

Non Profit Charity of Rebirth Society

Executive Summary:

1. This report reviews the addiction situation and the socially harmed of this disease. Findings indicate that the government and active organizations in the Islamic Republic of Iran have made efforts on all fronts to improve the addiction situation and realize the rights of drug users and recovering drug users. Nevertheless, drug consumption is an extensive subject with different dimensions and the reduction of problems from it requires further attention. This report deals with the improvements made in this regard in Iran: laws and regulations on treatment opportunities for drug users; employment for recovering drug users and reduction of the criminalization of addiction and nongovernmental organizations have played a significant role in the drug demand reduction and harm reduction, and have helped in the treatment of addicts. But some problems have slowed down the improvement trend of drug demand reduction in Iran; these include economic sanctions which affect the cost of drugs and therefore the appearance of very high risk behaviour of among the addicts, and also the existing taboo and discrimination in society towards addicts and recovering addicts.

2. Ultimately this report in line with the accepted recommendations of the first round of the UPR presents the following recommendations:

- a) Raising awareness of the general public and various sectors such as school and university students on addiction and its consequences.
- b) Efforts to reduce the taboo and discrimination towards addicts through implementation of different educational and social programmes.
- c) Reduction of the criminalization of addiction.
- d) Share successful experiences of different countries with regards to drug abuse through regional and international meetings.
- e) Request the UN and international community to remove unjust economic sanctions.

Keywords:

Drug use, social victims, economic sanctions

About us:

3. The Rebirth Society is a nongovernmental organization which began its activities in 2000 on drug demand reduction, harm reduction and treatment of the drug users. During its period of activities, the Rebirth Society has managed to have an effective share in prevention, treatment and harm reduction of drug use. Thirty-three percent of harm reduction centres of the country have been launched by this Society. Furthermore, Rebirth has launched several treatment centres around the country which have the capacity to provide services to 100,000 clients per year.

4. Cooperation with international agencies such as UNODC, UNHCR, and the European Commission are some of the activities of this Society. In 2005 the Rebirth Society successfully received the UN civil award as the best NGO active in the drug demand reduction in the world.

5. The Rebirth Society has also placed different educational, research, social and cultural activities regarding addiction in its working agenda. The holding of different educational

workshops on addiction and related fields, confronting social stigma and discriminations, training of peer counselors, launching social support centre for various groups involved with addiction (users, recovering addicts and families) and conducting various researches on social injuries are all some of the activities.

6. In 2012 in the Commission on Narcotic Drugs conference the Rebirth Society was recognized as successful NGO model in drug demand reduction field, and through a speech got the opportunity to transfer its experiences to other NGOs present.

Pivotal Recommendations:

7. This report is prepared on the basis of the below recommendations which were made in Iran's first round of the UPR in 2010:

- a) Continuation of efforts for the promotion of human rights in economic, social and cultural fields (Sudan)
- b) Further efforts to further promote economic and social rights and the rights of vulnerable groups (Vietnam).
- c) Coordination of efforts for effective promotion of the enjoyment of the right to economic, social and cultural rights (Libya).
- d) Continuation of efforts to raise living standards through furthering the enjoyment of people's rights to economic, social and cultural rights, and combat problems resulted from illegitimate and unjust economic sanctions (Zimbabwe).

The situation of recommendations in the past, present and satisfactory future:

8. Drug abuse in its today's form began from the 1850s and influenced by various ups and downs, and now it is deemed as one of Iran's social injuries. As a vulnerable group, the drugs users face various problems such as unemployment, stigma and social discrimination even after recovery. From our viewpoint suitable is when the addiction problem in Iran is placed under effective management and the victims of addiction can also enjoy their full economic and social rights.

Data Collection Method:

9. To present a picture of the addiction situation and problems and advancements in the last 4 years, the Rebirth Society collects data on the basis of research findings, political, legislative and judicial monitoring, and also media monitoring.

Advancements:

In legislative terms:

10. In 2010 the amendment to the Combating Drugs Act of 1997 approved by the Expediency Council further provided the opportunity for impoverished drug users to receive treatment, and reduced the criminality of addiction.

11. In 2011 according to a ratification of the cabinet, it was agreed that insurance funds were obligated to provide the treatment costs of addicts. Also a share of the annual allocated credit must be allocated to job creation for recovering addicts, and the Technical Profession Organization must cover recovering addicts for education courses according to the guidelines. Furthermore it was agreed that recovering addicts to be given priority in the Mehr Housing Project according to the executive guidelines.

12. The drafting of two regional programmes and the signing of a letter of agreement between Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding fighting drugs in the region in 2011, and the launching of a Regional Program in Afghanistan is another one of the improvements in this regard that will be strengthened through regional cooperation.

13. Issuing a permit for the opening of Alcohol Addiction Centre in 2013 by the government is another effective action in the field of addiction treatment.

Executive Field:

14. With the allocation of 5% of the annual credit of employment was allocated to the employment of recovering addicts, in accordance with the amendment to the Combating Drugs Act (2010) a positive step was taken for the employment of recovering addicts.

Nongovernmental Organizations:

15. Over the last four years, a good environment has come about for NGOs activities, and new NGOs in Tehran and the provinces were established in the field of harm reduction and addiction treatment. Cooperation between NGOs and the government in drug demand reduction and treatment have increased in Iran and NGOs work alongside the government in this regard. The Rebirth Society plays an active role in the technical decision making committee in Iran Drug Control Headquarter.

Challenges and Difficulties

Economic Sanctions:

17. In view of the Iranian government's efforts for the reduction and combat against the effects of unjust economic sanctions, the advancement of most economic and social activities have been faced with difficulties over the recent years. With the rise in the price of drugs, influenced by the increase in the sharp rise in foreign currency value as a result of the sanctions, changes have been observed in the addicts usage patterns, drug users are drawn towards high risk behaviors and cheaper substances with poorer quality, which can bring about serious problems among this group and, on a larger scale, the whole of the Iranian society.

18. Also due to economic sanctions, the expenses of drug use treatment have risen and or there've been restrictions in their distribution. This has resulted in complications in treatment of drug users.

Social Areas:

19. Although as mentioned, over the recent years positive steps have been taken in the direction of the improvement of society's views on addiction and reduction of criminalization, but it seems however that the criminalization of addiction is a hardened social issue, and requires further efforts of the government and NGOs in changing the view from addiction being a crime to being a disease, and reduction of the stigma and discrimination is needed.

Recommendations:

20. Rebirth Society presents the following recommendations for the removal of existing problems and speed of improvements:

- a) Public awareness-raising on addiction disease
- b) Efforts for the reduction of the stigma and discrimination towards drug users through implementation of various educational and social projects.
- c) Reduction of the criminalisation of addiction and efforts to identify all aspects of the disease.
- d) Increase regional and international relations in the field of addiction and sharing of successful experiences.
- e) National and international efforts for the suspension of unjust economic sanctions and or reduction of their effects on the vulnerable drugs addicts groups.