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# Investigating the Status and Role of Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee in Preventing Youth Delinquency (Case Study of Tehran Relief Committee)

Seyed Hossein Aboutalebi Bahnamiri \*<sup>1</sup> Hamid Abhari\*<sup>2</sup> Seyed Ahmad Jafari Kalarijani<sup>3</sup>

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#### Abstract

Due to the harmful effects of crime on society, the majority of countries in the world have drawn up plans for preventing and reducing the crime rate, and through the various institutions (governmental and nongovernmental) they let. In Iran, various organs provide services and activities for the prevention of women's delinquency, including the Khomeini Relief Committee. The present study was descriptive-analytic in nature and library and field based study with a researcher-made questionnaire whose formal validity and reliability were confirmed. The research population consisted of directors, assistants and planners of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee in Tehran, randomly selected through random sampling. SPSS software and descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The results show that the activities of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee are carried out in six main areas of material measures, training courses, counseling services, employment, health services and dowry costs and marriage for the prevention of crime. The results of inferential tests have shown that all of the above measures are effective in reducing crime and preventing delinquency. Friedman's test has shown that material actions and the cost of dowry and marriage have the least impact on the prevention of crime from the most important educational measures and counseling courses. Although the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is trying to prevent delinquency, the fact is that the state of crime prevention is not good enogh in our country for various reasons, such as the limited organization's programs, financial problems (lack of funds), structural problems, as well as the lack of institutionalization of the culture of preventing delinquency.

*Keywords:* Relief Committee, victim, delinquency, prevention, victimization.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>. Master of Law, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr Branch, Qaemshahr, Iran

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2\*</sup> . Professor, Department of Law, Mazandaran University, Iran (Corresponding Author) hamid.abhari@gmail.com

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>. Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Islamic Azad University, Qaemshahr Branch, qaemshahr, Iran, jas\_51@yahoo.com

## Introduction

The phenomenon of juvenile delinquency has been a social problem for advanced industrialized countries in recent years, but today it has become a global phenomenon in various societies with the development of industry and the transmission of its effects and the spread of urbanization around the world (Naiafi Tayana, 2006, p. 54). Although crimes are not considered as emerging phenomena in human society and the emergence of societies and crimes have been concurrent, but perhaps no one has ever encountered a problem called "crime" in their society. And when this dilemma is rooted in today's teenagers, who are the creators and founders of future society, it raises more anxiety and fears and requires more attention and sensitivity to find the causes of this phenomenon. Juvenile delinquency is one of the most important areas of criminal policy in governments today. Criminality is a social phenomenon that is used to explain the commitment of crimes against the criminal code of juveniles under the age of 18. These behaviors have a wide range in terms of the intensity and impact they have on others, with the lowest level of such behaviors on one side of the spectrum, if adults commit these behaviors, they will not be prosecuted or arrested (such as dropping out of school, driving). The other side of the spectrum also includes crimes that reflect intense criminal activity against victims and other members of society (such as murder, theft, acts of iniquity) (Scott, 1989, p. 24). According to published statistics, the incidence of crime is increasing among youngesters and the prevalence of juvenile delinquency among adolescents is increasing rapidly (Rajabiipour, 2009, p. 55). Obviously, the best way to combat and prevent or reduce crime is to identify the factors that contribute to it.

One of the fundamental challenges of the present century is how to establish security at all levels of society and to prevent criminal phenomena, deviations and social anomalies in a way that has become a major concern for the authorities in the country (Jinafili, 2000, p. 123). Therefore, crime prevention is very important in order to achieve security in society. Crime prevention is important for two reasons (as the most fundamental way of controlling crime). First, crime prevention is better than reactive measures of personal and social order and well-being; because statistics have shown that in many cases, offenders are not identified, arrested, and prosecuted, and on the other hand, criminal prosecution, rather than destroying the consequences of crime, causes various problems in society, including fear of crime. Secondly, the repetition of the crime causes disappointment in the public institutions responding to criminal phenomena, including the police and the judiciary (Niyazpour, 2004, p. 40).

