

Preventive Mechanisms for Offenses under the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law

1. Hossein Ranjbar[✉]: Assistant Professor, Department of Law, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Shomal University, Amol, Iran

2. Sara Kargar Dahr[✉]: Ph.D. Student, Department of Criminal Law and Criminology, Faculty of Law and Political Science, University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran

*Correspondence: h.ranjbar@shomal.ac.ir

Abstract

The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law was enacted in 2021 with the aim of increasing the fertility rate and promoting population rejuvenation. The Law emphasizes the importance of preventing related offenses and incorporates both penal and non-penal preventive measures. Non-penal prevention is implemented through institutions such as the education system, the media, the Ministry of Health, and other relevant organizations, whereas penal prevention is pursued through the criminalization of certain acts, including unlawful abortion. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the present study examines the preventive measures provided for under this Law and identifies gaps in its preventive framework through an analysis of its statutory provisions. The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law primarily focuses on primary prevention, while insufficient attention has been given to secondary and tertiary prevention. The absence of adequate support for at-risk families and the lack of necessary measures to prevent recidivism constitute significant challenges within the Law. To enhance the effectiveness of the Law, it is recommended that oversight of the implementation of preventive measures be strengthened, greater coordination be established among implementing institutions, and cultural and supportive policies be expanded alongside penal measures. Such measures may contribute more effectively to reducing related offenses and achieving the objectives of the Law.

Keywords: Crime, prevention, family protection, youthful population

Received: 05 May 2026

Revised: 27 September 2026

Accepted: 05 October 2026

Initial Publication: 07 October 2026

Final Publication: 01 February 2027



Copyright: © 2027 by the authors. Published under the terms and conditions of Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) License.

Citation: Ranjbar, H., & Kargar Dahr, S. (2027). Preventive Mechanisms for Offenses under the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law. *Legal Studies in Digital Age*, 6(2), 1-11.

1. Introduction

Policymakers' concern over the decline in the country's population growth during the past two decades has led to the proposal of various plans and policies aimed at reversing this trend. The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law (2021) represents the most recent legislative determination to alter this trajectory (Moghaddasi & Roustaei, 2021).

This Law is one of the most important pieces of legislation enacted in the country in recent years and was formulated to address demographic challenges such as declining fertility rates and population aging. It incorporates a range of measures and incentives in various areas, including facilitating marriage, supporting childbearing, providing housing, delivering health and

medical services, and improving families' quality of life. The significance of this Law stems from the fact that demographic transformations, particularly declining fertility rates, have profound and far-reaching effects on different dimensions of society, including the economy, culture, security, and social welfare. A shrinking workforce, rising social security expenditures, weakening family foundations, and declining social dynamism and vitality constitute only some of the adverse consequences of these transformations. Under such circumstances, the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law seeks to address these challenges by providing various solutions. By emphasizing the central role of the family in preserving and enhancing human and social capital, the Law seeks to establish an appropriate environment for family formation and consolidation, childbearing, and the upbringing of a healthy and capable generation. One of the most important issues associated with maintaining a youthful population is the family. Despite the profound transformations and extensive changes that have occurred in social relationships and patterns of social life, the family remains the most fundamental and significant component of the population. The family itself possesses the characteristics of a small society, and the larger society is formed through the aggregation of such units.

Iran's population policies after the Islamic Revolution have passed through two distinct phases: a period of rapid population growth during which fertility-control policies were implemented, and the current period, characterized by declining birth rates and the adoption of pronatalist policies aimed at increasing population growth. In this context, the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law was enacted in November 2021 and incorporated a number of coercive interventions, including the elimination of subsidies for contraceptive methods, restrictions on sterilization, and limitations on prenatal screening.

With the objective of increasing population growth, the Law provides for various penal and non-penal measures. Although primary crime prevention has received considerable attention, secondary and tertiary prevention have largely been overlooked. In relation to secondary prevention, the Law could have supported at-risk families through the establishment of counseling centers, safe houses, and crisis-intervention services. Likewise, with respect to tertiary prevention, which seeks to prevent recidivism, no specific measures have been established for monitoring repeat offenders, particularly in the area of unlawful abortion.

