this violent behavior and will make other people as an external stimulus to act aggressively as well (ibid).

B. Social Psychological Approaches:

In contrast, some scholars have discussed the interaction between individuals and society in the behavior process. Such an approach is closer to social psychology as it considers both individual and social factors in mutual interactions between behavioral courses. This approach, which is mainly formed in the social psychology school of "George Herbert Mead" as well as the Chicago Sociological School, believes in the mutual process and interaction between the behavior factor and situation of behavior in human beings' actions, and insists that while human being constitute the society and social realities, he is also under the influence of his own productions. As Yan Taylor said: "there is a dialectic relationship between human beings and the society that should be considered at all stages of misbehavior." (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:46).

C. Sociological Theories and Approaches

1. Feminist Theories
Feminists believe that two important issues should be considered in order to comprehend the discussions around criminal acts carried out by women:
1. Why only a few numbers of women commit crimes?
2. Why do these women commit crimes? (Abbot, Wallace, 2001:218).

a. Feminist Theories of Crime:

Feminists believe that theoretical models must be changed so to clarify the role of gender in explaining the reason behind the statutory offence committed by some women; women's destiny is tied with gender and class relations (women experience life on the basis of gender and class-based relations). In addition, feminists are all of the conviction that patriarchal relations, femininity ideologies, and the role assigned to women in families are considered as important factors. Although any individual must be free in choosing and orienting their own destiny, thoughts and acts, the necessary grounds of this latitude are not provided for women in the current economic, ideological and political context. The necessity to empirically study criminal women in order to foster awareness about the conditions under which they commit statutory offenses should be analyzed alongside the way the judicial system deals with them. Eventually, considering the double-sided control exerted on women by the social class and gender system might explain the reason why the majority of women obey the law, anyway a theory is also needed to proposed for explaining why some women break the law (ibid: 219).
Studies into the situation of the women who have been convicted to penal offences and have been imprisoned, confirm the major criticisms made by feminists against traditional criminology. These studies have identified four main features for female criminals:

1. The motivation of the women who have committed financial crimes is economic factors, i.e. they steal because they need or like the item they are stealing.

2. Women commit all different types of crimes.

3. The feeling of pressure and fear of being labeled as "delinquent" is absolutely serious for women.

4. Women are considered twice as perverted; once they are breaking the social rules and the other for being "unfeminine" and "unnatural" as they have committed crimes against all the codes for feminine behavior (Abbot &Wallace, 2001: 220).

B. Theories of Critical (Marxist) Criminology:

Critical criminology attempts to find the roots of social inequalities and power relationships in capitalistic societies. This theory investigates the social class aspect of the crime and focuses on the cases in which penal codes are selectively applied against the weak. However, women are not usually considered in such cases as in capitalistic societies, women rarely commit crimes despite being in a relative position of weakness. Therefore, although women are being explored and oppressed by men and are in lower economic positions, they appear in crime-related statistics much fewer than men (Abbot & Wallace, 1380:223).

Leonard (1987) and Gregory (1986) have expressed their comment on the necessity of reconsidering Marxist theory to include the significant effect of gender along with social class. They both believe that we are in need for socialist feminist theory that could understand and explain the issues related to women and the crime. Such a theory would help us understand why women are usually not involved in crimes and what the structural factors are which affect the very particular model of crimes in which women take part. We need to realize the differences in the legitimate and illegitimate ways through which one could achieve the valuable goals of the society in the opinions of men and women and to understand how women are affected by the people around them in comparison to men. We also need to take into account the effects of distribution of wealth and power on women as well as their impacts on crime in capitalistic societies. We must consider the reason why women are labeled as criminals less than men, though they are usually among the relatively weak classes of the society, while paying attention to the role of women in class-based societies, to the differences in oppression against the women and the men who belong to working class, and the way women are controlled and treated in the legal system and in society in general (ibid, 224).

2. Theory of Women Empowerment

Empowerment is a dynamic process through which women try to revolutionize the structures that keep them in margins (Ugbomeh, 2001:293). In other words, empowerment means that people should achieve a level of personal development that allows them to choose based on their wills (Shaditalab, 2002: 54).

"Women empowerment constitutes that women can overcome their baseless shame and fill their speech and behavior with self-confidence and assurance, they are able to properly assess and understand themselves, they are aware of their internal talents and limitations, they would have the power to encounter and remove the difficulties, they can gain an exact understanding of their objectives and the capability to accomplish them, they have the ability and capability to reach their objectives and finally they can achieve their goals through enhancing their capabilities" (Farrokhi, 1997:76).

