A Survey on Relationship between Re-arrestment, Labeling, Deviant Identity and Social Exclusion in Tabriz Prison, Iran

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Abstract— **Crime and social deviancies are dilemma in all over the world. Evidences showed that having a previous experience of imprisonment led to more involvement in legal problems. This study aimed to determine the relationship between labeling, deviant identity and social exclusion with re-arrestment as the most objective index of to be involved in committing crime. Sample included all prisoners in the Tabriz prisons, 180 people. To assess the indexes a self construct questionnaire with three subscales and 30 items designed and the variables measured. Validity and reliability coefficients of the scale were reported as a part of test-making process. Re-arrestment information was achieved from the judiciary system records which as a part of legal procedure recorded. The gathered data were analysed with Pearson correlation and other central tendency indexes. Results showed a robust relationship between re-arrestment and the other variables. These findings indicated the importance of labeling, social learning, social identity and differential association theories to explain consequences of imprisonment for people.**

Index Terms—**Re-arrestment, labeling, deviant identity, social exclusion.**

I. INTRODUCTION

There are lots of people in the world who have to stay at prison, for example in the USA 2.4 million people are being in the prison [1]; however. The dilemma is common in other communities and Iran is faced with too. Behravan reported that 32.6 per cent of prisoners in Mashhad's central prison had at least one criminal record, i.e. imprisonment experience [2]. According to Havasi during a 27 years' time period, 1981-2008, the index of prisoners in Iran increased from 22 400 to 156 600 which shows the broad effect of the phenomena on the society [3].

Crime and delinquency have an increasing trend in the world and lead to many problems in the society. The problems that are made by delinquency are not limited to the person and family, but they will inject into the society, overtime. Delinquency imposes so many costs on the society. "The costs of delinquency are considerable which can be classified as overt and covert. Security-judiciary and social services costs such as police, court, prison, rehabilitation and correction centers, foster homes, injury to victims, destruction of public properties due to vandalism and

deliberate fire-setting, making physical and intelligent obstacles to protect public and private buildings are all parts of overt or direct costs. On the other hand, costs of a low-educated group due to truancy and dropping out, lack of profession, inconsistency with educational and professional standards of society, decrease in productivity, and most importantly the danger of rearing a new generation with positive attitudes towards delinquency and social deviation by the group can be categorised under the indirect or covert costs" [4].

There are several theories which try to explain how a criminal behaviour begins and sustains. In this study, labeling, social learning, differential association and identity theories were applied which are described in details.

A. Labeling Theory

The theory of labeling originates from the symbolic interactionist viewpoint of Cooley's "looking glass self" [5], or Mead's reflexive self [6]; the hypothetical constructs refer to a view that according to it, self is a way to reflecting others' opinions. In fact the "self" behaves in a consistent way with the constructs. Lemert [7] stated that secondary deviance can be occurred by labeling; in the approach, during a process an explorative behaviour from a child is counted "deviant" and the engaged child is labeled as a delinquent. Over time the label is internalized and becomes a part of the child's identity. Consequently, he/she behaves in a consistent manner with the labeled identity. Whenever a label, delinquent/deviant, is used, it confirms itself by taking feedback from the environment in both formal as well as informal groups and institutes such as judiciary-security system, family members, peers, classmates and society as a whole[8]. Labeling theory shows how a typical person adjusts to a label and behaves according to its implications; the theory also explains the key role of formal system in continuing the situation in spite of its main purpose to prevent or stop the deviancies [9, 10, 11 and 12]. However, the explanation is very simplistic and cannot justify why some people who have been labeled as delinquents, prisoners or deviants, not be engaged in the behaviours or not behaved according to the label [13 and 14]. In response to the criticisms with regard to ignorance of individual differences in terms of people's reaction to the label, a group of researchers [15, 16, 17, and 18] introduced an intervening mechanism, a hypothetical construct which can be called reflected assessment, a filtering mechanism which acts in a feedback manner; i.e. it takes information from the around environment, then the person can regulates his/her behaviour with respect to the information. They proposed that the labeled people who choose a particular identity receive others' messages during playing a role and reciprocal