In the context of Iranian criminal policy, constitutional experts have taken into account a number of its principles, such as Article 156 of the Criminal Prevention Constitution. In addition, Iran's legislative policy on crime prevention can be specified by ordinary laws and bylaws and crime prevention legislation (Talebi & Barari, 2015, p. 129). But one of Iran's most important criminal policies is the prevention of crime through supportive institutions. Some of the country's defense institutions seek to prevent crime through state criminal policy and others with a participatory criminal policy. Among the social (supportive) institutions that directly or indirectly carry out activities in Iran to prevent the commission of crime, Imam Khomeini Committee is

mentioned. This committee can play an important role in preventing the delinquency of its own members. Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is the most important support organization in the country, founded to support poor families, impoverished women and reduce their deprivation and cover thousands of them or their families (Talebi & Barari, 2015, p. 131).

The necessity of crime prevention has always been a concern of the judicial system of countries, jurists and sociologists, so that its various aspects have been addressed in numerous scientific works. Today, the necessity to prevent crime is obvious. The famous saying, "prevention is better than cure," which is common among the general public, can be said to be a testament to this claim. According to this approach, crime prevention can be the root or cause of many other social injuries. The Relief Committee of Imam Khomeini is one of the most prominent institutions in the Islamic Revolution which has been formed by the order of Imam with the aim of providing support and assistance to the needy class of the society and has carried out many and varied activities throughout its life, but after more than three decades, despite these activities, there are still life-threatening manifestations of poverty in society. Therefore, this article seeks to examine the role of the Relief Committee in the prevention of juvenile delinquency. How effective are the activities of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee in the six main areas of material action, training, counseling, employment, health care and the cost of dowry and marriage to prevent delinquency? And which of these activities is more effective than the others?

## **Experimental Background**

Various investigations have been carried out on the role of organizations such as welfare, relief committee, etc. in the prevention and reduction of delinquency. Yarahmadi et al. (1977) believe that pediatric police actions are not merely a posteriori and post-crime aspect, he recommends providing educational psychology, working with parents and school principals, and interacting with social workers and NGOs leading as preventive measures. In this regard, it is appropriate for the Special Police for Children to design and organize an effective and discriminatory criminal policy. Sarikhani and Soltani Bohlouli (2016) discuss the role of executive power in social prevention of crime. According to the duties envisaged for the government in Articles 28 to 31 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the provision of social welfare and the elimination of social grounds for committing a crime are within the remit of the executive branch. Therefore, the executive branch, with the task of promoting the living and social welfare of individuals in society, is taking steps to reduce the social conditions of crime. Providing adequate education in accordance with Article III of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran is also one of the responsibilities of the executive branch which is part of the social prevention program. Changai (2010) believes that support agencies seek to prevent delinquency through their activities through a supportive, corrective, therapeutic and non-criminal approach inspired by three-step prevention (primary, secondary and third), long-term, short-term and social prevention. Beyond its activities, support organizations, especially the

Welfare Organization, seek not to engage in the causes and factors of delinquency in the first stage of society, and in the second stage, after being entrapped in the causes and factors of delinquency provide specialized psychological services. And assistance is sought to address these causes and factors, and in the third stage, after committing the crime and perverting the community, attempts to prevent the recurrence of the crime by presenting its activities. Asadi (2014) also assumed the same role for the Welfare Organization and achieved a similar result. Farhoumand (2013) believes in police prevention of crime by emphasizing public participation, which is a form of social prevention. In Prevention with the Participation of People (Social Prevention), the police maintains a close balance with the families and social, cultural and religious institutions in the community; it addresses the problems of youth and adolescents, which are at the root of many anomalies in society, collaborates with high-level schools, and delivers extensive planning to identify their problems with child and women offenders and with police. By utilizing religious teachings and communicating with religious institutions, especially mosques, to strengthen the council, it seeks to empower the well-known and forbearance of Islamic compassion to achieve both types of community-based social pursuit and sustainable social prevention.