Empowerment refers to preparing and assuming more command over the resources and gaining profits for women. Empowerment is a process during which people do certain activities in order to remove obstacles on the way of their progress and this will lead to a better command of their destiny. This term constitutes overcoming fundamental inequities. Empowering a woman means that she develops collective capability for performing certain tasks and such a capability will lead to elimination of discriminations between men and women and will be effective for fighting against sexual discrimination in the society (UN, 1993:14).

Empowerment is a process through which women develop awareness of their internal needs and wills, enhance their courage to achieve their goals, and expand the required capability for realization of their wishes" (Ketabi et al, 2003:30).

The theoretical framework of empowerment reiterates the process of revolutionizing women's situation and improving the level of their participation through accepting the cultural differences. In order to eliminate any ambiguity and misunderstanding, the theory of empowerment clearly emphasizes that empowerment does not intend to turn patriarchy into matriarchy, but it mainly seeks to achieve sexual equality in the process of development. This point of view analyzes the relationship and structure of power in families and society, and focuses on the significance of increasing women's power. Meanwhile, power is discussed not to give the superiority of one individual over another (men and women), but aims to enhance women's self-confidence and self-reliance. This theory uses the studies and the evidences that are indicative of inequality between men and women in the family and attempt to propose the issue of re-distribution of power in the family and society through empowerment of the women. The theory of empowerment, in

contrast to other theories (such as the theory of welfare) which merely focus on one of the women's roles, shows triple roles of women. It other words, in addition to the role of reproduction, it considers the presence and participation of women in family and society as well. In this theory, the right to choose in the life, being effective in the choices one make in family and society, participation in selecting the type and direction of changes, access to material and non-material resources as well as controlling the source of all indicators of women's capabilities and indeed it explains their participation in the structure of power (Bhasin, 1996:22).

"The proposers of the theory of empowerment" are of the conviction that development does not just refer to the increase of access to resources and welfare, but it depends on the process through which one could utilize these resources. Women should not just be regarded as a group that enjoys these resources, but they should enhance their capabilities in identifying and solving their problems by participating in the process of development. (Dayhim & Vahabi, 2001:65).

Sarah Longino, a feminist theorist, believes that 5 stages are needed to be passed through for empowering the women including welfare, access, awareness, participation and control (Ketabi et al, 2003:11).

Welfare: is a stage through which the issues related to women's material welfare are investigated in contrast to those of men, such as nutrition, preparation of foodstuffs and family income that will lead to inequality issues.

Access: at this stage of equality, identical access to resources in the family and society will result in women's empowerment.

Awareness: this stage includes how women can understand the concept of development process as to the extent of structural inequality. In other words, the increase in women's understanding and awareness of whether the existing problems about women are structural and if these problems are not related to personal shortcomings. This requires a particular attitude towards society that adopts a critical analysis towards the society in order to determine if the discriminations that were used to be regarded as natural or unchangeable realities could be changed. This stage consists of the identification of the gender roles which depend on the culture and are changeable; this should be to the extent that task division in terms of the gender would be desirable to both sides and does not mean the dominance of one gender over another (Moser, 1993:103).

Participation: is the fourth stage or criteria of empowerment theory. At this stage, equality in participation means women's participation in projects from which they would benefit. On the whole, increases in the presence of women in society are the potential factor contributing to their participation and increase their level of empowerment. Since women need empowerment in order to fight the weaknesses arising from the imposed gender-based roles, they have no choice but to use power and have social participation.

Control: is the last stage in the theory of empowerment. It means that the increase in women's participation to the degree of decision-making will propel them into the increasing development and will empower them in a way that this participation increases the control over factors of production and guarantees equal access to resources as well as fair distribution of profits. Equality in control constitutes balance of power between men and women in a way that neither has dominance over the other.

Three stages of access, awareness and participation are those which could directly be influenced by the media.

The objectives proposed in the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, are divided into three fundamental categories as follows:

1. Access to equality on the basis of equal participation of men and women and enabling the women to realize their potential talents.

2. Assurance about the increase in women's share of sustainable development through being involved in policies and policy-making processes as well as their participation in education, employment, income-earning activities, health, technology, sports, culture and humanitarian activities.

3. Assurance about the fact that women receive education as much as men so that they are given the basic needs and rights of human beings (Longino, 1993:18-32).