To improve the effectiveness of the Law, social and educational support should be strengthened, access to counseling services should be facilitated, and supervision of medical and healthcare centers should be enhanced. Complementing the existing measures in these ways could contribute more effectively to reducing related offenses and achieving the objectives of population policies (Roustaei & Moghaddasi, 2022).

2. Preventive Manifestations of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law

The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law recognizes the importance and effectiveness of crime prevention and incorporates a range of penal and non-penal preventive mechanisms intended to create conditions and opportunities that deter the commission of offenses. Contemporary criminal policy increasingly favors an approach that, in addition to punishment, pays particular attention to the preventive dimensions of crime and seeks to prevent criminal conduct. In other words, any measure directed against crime and capable of reducing its occurrence may be regarded as preventive.

Accordingly, under this broad understanding, both penal and non-penal measures, whether implemented before or after the occurrence of an offense, are considered forms of prevention. This conception therefore encompasses a wide spectrum of penal and non-penal interventions.

Other scholars employ the concept of prevention in a narrower or restrictive sense. Under this conception, "prevention refers to a set of measures employed by the State to achieve more effective control over crime by eliminating or limiting criminogenic factors or through appropriate management of factors in the physical and social environments that create opportunities for crime" (Niazpour, 2023).

Organizations involved in crime prevention may be classified into several categories according to their functions and institutional nature. This classification is presented in the following table (Aliverdinia, 2014).

Table 1. Classification of Institutions Responsible for Crime Prevention

Approach to the Social Problem	Some of the Most Important Institutions
Awareness raising	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting, Ministry of Education, Islamic Development Organization
Intervention	Law Enforcement Command of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Judiciary, judicial officers
Empowerment	State Welfare Organization, Legal Medicine Organization, Ministry of Education

Source: (Aliverdinia, 2014)

2.1. The Role of Non-Penal (Proactive) Prevention

Proactive prevention encompasses measures that are non-punitive and non-penal in nature and consists exclusively of interventions adopted by criminal justice agencies, together with the participation of civil society, before the commission of an offense and for the purpose of preventing its occurrence (Niazpour, 2023).

Based on the foregoing explanation, the following characteristics may be identified for proactive preventive measures:

1. Proactive preventive measures have an ex ante character. In other words, such measures are applicable when an offense has not yet occurred.
2. These measures lack any coercive or punitive character.
3. Proactive preventive measures are directed either at the entire population or at a particular group within the population and therefore cannot ordinarily be directed at a specific individual.
4. Participatory proactive prevention encompasses measures that seek to prevent crime at the societal level through the involvement of civil society in the sphere of criminal justice (Niazpour, 2023).

According to another definition, non-penal prevention, also referred to as proactive or ex ante prevention, consists of appropriate non-penal measures implemented before the occurrence of a criminal phenomenon through reducing, eliminating, or neutralizing criminogenic causes and rendering opportunities for offending less favorable. Such prevention encompasses two major domains: social prevention, including community-based and developmental prevention, and situational prevention. Under another classification, it includes primary prevention, which focuses on criminogenic conditions, and secondary prevention, which focuses on groups at risk of offending (Sobhdel, 2017).

2.1.1. Education

The first institution capable of transmitting social values to new members of society is the family. Naturally, when a child is born, the family constitutes the first social environment that the child enters. Within this small social group, the child learns social values through the behavior, speech, and conduct of parents and, more generally, through the family's way of life. However, because parents may not necessarily possess expertise in education and upbringing, and may themselves lack knowledge of social values, fail to adhere to such values, or possess personalities that have not fully developed, states and societies have established the institution of education in order to provide a unified and organized mechanism for transmitting social values to children. The education system is therefore responsible for transmitting social values to children and adolescents. Perhaps its most significant function lies in the fact that governments have established it as a principal mechanism for transferring social values to new generations (Razi, 2018).

Accordingly, the education system, as one of the principal and most influential institutions in proactive prevention and the only institution capable of properly implementing developmental prevention within conventional educational processes, should integrate sociological policies with religious teachings in order to provide innovative approaches to the legal and judicial education of children. Article 33 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law refers to the role and responsibilities of this institution in prevention. In defining the duties of the Ministry of Education, the Law provides that the Ministry, in cooperation with the Center for the Management of Islamic Seminaries and the Islamic Development Organization, and within the framework of resolutions adopted by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, including the Fundamental Transformation Document of Education, shall undertake the following measures:

(a) Provide education and training concerning Islamic-Iranian lifestyle skills, individual and social personality development, personal skills, promotion of the cultural value of marriage, family formation, and childbearing, and responsibility for establishing and strengthening the family, while observing learning principles based on the implementation of the Fundamental Transformation Document of Education in educational, research, and training programs through all learning packages, particularly textbooks, educational productions and events, festivals, cultural and educational camps, and interactive and online multimedia content utilizing technological ecosystems in cyberspace at all educational levels.

