



## Investigation of Social Harm in Clients Referred to the Department of Prevention and Rehabilitation of the Social Hurt in Shiraz in 2016

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### Abstract

As a threat, social harm imposes a serious challenge to the health of individuals in the community. The purpose of this study was to investigate the status of social harm in clients referred to the Department of Prevention and Rehabilitation of the social hurt in Shiraz. 5289 individuals who had been brought to or referred to the center by the teams of Prevention and Rehabilitation in the city of Shiraz in 2016 participated in this cross-sectional study. The data were collected through a researcher-made form. Data analysis was performed using the chi-square test and SPSS software. The results showed that 3950 (74.7%) participants were male adults, 813 (15.4%) were female adults and 526 (9.9%) were under 15 years old. The findings showed that 4827 (91.3%) participants were Iranian, 320 (6.1%) were Afghan and 142 (2.7%) were Pakistani. And finally, from the total number of people admitted to the center, 1435 (27.1%) individuals were freed on parole, 556 (10.5%) were referred to the recruitment unit, and 1652 (31.2%) were referred to rehabilitation centers. Given that the issue of social harm has become one of the most important challenges in recent years and this situation can adversely affect the physical and mental health of individuals in the community, there is a need for an organized and scientific approach accordingly.

**Key words:** Social harm, Epidemiology, Shiraz.

### Introduction

Social harm refers to any kind of individual or social behavior that does not fall within the framework of the ethical principles and general rules of the society and as a result, is subject to legal or social prohibition [1]. Social harm includes a wide range of anomalies such as divorce, drug addiction, sexual issues, suicide, theft, aggression, home run, unemployment, poverty, straying, begging, bullying, drinking, etc. [1-6]. Social harm, as a threat, poses a serious challenge to the health of individuals in the community [1]. The results of recent studies have shown that many factors such as urban development, population excessive growth, peer

influence, and disintegration of interpersonal relationships can play a role in causing and exacerbating social harm [1]. Although the occurrence of social harm in society is inevitable and the essence of human social life is always dealing with deficiencies and failures, social harm is a non-personal, real, relative but controllable phenomenon. Designing and identifying social harm requires a specific and thoughtful social unit to address them through group interaction [7].

Social harm is on the rise all over the world. Social harm threatens the security of the country and it is necessary to take actions to contain these

threats. Obviously, before taking any action to control social harm as a threat, it is necessary to identify it, quantify its frequency in the community, and identify the causes and factors associated with it. Therefore, this study aimed at assessing the status of social harm in clients referred to the Department of Prevention and Management of Social Harm in Shiraz in 2016. In addition to raising awareness of the current status and types of social harm in Shiraz metropolitan, it was intended to provide a basis for decision making and planning for municipal officials. One of the limitations of this study was the lack of similar studies to use as a framework for research and to compare the results.

### Materials and Methods

This is a cross-sectional study. The researcher has collected data from all those clients who were brought to or who referred to the Department of Prevention and Management of Social Harm in Shiraz in 2016 using a researcher-made form. The form includes the following variables: age, sex and province of issuance, province of residence, cause of arrest, nationality, and present status. It is worth mentioning that the Department of Prevention and Management of Social Harm is one of the sub-organizations of Shiraz municipality and is the only center responsible for the care and organization of the affected people in the whole Shiraz metropolitan area. People with social harm enter the center in two ways. The first method is carried out by specialized teams of the department who bring the affected people from all over the city of Shiraz and the second method is where the people refer to the center on their own.

Qualitative variables were reported as numbers and percentages, while quantitative variables were reported as mean and standard deviation. A Chi-square test was used to compare the variables. The data were analyzed using SPSS version 24. In addition,  $P < 0.05$  were considered statistically significant in all cases.

### Results and Discussion

In this study, a total of 5289 people were referred to this center during 2016 with 3950 (74.7%) male, 813 (15.4%) female, and

526 (9.9%) individuals under 15. The frequency distribution of the age of the clients is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Distribution of frequency of age of the clients referred to the Prevention and Organizing Department of Social Harm in Shiraz by year

Age	N (%)
Under 20	642 (12.1)
20 – 50	3845 (72.8)
Over 50	799 (15.1)
Total	5259 (100)

The results showed that they were arrested because of the following reasons: begging, 1696 (32.1%) individuals; straying, 2368 (44.8%) individuals; forgery, 16 (0.3%) individuals; refugee, 29 (0.5%) individuals; homelessness, 91 (1/7%) individuals; unattended elderly, 4 (0/1%) individuals; unattended mentally impairment, 4 (0/1%) individuals; destitution, 996 (18/8%) individuals; and self-reported, 84 (6/6%) individuals. Since begging and straying were the most prevalent causes of arrest, other factors have been investigated as a single entity. The results showed that among the causes of arrest, begging and straying were the most frequent causes in both genders among all the three groups. There was a statistically significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between these factors and gender (Table 2).

In terms of literacy, 63% of all the participants were illiterate. Most of those arrested for these reasons do not have high educational levels and there is a statistically significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between the causes of arrest and education (Table 3).

The results showed that 4827 (91.3%) individuals were Iranian, 320 (6%) were Afghan and 142 (2.7%) were Pakistani. Begging was the most frequent cause of arrest among both Iranian and non-Iranian individuals in this study and there is a significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between causes of arrest and their nationality. (Table 4).

The results also showed that in terms of marital status, 3102 (58.7%) individuals were single, 2002 (37.9%) were married, 78 (1.5%) were widowed, 93 (1.8%) were divorced and 14 (0.3%) were annulled.