In order to achieve the objective of sustainable development in different countries and to decrease economic and social differences between different countries, UN proposed the objectives of the millennium development goals in 2001. These objectives have been divided into 8 categories and include 18 goals and 48 indices. These goals have taken into consideration the enhancement of life conditions and presentation of key solutions for global imbalances until 2015. In the goals defined by the UN, the third one is about increasing gender-based equalities and women empowerment (UN, 1993:4).

The different aspects of women empowerment are proposed at the three levels of family, society, and wider domains; development in these aspects paves the grounds for women empowerment. These aspects are illustrated in Figure 1 in an integrated model:

Aspects	Household	Community	Broader Arenas
Economic	Women's control over income; relative share in family support, access and control of family resources	presence of women in high earning jobs; reflection of women's economic interests in macro-economy policies, federal and governmental budgets	Women's access to employment; ownership of land and property; access to credits; representation in local trade societies; access to the market
Social and Cultural	Freedom of women's movement; shortage of discrimination against girls; commitment about girls' education	Women's literacy and their access to a wide range of education; positive media image about role and participation of women	Women's attitude toward the access to social context; access to modern conveyance systems; participation in ultra-family and social groups; changes in patriarchal concepts (such as preference over having sons); symbolic representation of women in legends and events
Family and Personal	Participation in family decision-making; control over sexual relations; capability of making decisions about having children; use of contraceptive tools; access to abortion; control over choosing the spouse and time of marriage; freedom from domestic violence	National and geographical changes at the time of marriage; right of divorce and the existence of legal, religious, and political support for such changes; access to contraceptive instruments; possibility of safe abortion; pregnancy health services	Changes in marital and relationship system that are indicative of high value and great independence of women (delays in marriage, personal choice of spouse, decrease of marriage portion and acceptance of divorce right for women); local fight against domestic violence
Legal	Understanding legal rights; family support for excercising the rights	The existence of a legislation supporting the women's rights; access to legal sources and authorities; legal support; use of judicial system for correction of laws pertinent to violence against women	Social mobilization for establishment of rights; fight for legal awareness; successful local execution of legal rights
Political	Understanding political systems and instruments for accessing such a system; family support for political activities; having the right of vote	Representation of women in government's national and regional body; representation of women's interests in beneficial parties and groups	Placing women in local political systems; support for being candidates or representatives, representation in the local body of the government
Psychological	Self-esteem: self-effectiveness and psychological welfare	Public knowledge about injustice, potential for mobilization	Women's sense of merit, the systematic acceptance of women's merits

Presidential Office for Women's Affairs and UN children's fund (1993)

It could be seen that in the social and cultural aspects and in the social domain, participation in the groups outside families and in social networks, change of patriarchal norms and the like are among the omen for empowerment factors.

3. Structural-Functional Factors in the Sociological Domain

These factors include the total, multi-structural, broad and inclusive factors, which deal with all aspects of life. According to sociologists, these factors could be traumatic might work into the depth of the society. Therefore, they are located in the realm of depth sociology and make a cluster or a broad range of social phenomenon sick. Hence, they are connected with all damage grounds (ibid).

Some of these structural factors are as follows: according to Pitirim Sorokin, when humanity sacrifices all values for the sake of materialism and instrumentalism a society will be shaped that should be called a sensual society (ibid).

- Social Anomies from the perspective of Emile Durkheim:

In Durkheim's definition, anomie refers to some sort of derangement, confusion, crisis, mismatch, and abnormality in the collective system. He uses the term anomie as lack of some sort of agreement about social goals and collective expectations and what the society considers rules and patterns of behavior for its members. He believes that human beings' behavior and spirit is governed and controlled by brain or collective mind. A person's action is based on a reality called norm. The "norms" refer to the system of reward and punishment which guarantees the application of the behavioral principles and rules of the society. This is due to the fact that social life is possible without the existence of a particular kind of order. In mutual relationships, human beings find it necessary to predict the behavior of the person with whom they interact so that they regulate their reactions accordingly. Breaking such rules and not following the norms are called "social anomies" by Durkheim (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004: 53-54).

-Theory of social disorganization from the perspective of Robert Merton:

In contrast to Durkheim, some structural sociologists such as Merton are of the conviction that the society itself establishes these contrasting needs by creating a mismatch between the goals it confirms and available approaches for accessing those goals. Therefore, it could be seen that it has a more limited meaning of anomie in comparison to Durkheim's view (Loneliness, 2004:432).

