SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF ACTIVE CIVIL INSTITUTIONS IN THE FIELD OF DRUG ADDICTION: A PATH TO DEVELOPMENT

[1]FATEMEH SARAMI FOROSHANI, [2]AHMAD GHYASVAND, [3]GHAFAR YARAHMADI

Ph.D, Sociology and Lecturer at Payame Noor University,
Faculty of Social Science Member of Allame University, Researcher and Editor

Abstract - The sociological dimensions of functions related to nongovernmental organizations, with an emphasis on the functions of these organizations as a civil institution has often been neglected.Thus, the present study aimed to use qualitative method of grounded theory. In this method, the results of interviews with the managers of active nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) as well as addiction treatment specialists were analyzed and coded. Accordingly, amodel was developed upon which the formulation of the organizations was studied. The results of the analysis showed that confiding social affairs including the treatment of addiction to NGOs has many advantages, among which the most important are the deep recognition of civil institutions in relation to social issues, increasing financial and voluntary contributions from the public in the field of social issues, increasing concern for high quality services, the rise of public demand for conducting interventions, and the demand from the people towards civil institutions.

Keywords - Civil Institutions, Drug Abuse, NGOs, Treatment

I. INTRODUCTION

The statistics released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in 2010 show that 41% of the world's opium is consumed in Iran [1]. However, the drug use trend has changed. On one hand, the average age of consumers is lower than in previous years, and the pattern of consumption is changing from the consumption of opium to heroin by injection[2]. The statistics of 8,000 high-risk addicts reported by the Counter Narcotics Headquarters in 2011, as well as the number of deaths among addicts in Tehran's metropolitan area, indicate that Tehran is the most polluted city in the country in terms of narcotics [3].Therefore, according to the reports and statistics published annually by international assemblies, it is evident that the drug use in the whole world is increasing. To this end, in 1961, according to the Convention on Narcotic Drugs, most countries of the world were obliged to enforce the laws on drug use, with varying degrees of legal stringency in accordance with their own society [4].In addition, regarding the conducted studies to find out the influences of variables, the use of scientific approach was considered at the head of prevention activities. Secondary prevention aimed at controlling and preventing more consumption and handling other high-risk behaviors caused by drug use are regarded as the important approaches in the area of prevention. Therefore, the need for reducing harm and treatment programs along with preventive programs was considered as necessary and the treatment of addicts as one of the main components of the demand reduction strategy was identified[5].

In Iran, before recognizing the entry of non-governmental organizations into the field of drug control, custodians included governmental agencies such as the Counter Narcotics Headquarters as a policy-maker, which coordinated and supervised other active governmental agencies in this field and the Welfare Organization, as well.Despite the efforts done in the field of demand reduction, especially in the area of treatment by governmental agencies and spending large budgets, this dilemma has not diminished as expected by the community. In this regard, there are several reasons for criticizing government activities in this area such as the lack of correlation between different treatment patterns and conceptual differences or attitudes in various governmental sectors [3], the polarization of views in the field of addiction treatment and withdrawal attitudes toward some supplementary therapies [6], poor quality of public health care services [3], and the existence of social protection, treatment, rehabilitation and addiction harm reduction in Iran under the supervision of several different custodians. Nowadays, the presence of non-governmental organizations alongside governmental agencies in the area of international demand reduction has become one of the significant issues in which the the role of these organizations as a missing link is considered for the effectiveness of state preventive and therapeutic activities [7]. The future of the world is dominated by nongovernmental organizations, according to which every nation will have a strong survival potential through the expansion of NGOs. An attempt to move from mass democracy to organized democracy has led to the design of a civil society perspective against a mass society. Civil society in its new meaning refers to a sphere of social relations, which is independent of political power and involves a set of organizations, institutions, and private and civil (non-private) entities. These institutions play the role of mediating between political power and social power, and being democratic is considered as their most important feature. In Iran, formore than two decades, we have witnessed a formal and serious presence of