**Table 2:** Comparison of causes of arrest in referrals to the Prevention and Rehabilitation Department of Shiraz

Cause of arrest	Begging	Straying	Other causes	Self-report	Total	Chi <sup>2</sup> result
Male	845 (21.4%)	2175 (55%)	863 (21.8%)	70 (1.8%)	3953 (100%)	< 0.001*
Female	410 (50.4%)	180 (22.1%)	210 (25.8)	13 (1.6%)	813 (100%)	
Under 15	442 (84.5%)	13 (2.5%)	67 (12.8%)	1 (0.2%)	523 (100%)	

\*Significance level is 0.05

**Table 3:** Comparison of causes of arrest in Referrals to the Prevention and Rehabilitation Department of Social Harm in Shiraz by their education

Cause of arrest	Begging	Straying	Other causes	Self-report	Total	Chi <sup>2</sup> result
Illiterate	1328 (39.9%)	1597 (58%)	373 (11.2%)	32 (1%)	3330 (63%)	< 0.001*
Middle school	264 (20.3%)	542 (41.7%)	461 (35.5)	32 (2.5%)	1299 (24.6%)	
High school diploma	85 (16.8%)	175 (34.5%)	232 (45.8%)	15 (3%)	507 (9.6%)	
Undergraduate	12 (15.4%)	32 (41%)	32 (41%)	2 (2.6%)	78 (1.5%)	
Graduated	8 (11.4%)	19 (27.1%)	40 (57.1%)	3 (4.3%)	70 (1.3%)	
Master's degree	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	2 (40%)	0 (0%)	5 (0.4%)	

\*Significance level is 0.05

**Table 4:** Comparison of causes of arrest in Referrals to the Prevention and Rehabilitation Department of Social Harm in Shiraz by nationality

Cause of arrest	Begging	Straying	Other causes	Self-report	Total	Chi <sup>2</sup> result
Iranian	1307 (27.1%)	2325 (48.2%)	1111 (23%)	84 (1.7%)	4827 (91.3%)	< 0.001*
Afghan	249 (77.8%)	42 (13.1%)	29 (9.1)	0 (0%)	320 (6%)	
Pakistani	141 (99.3%)	1 (0.7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	142 (2.7%)	

\*Significance level is 0.05

Begging has the highest frequency cause among arrested individuals irrespective of their marital status and there was a significant relationship ( $P < 0.001$ ) between causes of arrest and marital status.

Districts 1, 2, and 8 accounted for the most number of arrests, and there was a statistically significant relationship between causes of arrest and all the eleven districts of Shiraz municipality ( $P < 0.001$ ). In terms of addiction, the results also showed that 3034 (57.4%) individuals were

addicted, 153 (2.9%) were involved in rehabilitation and 2102 (39.7%) were not addicted at all. Results output of this office and the assignment of individuals shows out of which 1437 (27.2%) individuals were free on parole, 556 (10.5%) were offered to the employment unit, and 1652 (31.2%) were referred to rehabilitation centers.

Social harm has been one of the concerns of human society so far. Given the spread of the industrial revolution and the growing scope of

human needs and consequently feeling of failure and disappointment, there has been a rise in corruption, addiction, theft, sexual deviations, and other harm. This phenomenon has caused problems for the residents of these areas, especially in the metropolitan areas. The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of social harm in Shiraz.

As the results of the study showed, 3845 (72.7%) individuals were between 20 and 50 years of age. They were expected to be economically active and contribute to the economy of the country, but as observed, they have been added to the overburdened group of the society by being involved in social harm leading to imposing high costs on the country. The results also showed that 87.6% of the hurt had low educational levels and were mostly illiterate. In recent years, illiteracy among Iranian children has declined. But the number of alienated children with no educational opportunities is rising, and these illiterate people may become a part of the socially hurt in the society in the coming years. The costs of educating these children seem to be far less than the social damage they may cause to society. Therefore, in-service education should be included in the objectives of the Ministry of Education to educate this group of children.

The results of the study showed that nearly 40% of the affected people i.e. about 2,000 individuals are married. Considering their family members, there will be about 10,000 individuals directly affected by social harm within a year. Given the importance of this issue and the large number of people affected by social harm, resolving this issue requires special attention from responsible institutions such as the governorate and other related institutions. The findings of this study also showed that there is are different approaches to the spatial distribution of the alienated refugees in urban areas. So that Afghans are mainly located in districts one, three, and eight. While more than 79.6% of Pakistani refugees are living in district 10 and others live in districts three, eight, and eleven. This should be taken into account when considering the organization of alienated refugees.

The results of the study showed that beggars, strays, foragers, refugees, etc. were not evenly distributed in different urban areas, but each of the hurt was grouped in specific areas. Therefore, municipal authorities should consider the spatial pattern of these affected individuals to manage social harm. About 30% of all the people organized by the Department of Social Harm have been freed on parole; however, there is no guarantee for their betterment and they may return to the center within a short period. That said, they are not precisely identifiable and they cause waste of a great deal of budget, workforce, and staff's time. In addition to setting up an accurate system to identify these people, more efficient plans are required for their future outputs to the society to provide more favorable consequences for these organized people.

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### Footnotes

**Authors' Contribution:** MGH and SHH contributed to the concept and design of the study. SB, SMH, and HMM conducted the initial search, extracted the data, and drafted the manuscript. MGH, SHH, and SB performed data analysis and interpretation. SMH, HMM, and MGH read the manuscript and revised it for important intellectual content. All the authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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