In order to investigate human abnormality and anomie, in a general typology Merton divides social behaviors into 5 categories as follows (Rafipoor, 1998:239):

1. resemblance   2. innovation   3. compliance and formality   4. isolatin   5. rebellion.

The first group is the normal group of the society and the other four groups are the abnormal ones. The first group refers to the societies that have managed to conform the cultural paths and goals. If a society fails to create such conformity, it will experience disorganization. In other words, all the four forms of abnormality or deviation will lead to social disorganization (ibid).

- Talcott Parson's ideas about abnormality:

In order for the society to survive, four subsystems are needed. Otherwise and if these four subsystems or the whole system are not available, the society will be destroyed. He believes that economic, political, social, and religious subsystems are in mutual conformity, integrity and interpenetration with each other and so people in different societies could be maintained next to one another and will be saved from destruction, collapse and abnormalities (Riterz, 1998, pp.131-138).

Elizabeth Hurlock and the theory of family dispute and personality growth:

Like William Goode, Hurlock finds the root of deviation and abnormality in family environment and in family structures and considers abnormalities the result of the training and social-acceptance mechanisms of the family as well as the quality of development of the child's personality within the family. Healthy and natural growth is the result of a variety of different conditions and factors and the role of the family here is greater than the other factors (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:71).

William Goode's theory and the theory of normality and family structure:

William Goode is of the conviction that family is the focus and the main component of social structure. He saw family as a small social system that lays the foundation of a bigger society. The values that govern the family definitely affect each and every member. Therefore, understanding the structure and types of families could be the main key for understanding the behavior of the people that are raised in families. According to Goode, when one or a number of family members fail to properly perform their duties and roles, family will be dissolved and the strength could be seen in the families in which members are separated. Family separation could be the result of one of the following factors (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004, p.70).

a. Absence of father as the results of death, divorce or being busy

b. Absence of mother due to outside home employment, death or divorce

c. Having weak emotional ties or even conflicts among family members

Dorothy Lovenvolt and the theory of emotional family environment

Lovenvolt attempts to link the family's harmful behavior to the formation of abnormal behavior in the members in order to explain the factors affecting the structure of abnormal behaviors (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004: 75). With regard to the role of harmful behavior in the formation of abnormal behavior in members, Lovenvolt mentions that the initial experiences of life determine the future behavior and thus family is the first group and institution that provides the grounds and conditions for such experiences. Therefore, attention to the relationship between family members and the mutual effects of interactions is of great importance for the behavior of children and the youth.

Lovenvolt identifies the most important harmful behaviors in the family and considers them significant in the formation of abnormal behavior in the members. These factors include: (ibid)

1. Punishment, extra seriousness and too much strict behavior   2. Extra expression of affection and unnecessary protection and care   3. Irrational expectations from children,   4. Irrational and exaggerated order

-Theory of Durkheim, Merton, Davies and Staz, Festinger and Ronsiman:

the basis of the theories by of Durkheim, Merton, Davies and Staz and other was that evolutions will bring about changes in the needs and wishes (Rafipoor, 2006:96).

Based on the theories of Festinger and Ronsiman, social comparison and feeling of deprivation is begun, the level of expectation increases, dissatisfaction with the current conditions is felt, and then people start to find a solution and search for ways to satisfy their needs. At this stage, if the ways to satisfaction of needs and accomplishment of goals are blocked, people hope to achieve their goals in the future through attempts and through gaining access to facilities and other means. Therefore, they either tolerate the present conditions or become hopeless and find the current situation unbearable.

The last group is fragile with regard to deviations and corruption. At this stage, there are two controlling variables: one is the external control and the other one in internal control.

- Theory of social control by Hirschi, Reckless, Friday and Hague:

Hirschi, Reckless, Friday and Hague are considered the forerunners of the theory of social control, based on the theories of Durkheim and particularly being inspired with the theory of social anomie, attempted to expand this theory. This theory is based on the assumption that deviance is the result of the person's weakness or dissonance with the society and this is itself the result of social control and supervision (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:89).

Hirschi is of the conviction that the components of feeling to be belonged and depending on the society are the following:
1. Relationship with other people
2. Acceptance and participation in social roles and activities that benefit their future
3. Believing in ethical values, cultural norms and the like (ibid).

Walter Reckless believes that membership in groups and mutual social interactions determine the type of behavior in particular conditions of life. He emphasized those elements of group life that prevent individuals from being deviated. From this perspective, deviation could be considered the result of incapability and lack of functionality in the pressure system that creates normal behavior in some people and is the result of their social position (ibid, p.92).