volunteers, NGOs, and community-based organizations,which have been actively involved in the fight against addiction, itsprevention, and treatment. More than 80% of drug-related harm reduction and drug treatment programs in Iran are conducted by NGOs, and among 2,271 nongovernmental organizations, about 37% are involved in preventive activities, 56% in treatment, and 7% in reducing damage activities[3]. Accordingly, attention should bepaid to new approaches in the field of Narcoterrorism. This approach is based on different methods from the past, requiring a change from a prescriptive viewpoint to participatory and community-based viewpoint, from dependence on existing resources to social capacity building and advocacy, from focusing on state-oriented solutions to evidence-based problem-solving methods and with emphasis on initiatives of the civil society, as well as the emphasis on collective collaboration, social co-operation and accountability, all of which are regarded as the features of this new approach. Therefore, the present study aims to recognize the role and the presence of NGOs and civil institutions in the field of management and reduction of the demand for drugs as much as possible, assuming that the presence of the public sphere, as Habermas points out, reduces the fragility of the collision between the private sphere and the state, and increases social flexibility. From Habermas's point of view, the public sphere is considered as a part of civil society.Although the state controls the institutions of the public sphere including associations through law, the main function of the public sphere is to restrict the power of the state and create a kind of sustainability and moderation[8]. Despite all of the theories in the field of civil society, there is no independent area for voluntary and nonprofit studies. As the issues related to nongovernmental sector are attributable to the social sciences, the studies in this area were taken into consideration. For sociologists, the basic debate on the role of nongovernmental organizations in developed and developing countries was further based on a public oversight analysis, in which nongovernmental organizations provide welfare and social services more effectively and efficiently than governments. As a result, the relationship and cooperation between governments and these organizations in the provision of welfare services became the dominant issue in countries like America, Germany, France, and the United Kingdom [9].

II. METHOD

The present research was conducted based on a grounded theory method which allows the researcher to develop a new theoretical model instead of using predefined theories in cases where it is not possible to formulate the hypothesis. In order to collect the data, qualitative in-depth interviews which were used for two groups of interviewees. The first group was the leaders of NGOs who operated at the national level and included nine organizations, all of which being numbered. The second group included experts and pundits in the field of treatment and NGO's who were interviewed and in-depth information were gathered. This method is in fact a homogeneous sampling method that is used in qualitative methods and it was used for interviewing specialists in a discipline [10]. Finally, after 7 interviews and reaching the saturation stage, the data collection was stopped. The well-known model which Straussand Corbin provided as a systematic GTM (Grounded Theory Method) was regarded as a way to go through the qualitative analysis process which was used in this study. In addition, the data were coded in several steps and eventually in a framework of a predetermined, unified, and arranged model[11].

III. RESULTS

After performing the steps mentioned, the researcher achieved the paradigmatic pattern of Strauss and Corbin. In this model, the main theme is a central phenomenon, which is the study of the dimensions and sociological functions of NGOs in the field of addiction treatment. The causal conditions are the main causes by which the phenomenon of exploration arises. Strategies mean that activists take some behavioral and tactical strategies through causation and what measures and tricks they take in the context and circumstances in which they are located. The underlying conditions are the circumstances in which those conditions and areas affect the main phenomenon, and the intervening conditions mean general moderating factors. Ultimately, what are the effects and consequences of the overall causes and strategies adopted?

By using the obtained model, it is clarified how these institutions, as one of the most important tools of civil society in the country and in view of the recurrence rate of addiction, as well as their causative conditions and their intervention structures, have acted in treating addiction treatment, which strategies they used, and finally what are the consequences of these functions. Based on the results of the study, "treatment of drug addiction" and "dual interaction of knowledge and experience" were the most important causative conditions which influenced the performance of addiction therapeutic NGOs. This means that the lack of a uniform pattern in defining the concepts of addiction, addict, and treatment, as well as involving the life of improved managers in choosing a therapeutic approach is regarded as some of the factors preventing the integrity and coherence related to the functions of active therapeutic NGOs. In addition, the fact that experts and empirical directors do not accept each other and “desertification of NGOs “creates a competitive and unhealthy view ,

which prevents the government from trusting. Furthermore, the divergence among NGOs, the transformation of NGOs into a place for economic competition, and the social status of managers along with the attempt to obtain more financial resources from the government to compensate for the shortage of capital resources, should be added to the causative conditions in the functions of NGOs working in the area of treatment.