interaction. The messages and assessments, or the feedbacks, in fact labels, are communicated via oral or body language, behaviour or facial expression and all of the methods together. The others' reactions are comprehended by the self to supply significant feedback about how the person's identity is being activated in the environment and plays its role to guide his reactions according to the set of the information [19]. Matsueda and Heimer [18] measured the effect of the feedbacks or reflected assessments of the family members, teachers, classmates and peers on the labeled persons. They found empirical evidence that the information set affect the people and consequently lead to a relationship between the reflected assessments and deviancies. They also reported that the assessments or feedbacks from different groups (family members, teachers, classmates, and peers) have different effects for the labeled people. In fact this theory states that a deviant behaviour is not deviant by its nature, but instead refers to the tendency of dominant culture or majority to count negatively label minorities or those seen as deviant from standard cultural norms. The theory is also concerned with how the self-identity and behaviour of people can be recognized or affected by the terms used to define or categorise them, and is related with the concept of self-fulfilling prejudice and stereotype thoughts [20]. In the case of prisoner label as other labels, the person behaves according to implications of the stigma and withdraws of normal interaction with other people who do not count in-group**.**

B. Social Learning Theory

According to the theory people learn behaviours whether deviant or normal in a process which is based mainly on observing people's behaviours as well as their consequences for the group [21]. Social learning theory explains how a new behaviour, for example, a delinquent behaviour, is acquired [22]. According to the theory, family members, friends, peers and even people in the street or environment can act as the models of antisocial behaviours. In this case, other children play the model role and present a pattern of deviant behaviour or more exactly a set of abnormal functions [23]. The process begins with observing the deviant behaviours as well as their consequences. According to the theory reinforcement can firm a behaviour firm via vicious mechanism [21]. It means the child by observing others' behaviours reinforcement, learn to behave in the way very well. In the situation observer(s) learn the deviancies; however the achieved abilities or behaviours will be only exhibited in a suitable situation. Whenever the children come back to the society the problem will be represented in their behaviour. The achieved behaviour is appeared as the society prepares the necessary things for the behaviour, a suitable situation and reinforcement. Unfortunately the process is not limited to the group who had the imprisonment experience, but, eventually the behaviours are transmitted to others especially siblings. When these children attend school, the problems are also brought to the academic environment. It has been found that situations like high levels of reinforcement for deviancies, doubtful interaction, negative labeling, aversive interactions or exclusion from informal groups, and coercive processes lead to choosing a deviant

identity as a protective shield which in turn all of the agents are effective in forming and continuing delinquency [23]. According to social learning theory, delinquency and its components as a set of behaviours that are acquired during interaction and pay attention to the consequences of behaviours, can be ascribed to wrong patterns of behaviour that are provided to the children [24]. The theory proposes that the problem originates from providing inappropriate patterns of behaviour to children and also applying reinforcement mechanisms in an incorrect manner [25].

C. Differential Association

This is one of the first theories used to particularly explain deviancy, delinquency and crime. According to the theory crime is the result of social interaction, and a person just can commit a crime after a period of being in an environment with high frequency of laws' violation and favorable opinion towards the behaviour. The situation includes some components such as motives, attitudes, and techniques which support the deviant behaviour. In fact the components together give a definition for people who interact in an especial environment. The most influential definitions are prepared by informal and primary groups like family, friends, and peers. The process is followed by the formal and secondary groups, such as kindergartens, schools and state organisations which convey the definitions in a looser manner. In spite of several revisions in the theory [26 and 27], the core concept of differential association has not been changed even in the last reformulations [28]**.** Moreover, there are lots of empirical supports as it was applied for traditional crimes [29,30,31, 32 and 33]**.** The best opinion about the efficacy of the theory in explaining delinquent and deviant behaviours can be seen in the sentence "there is no... better predictor of criminal behavior than the number of delinquent friends a person has" [34].

Using the theory to explain of being involved in more delinquent behaviour and re-arrestment, differential association theory predicts that people learn to engage in deviancy and crime primarily from friends, peers and family during interaction and transmitting norms and traditions which are acceptable for them. The group's members also share some ideas about thieving, bullying and others' rights violation [35]. It can be supposed that the behind ideas for justification and neutralizing tactics are shared in the course of differential association.

The theory applied in several studies to predict risk-taking behaviours among adolescents [36]. This theory could successfully explain considerable part of deviant behaviours variance; for instance, explaining a large part (41%) of variance in adolescents' smoking [37], even better for marijuana (68%) and alcohol abuse (55%) [38], and also explaining drug abuse variance among Korean adolescents [39] as well as the problem among the Italian adolescents [40].