With regard to social monitoring, Friday and Hague claim that in crimes are unethical in a way that they will bring the breakdown of societies and the collapse of societies (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:93).

Hirsci and Friday, trying to expand their theory of social control, limited themselves to the conflicts of conformities and non-conformities or crimes. It means that conformity will definitely pose an obstacle for commitment of crime. Therefore, they recommend using parameters of conformity and nonconformity in order to explain for the commitment of crimes. They thus stated the following theoretical issues:

Behavior conformity in social and cultural contexts might lead to commitment or non-commitment of crime. Therefore, certain conditions could create deviation. Meanwhile, it is the existence of conflicting definitions of crimes that has resulted to different theories (ibid: 95).

-Cloward and Ohlin's theory of Strain

Cloward and Ohlin believe that the relationship between cultural values on the one hand and legitimate and illegitimate opportunities on the other hand determine the different types of crimes and their frequency. They are of the conviction that delinquency is reflected in society as the subculture of the delinquent. In the same way that in the subculture of the obedient person, there are legitimate opportunities, in the subculture of the delinquent, there are illegitimate opportunities for achieving cultural goals (Mohseni Tabrizi, 2004:87).

-Oscar Lewis's theory of cultural poverty and social instability

According to Lewis, the subculture of poverty is a cultural means for adapting oneself to difficulties and fighting despair. It is also a reaction adopted by the poor classes for fighting their lack of value in the capitalistic economic and class-based system. Therefore, these groups internalize the goals, values, and the norms of this society and pass them from one generation to another. Meanwhile, Lewis believes that the formation of this subculture is usually the result of the effects of different variables such as:
1. breakdown of an economic and social system and replacing it with a different system;
2. The rapid changes in sciences, technology and the like (Salimi and Davari, 2001:451).

The pessimism of the members of this subculture with regard to the ruling institutions and the spirit of mistrust and hatred towards those in power while being aware of the values of the middle class and even feeling belonged to this class along with the hopelessness in achieving success in the current social system will result in an aggressive attitude and the fact that these people are put in a situation of anomie and social disorder, Kelvis believes. This feature will indeed make them puppets in the hands of the political intellectuals. On the other hand, the existence of the same features places people in a situation of anomie and social disorder, the consequences of which will be clearly manifested in different aspects of sexual behavior, family ties and the like. The features discussed here are usually considered the backgrounds for formation of delinquent behavior and create the necessary grounds for commitment of delinquency (ibid: 452).

-Theory of cultural Transfer

The theory of cultural transfer focuses on the point that delinquent behavior is learned through mingling with improper friends. Edwin Sutherland is of the conviction that delinquent behavior is learned through having communication with strangers or having social relations with certain types of people such as criminals. He says that in order for a person to become a criminal, he first needs to learn how to commit a crime (Koen, 1991: 167).

Therefore, the process of learning delinquent behavior is determined by the friends of the criminal. The following four steps indicate this process (Sotoodeh, 2001: 131).

1. Delinquent behavior, as other normal behaviors, is learned through mutual social interactions with other people particularly the friends;

2. Learning delinquent behavior necessarily requires learning the techniques of committing crime and having the proper motivations, tastes and tendencies for criminal behavior.

3. Delinquent behavior could be different with regard to frequency, priority, consistency and strength. The more the contact between a person and criminal groups, the more would be the possibility of delinquency.

4. People commit crimes when the frequency of advantages of breaking the law outweighs the undesirable limitations. In fact, if the values of a person and the people who strongly affect that person support delinquency instead of obedient behavior, that person will probably become a criminal (ibid: 131).

-Theory of Social Learning:

Based on the theory of social learning, delinquency could be learned. Sutherland claims that the people with potential for delinquent behavior learn certain definitions in their relationships with the members of society and such definitions are sometimes in agreement or sometimes in disagreement with delinquent behavior.

If the definitions that consider delinquency acceptable have more support than the contrasting definitions and the person is more in contact with such definitions, then he will have more probability of committing delinquency. Meanwhile, he emphasizes that the realization of this situation does not require having direct contact with criminals and delinquents. A child might learn the definitions approving delinquency when he sees someone driving above the speed limit (Davari and Salimi, 2001:513).

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approaches that are used to investigate this phenomenon are different due to its very complicated nature.