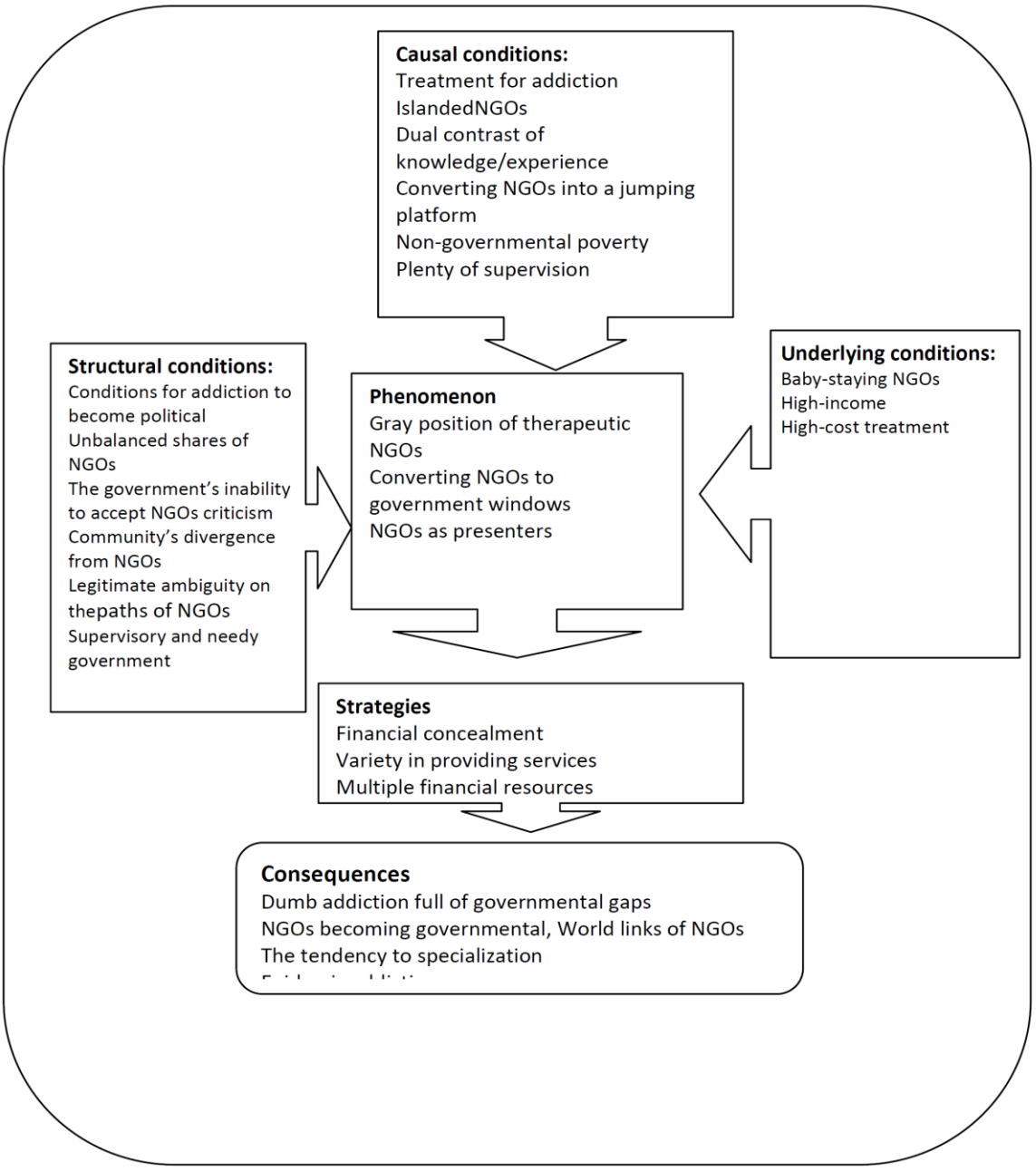


Fig. 1. A conceptual model of active NGOs' functions in the area of addiction treatment