D. Identity Theory

Like labeling theory, identity theory and particularly its structural explanation stems from the symbolic interaction [41 and 42]. While several types of symbolic interaction views [43,44,45 and 42] are recognised, all of these approaches have common concepts, for example, all of them

believe that both social and personal "selves" are shaped and sustained through social interaction [46 and 47]. In line with the structural approach to symbolic interaction viewpoint, a definition of the self is presented here which consists of several contemporary identities that a person can apply each one according to the situation and its requirements [47]. According to the theory, one of the identities is understood as the main figure of the self in a definite social status [48, 49 and 42]. These identity concepts are included in a hypothetical construct, or what is so-called, the standard identity [50,51and 52]. The fact can be generalized to all types of identities, consisting role identities like teacher and plumber, and also "deviant" identities such as criminal or drug trafficker. From the identity theory view point, identities play their roles by making comparison between different perceptions about a person including the reflected assessments and the associated feedbacks which come from the situation to the identity standard.

In the situation of being any difference between the standard definition and meanings of identity from one side and how a person acts in the situation on the other side, an error or disagreement is appeared which in turn serves like a behavioural pattern. So, to decrease the error or disagreement to zero, the person tries to revise the perceived self-directed concepts or feedbacks so that they match the personal concepts with his/her identity standards. This process verifies the identity by making equilibrium between the perceived concepts with how he/she defines themselves (self verification process). Hence, in the situation, behaviour is a function of the disagreement or error between the perceived perceptions/ feedbacks and behavioural standards which is provoked by the tendency for self-verification.

Thus identity theory is perceptual and states that people control their perceptions by applying behavioural patterns. According to the theory people do anything to alter the concepts in the situation so that the self-directed concepts and meanings (including the reflected assessments and feedbacks) being matched with their identity standard, and consequently confirms their identity. Thus the perceptual identities are active constructs rather than passive agents. They try to protect identity concepts by neutralizing the incongruent characteristics and labels with the standard identity.

Sampson and Laub [53] believe in a sequence of arrestment, formal labeling and imprisonment finally leads to a public labeling. A group of researchers [54] showed that involvement with the legal system and getting label of prisoner is correlated with more serious delinquency in later years. Weerman[55] found a relationship between labeling at adolescents period as prisoner and committing more serious crime in adulthood. Cullen et al. [1] found imprisonment experience and its consequence, labeling, ended to high rate of re-arrestment. Chiricos et al. [56] studied a group consisted of 95,919 male and female in a 2 years period and found from the group those who labeled as prisoner showed higher rate of re-arrestment. Petrosino et al. [57] found putting juveniles in prison did not show a controlling effect in this regard. There were 29 studies in the review and almost all of the findings were negative. In a longitudinal study [58] about offenders in the Netherlands it was found that labeling group as prisoner led to higher rate of re-arrestment than the group which treated with a community service without the stigma.

Cid [59] found that offenders with suspended sentences showed a lower risk of re-arrestment than a group with custodial sentences. Some researchers reported using sanctions such as community service led to lower rate of re-arrestment than group who sentenced to imprisonment [60, 61 and 62], a labeling effect.

However, not all studies ended to the similar results. In several studies [63, 64 and 65] no difference was found between groups of with and without label in this regards. In a study [66] a group followed including 5,469 of male offenders to find whether imprisonment is effective on prevention of re-arrestment. They reported that the most important variable in this regard was the quality of the rehabilitation not merely imprisonment. some researchers[64] found there is no significant difference between a group with prisoner label and a comparison group without the label and with community based sanctions in terms of their re-arrestment.

Thompson [67] indicated that imposing a deviant identity from society can make way smooth towards delinquency. Watson [68] reported that there is a strong relationship between deviant identity and committing delinquency. A research team [69] found that prevention of forming a deviant identity for delinquents by assigning them to other forms of sanctions except imprisonment can decrease their re-arrestment rate significantly in comparison to a group who had the detention experience.