From the viewpoint of methodology, this phenomenon needs to be dealt with and assessed as an action by social actors investigated by quantity and quality methodologies. On this basis, in order to increase the validity of the study, data collection in quality studies needs to rely most on field observation and deep interviews and in quantity studies as survey-studies it needs to rely on questionnaires (Ahmadi, 2005:109).

Therefore, in order to conduct this study, documental research, field research and survey research were used along with different techniques such as the new techniques of project circle management (PCM). Based on the study's objective that deals with enhancement of empowerment in imprisoned women with regard to recidivism, it is not possible to achieve the objective without taking into account the attitudes and behaviors of imprisoned women over a period of time and under the framework of quality methods. In other words, the strength of quality methods and the related techniques such as PCM in the issue under study are the fact that they provide the possibility of having deep understanding of the mental structures. PCM along with interviews, questionnaires, and observation contribute to the objective of this study. In the first step (documental research), an attempt was made to use the books, resources and researchers of other as a library study and to collect the data related to deviations and causes of crime commitment. With this regard, the opinions of different sociologists, psychologists, and social psychologists about the grounds of women's social pathology and the causes of their crime commitment were collected. Using different theories, this phenomenon was investigated in human societies and it was tried to provide a theoretical framework for explaining social damage. The studies conducted into this issue both in Iran and abroad were analyzed.

In the second step, the field study and observation technique and deep interviews were used on 50 imprisoned women. Their behavior was closely observed. Each counted a number of main factors for their commitment of crime and emphasized on one key factor.

In the third step, a pre-test was conducted and the questionnaires as the tools of measurement were distributed between two main groups. The results of the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS software and alongside certain training courses were held for the prisoners and their families. After holding the training courses, the post-test was similarly conducted.

Statistical population and selecting the sample size:

The statistical population in this study includes all female prisoners who served time in jail between May 2009 and October 2009 whose files were available in the administrative department of the prison. They were all interviewed.

The sampling method in this study included all prisoners as due to the low population of this study, all female prisoners in Zanjan province (33 persons per day, on average) were interviewed.

Data collection tools:

As it was mentioned before, the methodology of the study was both qualitative and quantitative. Therefore, the data collection tools were observation and interview for the qualitative method and survey for the quantitative one.

Validity and Reliability of the study:

Baker believes that field studies are among the most valid social studies as they take place in the field and aim to understand the real meaning of social environment and its nature. Field study attempts to provide the most fundamental criteria of validity. However, having reliability in the field studies is difficult as it is a unique and individual-based task and it is usually difficult or even impossible to be repeated by another researcher (Baker, 2002: 295). The questionnaires (personality test, social compatibility test, and religious test) used in this study were chosen from standard tests, however, the reliability and validity was analyzed again and the alpha obtained in this study is higher than 70%.

ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

Table 1. Frequency of the sample size as per personal factors

Item	Variable	variable dimension	percentage of frequency
1	women's age	16-25 years old	28.6%
		26-35 years old	40.2%
		Older than 36 years old	31.2%
2	Husband's age	n/a	23.3%
		26-35 years old	17.3%
		36-45 years old	28.7%
		Older than 45 years old	30.7%
3	Husband's job	a/n	34.3%
		businessman	28.6%
		clerk	2.9%
		worker	11.4%
		farmer	8.6%
		unemployed or in prison	14.2%
4	Husband's eductaion	a/n	34.3%
		illiterate or elementary school	48.6%
		middle school and high school	17.1%
5	Marital status	single	22.9%
		married	42.5%
		divorced	17.3%
		widowed	17.3%
6	period of married life	a/n	35.3%
		1-5 years	14.6%
		5-12 years	8.7%
		More than 12 years	41.4%
7	residential location	rural areas	14.3%
		Urban areas	85.7%
8	number of children	No child	28.6%
		1-3	42.8%
		4-6	20.2%
		more than 6	8.4%
9	education of imprisoned women	illiterate	31.4%
		elementary school	48.6%
		high school or diploma degree	20%
10	punishment	life sentence	22.9%
		Qisas (retaliation)	10.2%
		limbo	37.1%
		whip	2.9%
		limited imprisonment	26.9%
11	period of imprisonment	Less than 1 year	47.4%
		1-5 years	2.9%
		More than 5 years	49.7%
12	type of crime	Murder	12.4%
		drugs	45.7%
		illegitimate relationship	12.3%
		robbery	8.6%
		drug and illegitimate realtionship	12.6%
		disputes family	2.8%
		participation in murder	2.8%
		political	2.8%