(b) Incorporate educational and training content consistent with the General Population Policies and General Family Policies into textbooks within two years after the Law enters into force.

(c) Provide education concerning puberty and marriage and relevant educational skills through continuous in-person training for parents and educational personnel, appropriate to students' ages and based on the Islamic-Iranian lifestyle.

(d) Train competent, committed, and married human resources for courses in family management and lifestyle (Article 33 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law).

It is evident that the government must assist families and the education system in implementing these measures by providing the necessary instruments and facilities, particularly by meeting schools' financial requirements and formulating precise regulations and programs (Mohammadi Bijani et al., 2018).

The widespread global movement toward the use of information and communication technologies in education itself demonstrates that the use of the Internet provides unique benefits and advantages for teaching and learning. Accessing information through digital technologies such as computers, the Internet, and related tools affects not only teaching and learning but also learners' identities. Information and communication technology does not merely provide facilities for learning; it also transforms the meaning and role of education and learning. These developments have introduced new concepts such as e-learning, online education, virtual education, and technology-enhanced learning, while also promoting innovative educational systems and methods. By utilizing the latest achievements of the information and communication technology era, these new educational systems and methods have created new paradigms and opened promising horizons in the field of education and learning (Mohammadi Mehr & Keykha, 2020).

In this context, the present author maintains that, given the widespread use of the SHAD platform as an educational application in Iranian schools and the fact that the majority of families have access to this platform, while Internet access associated with it is provided without cost to families with school-aged children, the platform could be utilized more effectively. Examples include the following:

1. **Family values:** The platform may be used to provide online multimedia education concerning family values and healthy relationships among students.
2. **Life skills:** Life skills such as time management, problem solving, and effective communication may be taught to students through this platform so that they may become successful parents in the future.
3. **Support for parents:** Healthy parenting methods and approaches to supporting children may be taught to parents through online workshops conducted through the platform.

In this manner, the SHAD platform may be utilized as a powerful instrument for crime prevention and family support.

2.1.2. *Media*

The contemporary era is the age of information. Considering the importance and influence of the media and the press, Article 2(b) of the Press Law of 1985, as subsequently amended, identifies one of the principal responsibilities of the press as "advancing the objectives set forth in the Islamic Constitution." At the same time, as previously noted, Article 156(5) of the Constitution identifies "crime prevention" as one of the functions of the Judiciary (Niazpour, 2023).

The role of mass media, particularly the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization, in transmitting social and cultural teachings concerning a youthful population and family protection is highly significant. As the country's principal audiovisual media institution, it can play an influential role in raising awareness, persuading the public, directing public opinion toward responsibility, and encouraging childbearing. Accordingly, under the relevant statutory provisions, institutions including the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization, the Islamic Development Organization, and public institutions are required, through the production and dissemination of films, television series, advertisements, and festivals, to promote facilitated marriage, larger families, maternal and spousal roles, family cohesion, and public awareness regarding the consequences of abortion and contraceptive practices.

(a) The production, broadcasting, or dissemination of any educational, cultural, or entertainment content contrary to the General Population Policies is prohibited.

(b) The promotion of families with two or fewer children and permanent singlehood in outdoor advertising, cyberspace, and the media is prohibited, while representation of families with three or more children is encouraged.

(c) The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization is required to produce programs emphasizing the value of childbearing, criticizing very low fertility and permanent singlehood, and emphasizing the prohibition of abortion.

(d) The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization must develop accountability-oriented programs aimed at increasing the population growth rate.

(e) Supervision of content concerning population policies in cyberspace, cinema, theater, and published works is assigned to the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization, the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, and the National Cyberspace Center.

(f) The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, is required to prepare symbols and images supporting Iranian families and mothers and to supervise their inclusion in relevant products.