The results of the qualitative interviews and the derived categories indicated that the governmental organizations and their related issues, as well as the society's view at NGOs were considered as the most important structural conditions which have the most limiting effect on the performance of NGOs under study. Political insights on the issue of addiction, the unbalanced shares of the NGOs, monitoring and, at the same time, the government's need for the NGOs as well as the government's lack of flexibility to criticism were regarded as the governmental conditions which affected the performances of NGOs. Further, the superficial and unbalanced look of the government to NGOs was another problem which prevented their effective operation. Furthermore, there were some legal uncertainties regarding the development of NGOs from registration to the type of function they perform in the field of treatment. Some of the issues predicted by the legislator in the path of registration were in contradiction to the nature of the

NGOs and brought the actors backward. In addition, the government, as a means of power, did not attempt to attract or at least inform the public. The results indicated that two factors related to the underlying condition of the treatment NGOs were effective on their performance: 1) the lack of growth and maturity of the NGOs, and 2) treatment is income-based. Since the main concern of NGOs in the field of treatment can be summarized in two areas, namely lack of expertise and lack of financial resources.These institutions adopt strategies to deal with these conditions including financial concealment, diverse services, and use of multiple financial resources. As shown in the conceptual model, the consequences of the therapeutic NGOs strategies resulted in "dumbness of addiction", "governmental state of NGOs", "tendency towards specialization", addiction epidemic, "filling government vacuum", and "global NGO ties". There are many threats to the development of NGOs from different sources. First, politicized attitudes and pressures on the activities of NGOs limit their activities, especially in terms of capacity building in relation to international experience. Further, there is a lack of institutionalized system which reduces their impact on decision-making, monitoring, and controlling. The third point is related to the constraints and economic problems which are partly related to the lack of social protection of various, modern civil activities due to the weakness of organized support from social participation in the public sector. The fourth issue which should be considered is that NGOs have less function and developmental role, and are more affected by service / executive roledue to structural problems, as well as lack of experience in Iran. Finally, institutions are formed on the basis of the interest and the sense of team work for a goal, but the sustainability of NGOs and their continuity for total and complete affiliation depends on providing financial resources and maintaining the executive power of the group together.However, despite all the obstacles which are available on the way of NGOs due to the government's performance, the society's view, and the internal problems of NGOs, there are positive consequences alongside the negative consequences, which themselves indicate the need of the state and society and the efforts of NGOs to improve their performance in the field of addiction treatment. Based on the results, the presence of NGOs along with the government is an important factor in increasing public satisfaction with government performance, especially in the field of social issues, because the government's inability to allocate limited resources to all segments of society and not having a deep look at the social problems of people prevents them from being treated properly by the government. A strong, bilateral relationship based on cooperation and partnership between non-governmental organizations and governmental agencies on the resolution of national or regional problems should be based on mutual respect, acceptance of independence of action, independency, plurality, and the acceptance of the status of non-governmental organizations.

IV. CONCLUSION

In spite of the shortcomings and problems which are available for different reasons for NGOs, quantitative and qualitative growth of these organizations is a great step towards development of the country and creating the necessary conditions for people to demand governmental services.As a result, governmental sectors became smaller and people's presence increased in various fields to solve social problems. The way of surviving and internalizing cultural affairs structurally and organizationally is through civil institutions. Civil society is the place where ordinary people are present and it is considered as a place for fraternization of elites at different levels. In a society where there are lots of conflicts and disagreements in solving social and cultural problems, civil institutions have a role and function moderately [8]. If people are not allowed to participate in social activities or if they are isolated, they cannot rely on social networking support. On the other hand, becoming a member of any social organization can bring a lot of resources to people. The use of social capital by the poor can be used as an important tool for alleviating poverty. Thus, whysuch an action shouldbe overlooked in anti-addiction programs? Undoubtedly, the prospect of future drug management should focus on a new definition of the role of government and people, community, and economy in anti-addiction programs.

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