Results obtained from comparison of the pre-test and post-test:

The results of the pre-test and post-test of social conformity, religion, and test of personality among female prisoners has been demonstrated in the following tables:
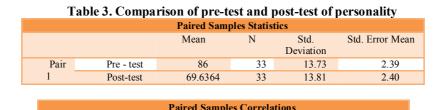
Table 2. Comparison of pre-test and post-test of social conformity

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	test-Pre	10.45	33	4.644	0.808
	test-Post	13.73	33	3.347	0.583
Paired Samples Correlations					
			N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre-test & Post- test		33	0.911	0.000

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre- test & post- test	3.273	2.11	0.367	2.524	4.21	8.908	32	0.000

Based on the abovementioned test, it could be said that:

T-test for correlated groups with confidence level of higher than 95% is indicative of significance difference between pre-test and post-test of social conformity among female prisoners. As it could be seen, the obtained t value in the test (8.908) with the df=32 is higher than the t value in the standard table. As it could also be seen in the descriptive indices of the test, the mean of pre-test is lower than the post-test, showing that the training courses managed to enhance social conformity among female prisoners and to neutralize the effect of other factors in the prison.

Table 3. Comparison of pre-test and post-test of personality

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre - test	86	33	13.73	2.39
	Post-test	69.6364	33	13.81	2.40

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre –test & Post- test	33	0.531	0.000

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre – test & Post - test	16.36	13.34	2.32	11.6	21.9	7.046	32	0.000

Based on the abovementioned test, it could be said that:

T-test for correlated groups with confidence level of higher than 95% is indicative of significance difference between pre-test and post-test of personality test among female prisoners. As it could be seen, the obtained t value in the test (7.046) with the df=32 is higher than the t value in the standard table. As it could also be seen in the descriptive indices of the test, the mean of pre-test is higher than the post-test, showing that the training courses more or less managed to rebuild the character of female prisoners, to decrease their personality problems, and to neutralize other factors in the prison.

Table 4. Comparison between pre-test and post-test of religiosity

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	Pre – test	49.5	24	2.99	0.61
	Post - test	53	24	2.14	0.43

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	Pre – test & Post- test	24	0.548	0.006

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	Pre- test & Post- test	□3.5	2.55	0.52	4.57	2.42	6.71	23	0.000

Based on the abovementioned test, it could be said that:

T-test for correlated groups with confidence level of higher than 95% is indicative of significance difference between pre-test and post-test of religiosity among female prisoners. As it could be seen, the obtained t value in the test (6.714) with the df=23 is higher than the t value in the standard table. As it could also be seen in the descriptive indices of the test, the mean of pre-test is lower than the post-test, showing that the training courses managed to enhance religiosity among female prisoners and to neutralize the effect of other factors in the prison.

Conclusion

Most criminals commit crimes and thus are imprisoned due to economic, social or family problems. With this regard, a detailed theoretical framework was proposed as psychological, psycho-sociological and sociological approaches that dealt with theoretical investigation of social problems and crimes. The important issue is that condemning criminals to prison with the aim of correction of their behavior and their rehabilitation is done to change them into obedient citizens. The main principle of the system of prison is to improve the individual in order to perform a role that is in conformity with the society. In other words, the main goal of prison is to empower criminals and prevent them from re-commitment of crimes. Accomplishment of such an objective requires attention to the prison environment, social context, personal characteristics of prisoners, and the network of their social relations and eventually the role of governmental institutions and economic and social structures in provision of the proper grounds for rehabilitation and empowerment. Therefore, the main aim of the present study was to investigate the factors affecting the occurrence of crime, the social, economic and personal structures that have a role in the return of the criminals to ordinary life and eventually the empowerment of female prisoners and prevention of recidivism. Therefore, in order to achieve such an objective, to understand the factors contributing to the recidivism, and to identify the techniques for fighting recidivism, a qualitative study and PCM technique was used while having the helpful cooperation of prisoners. As it was discussed in the psychological arguments of the study, in PCM technique, after identification of problems and issues, the objectives for improving the situations were defined and the solutions for achieving and enhancing such objectives were provided.