Talebi and Barari (2015) are in charge of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee of the Martyrs and Sacrifice Affairs Committee in Crime Prevention. As organizations play functions and roles in society, they are created with specific goals and functions, and according to the needs of the community, organizations are formed and defined based on the goals and values of the community. Nowadays, there is a need for identifying needs assessments based on a supportive approach.

Tau and Stockdale (2008), in a study entitled "The relationship between family socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency" concluded that there was a significant relationship between family socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency. Chang and Steinberg (2006) showed that there is a significant relationship between socioeconomic status of family and living environment of 14 to 18- year-old adolescents with their delinquency. According to Jennifer and Paterson (2006), the best predictor of adolescent delinquency was the quality of their relationship with their parents. This means that the poor quality of relationships between adolescents and their parents has been responsible for their delinquency. Sakir et al (2005) showed that most delinquent adolescents have large, disadvantaged, immigrant, and economically and educationally low-income families, and there is insufficient control and oversight in their families. Anderson (2002), in a study entitled "Factors affecting adolescent delinquency", showed that adolescents living in single-parent families or living in disadvantaged families are more likely to be delinquent.

## **Theoretical Foundations**

Crime and delinquency can be examined in different approaches. Proponents of the legal approach to crime cosider any act that is contrary to morality and social justice as cime and consider the purpose of criminal law formulation to prevent behaviors that somehow harm society and its individuals and disrupt social order (Najafi Tavana, 2006). The sociological approach to crime is largely based on

Durkheim's theories. Although these theories are largely complex, their impact on criminology is undeniable. According to this theory, "crime is a natural phenomenon and comes from the culture, civilization and spaces of every society". The evolution of cultures has transformed the concept of crime, its type and quality, and modernism has also played an important role. From a criminological point of view, people's incompatibility and anti-social behavior are called offenses. Criminologists not only call every act punishable by law as cime, but also believe that acts not punishable by criminal law, but harmful to society, are also crime and need to be investigated. The general view of this approach in defining crime is to believe in actions or to leave actions that are dangerous to society, such as addiction as an action or non-compliance with driving rules as a leaving action (Sekhavat, 2002).

In relation to delinquency and deviance, it should be said that the sociology of deviance as one of the domains of sociology seeks to explain the causes of nonconformity of individuals with social norms. Social deviation is a social phenomenon that is relative to time, place, social status of individuals, different cultures and subcultures, different ideologies and social groups. In general, it has to be said that in the sociology of deviations, delinquency and deviation have been studied from four perspectives, and the theories exist in four levels and contexts: 1- Biological explanations, 2- Psychological explanations, 3- Sociological explanations and 4-Social psychologies, each of which has different theories about crime and delinquency.

According to Hirschi (1969), delinquency as a social issue should be examined in the context of family, neighborhood, school, peers, and other organs or institutions in which the adolescent is a member. Hirschi believes that delinquency occurs when one's attitudes (attachment, commitment, occupation, and beliefs) to the community are weakened or generally eliminated. In an empirical test in Hirschi's theory of social control, information was obtained through a questionnaire from 724 students in four high schools and three correctional centers. The result indicated that Hirschi's view was fulfilled when the variable of criminal offenders was included in the analysis. The findings of this study were more consistent with the differential bond theory than with Hirschi's original theory of the causes of delinquency (Mahmoudi & Habibi, 2010).

According to the differential bond theory, delinquent relatives and peers contribute to the formation and reinforcement of the delinquent attitude and lead the individual to delinquency. The differential bond theory considers the social aspects of the offender and considers the offender in his or her social position in relation to the family, neighborhood, comrades and interviewers (Meshkani, 1998). Some have also taken eclectic views and taken a broader view. The findings of this study (Meshkani, 1998) show that the results obtained from the combination of the two theories of differential bond and social control from this empirical test indicate that the component of adolescent dependency on the family and the component of family health status are associated with the severity of the crime.