Matsueda [17] showed a significant relationship between labeling and deviant identity, in the same line [70] a significant relationship found between deviant identity and involvement in more serious delinquent behaviours. it was also found [71]that being isolated from society and pessimistic view of people about them are effective agents to pull them towards gang group which in turn end to commit more crimes. In fact, the labeled juvenile is high risk of being excluded from culturally accepted social networks in the society, and pulling into deviant groups. For instance, a relationship between involvement in delinquency and peer rejection from conventional groups was found [72]. In the vicious circle of imprisonment, labeling and isolation from the society, the labeled persons feel social pressures such as social exclusion and deprive from a normal interaction. So they choose a deviant identity [73].

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling

Statistical population and sample in this study was the same thus all 180 prisoners in Tabriz prison in 2010 were included in this research.

B. Instrumentation

Totally four variables of re-arrestment, labeling, social exclusion, and deviant identity were assessed. The first variable was measured from judiciary system records which stored in the system as a part of judicial procedure. The rest variables were measured via a self-construct questionnaire which covered the categories according to the related theories.

Accordingly, the labeling was assessed by items which encompassed nick name, humiliation, scolding, accusation and mocking the deviant identity was assessed by items which covered indexes such as knowledge of consequences of the behaviour, lack of penitence, and interesting to the deviant behavior. The last component, social exclusion, was measured by questions which covered fear of social communication, incongruence with social issues, limitations in daily functions, lack of suitable social position, social rejection, and deprivation form job opportunities. Each index was assessed by 10 items which divided to two parts, the first five items of each sub scale put in the first half and the rest in the second one. Concurrent validity coefficients of the questionnaire were as: 0.832, 0.812, 0.725 and 0.819 for whole, labeling, social exclusion, and deviant identity respectively. The counted coefficients of reliability with Chronbach's alpha were as: 0.922, 0.874, 0.952, and 0.935 with the above mentioned order.

C. Statistics

The applied research method was correlational and Pearson correlation coefficient beside frequency, mean and percentage were used to analysis data.

III. FINDINGS

Ages of the subjects were in range of 15-29 with a mean of 19.5, the mean of literacy level was 7 with 12 per cent illiteracy in the group. The mean of family household was 5.8 compared with Iran's norm, 5.4, [4] (Baratvand, 2011), parents' education was 8.5 and 4 for mothers and fathers respectively. Parents' job was for mothers mostly unprofessional and low paid jobs, however mothers almost all were housewives. Type of crimes was 62, 31, 24 and18 per cent for thieving, addiction, physical aggression and other crimes respectively (more than 100 per cent is counted as some subjects committed more than one crime). Mode of re-arrestment was as: 36.7 (two records), then 21/7 (three times), 10.6 (five times), 8.7 (4 times). The range of re-arrestment was between 1-28 times (6.1 just one time and less than 0.01, 28 times). The indexes of mean, standard deviation and variance for the variable were 4.06, 3.76 and 14.2 respectively. The Pearson correlation coefficients which achieved between re-arrestment and variables of labeling, social exclusion, and deviant identity in this study were as: $r=0.69$(df=178, p=0.009); $r=0.7$(df=177, p=0.031) and $r=0.74$(df=178, p<0.001) respectively. The results showed a significant relationship between the re-arrestment and the other mentioned variables.

IV. DISCUSSION

According to theories of labeling, differential association, social identity, and social learning, being involved in the situation can lead to more crimes or deviant behaviors. Finding of this study confirmed the efficacy of the theories in prediction of labeling from society and hostility of people towards the group can make the situation worse. The findings are in line with some studies [59, 37, 55, 57 and 58] about

relationship between labeling and re-arrestment. However, others [65 and 66] reported no relationship among the variables. Probably there are some intervening variables such as cognitive process like self assessment, and the quality of information processing as it can be seen in the social identity theory, race, socio economic status and social class which intervene in the results. While the results of this study are in line with some studies [67, 68 and 69] that showed relationship between re-arrestment and deviant identity, some researchers [17 and 70] insisted on the preventive role of social networks in this regard. Findings of this study about relationship between deviant identity and committing more crimes are in line with a group [71 72, 74, and 75] who showed exclusion from society can lead to involvement with deviant peer groups and committing more delinquent behaviours.

V. CONCLUSION

According to the findings in this study which are in line with the labeling and cultural transmission theory, the experience of imprisonment can lead to being involved in more crimes. The process can be exaggerated, if it not recognize and control by the judiciary system. However, practitioners in this field can stop the trend just by using maximum of sanctions which are based on probation, community service and other methods except imprisonment.

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