After the exploratory studies using interviews and questionnaires, the content of the workshops in five areas (related to recidivism) of relationship between family members, faith and religiosity, social conformity and psychological wellbeing were determined. To this aim, the empowerment methods were provided to the female prisoners. The results obtained from workshops about unpleasant family relationships, as one of the reasons behind returning to crime and crime environment, indicated that generation gap, domestic violence, lack of affection resulting from emotional separation or divorce, parents' addiction, and discrimination at home were among the most important cause of unpleasant family relationships. Empowering prisoners in this regard and clearing such hurdles require the cooperation of prisoners' families. The solutions for dealing with these two problems were discussed with the prisoners and their families during the two workshops that were held in prison.

PCM workshops with regard to enhancing religiosity demonstrated the factors that have significant role in occurrence of crimes in a way that not only they could be the cause of occurrence of crimes but could also contribute to recidivism. As a result, attention to these factors, rebuilding religious character and enhancing religiosity could be

considered ways of preventing recidivism. Such factors include lack of good temperament, lack of adherence to repent of sins, impatience and lack of forgiveness, lack of fear of God when committing sins, lack of hope in God, low trust in God and little remembrance of God.

PCM workshops with regard to social conformity, i.e. the main stream of training workshops, followed three main objectives: 1. Giving awareness to prisoners about causes, effects and consequences of crimes 2. Changing prisoners' attitudes, from feelings of isolation, depression, hopelessness and deprivation to hope, motivation, confidence and social and living skills for returning to normal life 3. Encouraging officials, families and target sources to support prisoners, decrease their mistrust and create opportunities for them to live.

The results obtained from the shared discussions in this stream of workshops were about the most significant problem of prisoners, i.e. social problems and social conformity after returning to their communities. This indicates that the causes and the factors that affect social non-conformity as one of the most important reasons of recidivism, are on one hand related to social institutions and on the other hand to personal characteristics of the prisoners. In better words, with regard to social institutions, provision of cultural grounds for acceptance of prisoners by the society is a main principle. With regard to personal characteristics, the following factors could be mentioned:

Reduction of society's trust in prisoner, weakness in establishing intra-personal relationships, weakness in gaining self awareness, weakness in having sympathy, weakness in establishing effective relationships, weakness in fighting stress, and weakness in making correct decisions.

The results gained from the workshops held about psychological wellbeing indicate that high depression, anxiety, low hope in future, lack of self-confidence are among the most important factors affecting prisoners' psychological wellbeing. Enhancing the personal abilities of prisoners with regard to psychological wellbeing and its indices plays a major role in prevention of recidivism.

After holding PCM workshops, the assessment of the results of the workshops was done within framework of pre-test and post-tests. The results of correlated t in investigation of variances of pre-test and post-test means are indicative of the issues mentioned in the analysis part. The results of correlated t in investigation of variances of pre-test and post-test means with regard to the issues under study are indicative of the relative success of training workshops in enhancing the capabilities of prisoners' in returning back to the society and prevention of recidivism.

Since in PCM, the solutions for access to the goals are extracted with the cooperation of target societies and the related groups, the institutional solutions in the framework of training workshops and with the aim of performing certain interventions are useful. Therefore, with regard to training workshops, the following suggestions could be proposed:

A. Enhancing psychological wellbeing:
1. Continuance of consulting and psychotherapy programs for decreasing depression
2. Holding a variety of joyful programs to decrease depression;
3. Provision of more facilities with regard to having some days off the prison and having visitors in prison;
4. Enhancing financial, material, and emotional supports after release from prison;
5. Granting facilities for employing therapists in prisons

B. Enhancing social conformity and the relationship between family members
1. Boosting the spirits of prisoners through holding a variety of different artistic, sport, religious programs and the like.
2. Teaching social and life skills with effective methods and tools
3. Teaching professional and educational skills in order to create professional and educational motivations after being released.
4. Obvious and hidden supervision of prisoners after being released.
5. Enhancing family relationships and encouraging influential family members to support prisoners when in prison
6. Solving physical, psychological, personal, family, economic, and legal problems of prisoners through related authorities and advisors;
7. Encouraging the media, families, and public opinion not to label prisoners with mistrust
8. Eliminating prisons and replacing them with other forms of confinement

c. Enhancing religiosity
1. Holding joint workshops for reminding capabilities, increasing faith in God, boosting self-confidence and increasing hope in God.
2. Holding praying events, providing a situation like imagining being connected to God, expressing wishes, and the like was welcomed (it is recommended to have such sessions once a week)
3. Holding religious sessions with the present of non-traditional and professional religious scholars

4. Proper scheduling for holding religious classes and programs

5. Holding entertainment, sport, and leisure programs with the attendance of religious tutors and scholars.

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