Thus, as adolescent emotional bonds with family increase and parent-child relationships become healthier and more secure, delinquency decreases. The component of beliefs such as "Belief in law and prohibition, punishment or sin and

thought to sin" reduces the severity of delinquency. The components of the differential bonds and the component of adolescents' relationship with friends and relatives show that the presence of criminal neighbors and offending neighborhoods is effective in crime (Mahmoudi & Habibi, 2010).

Social disorganization theorists believe that factors such as decreasing the efficiency of social institutions such as the family and weakening kinship as informal forces of social control increase crime such as murder, robbery, sexual deviance and addiction. They believe that social factors control individuals, and when these factors become unstable, individuals are less able to control their behavior. Morten's view seeks to discover how certain social structures affect certain individuals in society and cause them to behave in a manner inconsistent with social norms. In his view, social constructs are active and generate behavioral patterns; therefore, he focuses on social order and explores the impact of normative constructs on individuals. Parsons believes that the proper functions of each of the subsystems of culture, society, personality, and economy, and the interaction between them, are the controlling factors of every society as well as the survival and stability factors of the social system. Each of these subsystems threatens the life of the community, providing the basis for deviant behavior. For Parsons, social institutions are the executive agents and tools of socializing the patterns of behavior and internalizing them. If socializing agencies and organizations such as family, school, and mass media do not have the necessary efficiency, the community will become socially disorganized, resulting in the prevalence of deviant behavior in society. From Parsons' point of view, social institutions such as family, school, and mass media, if not functioning properly, cause social disorganization in society, the consequence of which is the prevalence of deviant behavior in society (Ahmadi, 2005).

The best practice for prevention planning with regard to novelty of the issue is the use of longitudinal study methods and randomized design. There have been many evaluations of prevention programs at all levels, but the results of these studies and evaluations have failed to prove the claim that intervention plans are successful. The US Centers for Disease Control has proposed comprehensive strategies to tackle the problem of youth delinquency:

- 1- Family-oriented strategies: These strategies have provided training skills such as parent training on parenting techniques, child-family communication skills, and solving child-family problems without abuse and punishment, home visits that can introduce hazardous resources into the home and provide guidance on how to maintain and grow children at home.
- 2- Socialist Strategy: This strategy provides the skills needed to solve problems so that children are able to solve the problem correctly rather than delinquently.
- 3- Monitoring Strategies: Mostly based on positive adult education patterns and can reduce the risk of delinquent behavior (Meshkani, 2006). Interventions in formulating strategies are recommended as summarized in the table below.

Table 1. Steps for designing effective prevention and treatment strategies

	<u> </u>				
First step: Diagnosis	The first step in the prevention position is to quantitatively and qualitatively review previous data, which somehow confirms the prevalence of delinquent				
	behavior in society. Comparison of problems, explaining risk factors, awareness				
	of statistics of various health education organizations, community surveys and				
	researchers studying crime are necessary.				
Step Two: Identify	After identifying the delinquent behavior, identify the community involved for				
the target group	the intervention. The study of the characteristics of the target group and its				
	contextual factors is based on planning and identifying intervention strategies.				
	Note that using an intervention program should be easy and accessible.				
Step Three: Explain	The third specific measure is to identify the goals of the intervention program.				
Objectives and	The goals are analyzed in terms of accessibility and ease of access at this stage.				
Analyze It					
Step Four: Design	This stage is planned to reach the goals. The sources of support and involvement				
and Implementation	are identified. Necessary training to intervene are conducted, and the designed				
	program is implemented.				
Step 5: Monitoring	At the last stage, an intervention plan is planned for monitoring and evaluation.				
and Evaluation	Monitoring during the program will allow the program to proceed as expected.				
	Evaluation practice can determine the effectiveness of the program and the				
	strengths and weaknesses.				

(Source: Meshkani, 2006: 119)

## **Research Methodology**

The research method was survey and descriptive-analytical and the data were collected by questionnaire. The directors, deputies, and planners of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee in Tehran, consisting of two hundred members, were selected as the statistical population.

Using Morgan table, 128 statistical samples were selected through simple random sampling. The Cronbach's alpha of the variables indicates that the internal correlations between items related to the variables are appropriate and acceptable. The value of Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82 for the activities of the relief committee, which is very high and its items were able to have the necessary internal fit. In order to analyze the research hypotheses according to the level of measurement and the type of variable, one-sample t-test, independent t-test and Friedman test were used. The data were analyzed in two parts: descriptive and inferential statistics, and SPSS24 statistical software was used for data processing.

# Research Hypotheses

- 1. Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee's actions are effective in preventing delinquency.
- 2. Imam Khomeini Relief Committee activities have different priorities in preventing crime.

## **Results and Findings**

85 people (66.40%) were male and 43 (33.59%) were female. 37 people (28.90%) were less than 30 years old, 23 people (17.96%) were between 30 and 40 years old, 51 people (39.84%) were between 40 and 50 years old and 17 people (13.28%) were

more than 50 years old. Of the 128 respondents, the highest number of respondents had a bachelor's degree with 46 people (35.93%) and the lowest was higher education with 6 respondents (4.68%).

Descriptive statistics on identifying the role of Imam Khomeini's relief committee in preventing crime are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the role of Imam Khomeini's relief committee in

	preventing ac	chiquency		
Parameters	average	Standard	Standard error	
		deviation	average	
Material measures	3.55	0.536	0.047	
Training Courses	3.72	0.590	0.052	
Consulting services	3.79	0.719	0.063	
Employment services	3.73	0.665	0.058	
Health Service	3.62	0.516	0.045	
The cost of dowry and	3.88	0.707	0.062	
marriage				

The mean value of scores on material measures is equal to 3.55, indicating that the average number of comments of respondents in response to identifying material measures is above average. Average training courses is equal to 3.72, average score for counseling services equal to 3.79, average score related to employment services equal to 3.73, average score related to health services equal to 3.62, average score for dowry and marriage is equal 3.88, indicating that the mean of the responses to identifying dowry and marriage costs is above average. Among the six tasks and the roles of the Relief Committee in reducing and preventing delinquency, the cost of dowry and marriage had the highest mean of 3.88 and the mean of material measures had the lowest mean of 3.55.

First, to determine whether parametric tests or nonparametric tests are used to test hypotheses, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to determine normal or abnormal components of the study. As can be seen, the significant value for the research hypotheses is more than 5%, thus the first hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the assumption of normality of the distribution is accepted and one-sample t-test is used to test the research hypotheses.

Table 3: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results

Actions of	the Relief	Material	training	Consultin	Employ	Health	dowry and
Committee		measures	course	g services	ment	Service	marriage
Sample size		128	128	128	128	128	128
Normal	Average	3.55	3.72	3.79	3.73	3.62	3.88
parameters	Standard deviation	0.53	0.59	0.71	0.66	0.51	0.70
Kolmogorov-Smir statistic	nov Z	0.953	1.322	1.146	1.266	0.757	0.833
Significant value		0.324	0.061	0.145	0.081	0.615	0.540

Hypotheses 1: Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee's actions are effective in preventing crime.

Table 4: Single-sample t-test results on the role of relief committee actions in preventing crime.

Table 4: Single-sample t-test results on the role of relief committee actions in crime	
prevention	

Actions of the Relief	T	Degrees of	Significance	Average
Committee	statistic	freedom		difference
Material measures	11.707	127	0.000	0.555
Training Courses	13.822	127	0.000	0.721
Consulting services	12.451	127	0.000	0.791
Employment services	12.513	127	0.000	0.735
Health Service	13.610	127	0.000	0.621
The cost of dowry	14.142	127	0.000	0.884
and marriage				

Based on Table 4, the average of each of the six components is greater than the average of three. As a result, there is a significant difference between their mean and the hypothetical population average. For example, in the component of training courses, the calculated mean comparison test score (13.82) is higher than the number calculated in the test table and also the difference in mean (0.721) is a positive numerical one, so the factor of training courses of the research is accepted. In other words, the participants view Imam Khomeini Relief Committee courses to have an effective role in preventing crime.

# Hypothesis 2: Imam Relief Committee activities have different priorities in preventing delinquency.

The Friedman test was used to prioritize the role of the Relief Committee in preventing delinquency. Table 5 shows the results of the significance of the Friedman test. The Friedman test value is 83.91 and its significance level is zero, so the significance of Friedman test is confirmed.

Table 5: Friedman test significance

View count	128		
Chi-square statistic	83.913		
Degrees of freedom	5		
Significance level	0.000		

Table 6 shows the results of the ranking of the role of the Relief Committee in preventing crime. According to the results in the table below, the cost of dowry and marriage and material measures respectively had the highest role among the relief committee's actions in preventing delinquency. Counseling and health services are also top priorities.

Table 6: Ranking the role of the Relief Committee in preventing crime

parameters	Average rating	Rating
Health Service	2.57	6
Training Courses	3.48	4
Material measures	4.06	2
Employment services	3.52	3
Consulting services	3.04	5
The cost of dowry and	4.33	1
marriage		

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Crime is a social phenomenon and is caused by a number of factors, organizations and NGOs act as a supportive factor in addressing or abolishing these factors. Imam Khomeini's Relief Committee is working to help people avoid crime and create a better future for themselves and their families in order to reduce poverty, create jobs and provide household amenities.

Juvenile delinquency has been a social problem for advanced industrialized countries in recent years, but today with the development of industry and the transmission of its effects and the spread of urbanization around the world, it has become a global phenomenon in various societies (Najafi Tayana, 2006, p. 128). Although crimes are not considered emerging phenomena in human society and the emergence of societies and crimes have been concurrent, but perhaps no one has ever encountered a problem called "crime" in their society. And when this dilemma is rooted in today's teenagers, who are the creators and founders of the individual community, it raises greater concern and deserves more attention and sensitivity to find the causes of this phenomenon. Researchers attribute various factors to adolescent delinquent behavior. One of the effective factors in adolescent delinquency is the type of family relationship with the individual. All social scientists, whether sociologists or psychologists, emphasize on family awareness and its unparalleled impact more than any factor. Although not unaware of the impact of school, peer groups, mass media, etc., they consider the role of the family effective; because the individual in the family learns the process of acculturation and the personality of the individual grows more and more in the family; however, other factors play a greater role in the socialization of individuals.

The greater the differences between parents and adolescents, the more likely they are to develop antisocial maladaptive behaviors; characteristics like: responsibility, love, sustainability, independence only seep from a person who has positive selfbeliefs and good relationships with members of a family, and seek good relationships, and a sense of security that makes the home space accessible to people full of love and individuals. It is through this factor that they develop their identity (Mariji, 2008, p. 86). Therefore, as future of our community depends on the activity, energy, and physical and mental health of the adolescent generation, we need to use all of the community's resources to prevent, combat, and eradicate juvenile delinquency in our country. The results showed that the six components of the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee (material measures, training courses, counseling services, health services, employment services and dowry and marriage costs) are effective in reducing crime and preventing delinquency. The Friedman test has shown that material measures and the cost of dowry and marriage were the most important, and training and counseling services have the least impact on crime prevention. Although Imam Khomeini Relief Committee is working to prevent crime, the reality is that the state of crime prevention in our country is not organized for a variety of reasons such as partial and limited organization programs, financial problems (budget shortages), structural problems and the lack of institutionalization of a crime prevention culture. The results of the ranking

show the role of the Committee's actions in preventing crime. According to the results, the cost of dowry and marriage and material measures respectively played the greatest role in the relief committee's measures in preventing delinquency. Counseling and health services are also top priorities.

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