(g) The Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting organization must establish indicators for evaluating programs and submit six-monthly reports to the Supervisory Council. The Council is likewise required to submit its evaluations to the National Population Headquarters and the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

(h) All institutions covered by this Article are required, under the supervision of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution, to formulate and implement cultural appendices relating to the General Population and Family Policies in accordance with national and local priorities and capacities (summary of Article 28 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law).

According to interview findings, negative experiences, beliefs, and opinions within social networks concerning having children affect couples' decision-making processes and discourage them from childbearing. This finding supports the theory of social acceptance.

In the same study, the concept of "absence of social pressure" was raised by some participants as an influential factor in their decision-making processes. In the present context, absence of social pressure refers to situations in which couples, throughout their lives, were not pressured by parents, relatives, or friends to have children, and their social networks did not express opinions or interfere in their decisions concerning childbearing. Social acceptance theory supports this finding. According to this theory, individuals pay considerable attention to the opinions of friends, groups, parents, and society generally when deciding whether to engage in a particular behavior. If an individual becomes aware that a specific action, such as childbearing, enjoys a high level of social acceptance, that person may consciously or unconsciously become more inclined to engage in that action; conversely, lower social acceptance may produce the opposite effect (Nematian & Noghani Dokht, 2021).

Today, given technological development and globalization, the Internet can be utilized both to introduce the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law and to advance its objectives. For example, through the development of social networks for providing online counseling and educational services, young couples and families can gain easier access to such programs, and such accessibility may further encourage families to utilize them.

2.1.3. Other Organizations

Another organization involved in preventing offenses related to the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law is the State Welfare Organization. Welfare services in Iran were previously provided by charitable individuals and various charitable institutions, many of which had religious dimensions. A prominent example consisted of services provided through charitable endowments (*awqaf*) by different segments of society. Over time, these activities were transferred to organized institutions. At the beginning of the Fourth Development Plan, which may be regarded as the beginning of systematic planning for the welfare sector in Iran, approximately six governmental agencies and several private institutions throughout the country were active in providing welfare services and generally benefited from substantial governmental assistance (Aliverdina, 2014). During the First, Second, and Third Development Plans before the Islamic Revolution, no specific heading was devoted to welfare affairs through which clearly defined objectives could be evaluated. However, during the Fourth Development Plan, institutions relating to "family and child affairs," "welfare of orphaned children," "youth welfare," "rural welfare," and rehabilitation of specific social groups were established. Following the Revolution, greater attention was devoted to welfare services, and relevant organizations were integrated into the Ministry of Health and Welfare. With the establishment of the State Welfare Organization, activities in this field were separated from the Ministry of Health and transferred, together with rural cultural

centers, to the Welfare Organization. Article 23 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law emphasizes the utilization of the capacity of the State Welfare Organization to prevent related offenses and requires supportive measures for infant care facilities and residential centers caring for orphaned and street children.

(a) The State Welfare Organization is required, in cooperation with charitable organizations and civil society institutions, to increase the quantitative and qualitative capacity of infant care centers to 1.5 times their existing capacity.

(b) Each center must employ at least one staff member familiar with Islamic child-rearing principles, introduced by the centers responsible for the management of Islamic seminaries.

(c) Planning and supervision of the educational, developmental, and religious content of these centers shall be conducted in cooperation with Islamic seminaries.

(d) The government is required to provide land under 99-year leases with fixed designated use to charitable organizations approved by the State Welfare Organization (summary of Article 23 of the Law).

Another organization bearing significant responsibility for preventing population decline is the Ministry of Health and Medical Education. The duties of this Ministry are specified in Articles 53, 54, and 55 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law.

Other institutions have also been assigned responsibilities relating to the prevention of population decline. One such institution is the Legal Medicine Organization. Under Note 3 to Article 56, the Legal Medicine Organization is required to record and upload information concerning all stages of abortion applications and their outcomes, including the reasons provided by applicants, members of the relevant commission, whether authorization was granted or denied, and the reasons for authorization, while observing confidentiality principles, in the patient's electronic health record or the system established under Article 54 of the Law. The information must be submitted annually to the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution. Finally, Article 57 specifies the responsibilities of the Judiciary. As the judicial institution is the principal body envisaged by the framers of the Constitution in the field of crime prevention ([Najafi Tavana, 2007](#)), it is required, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education and other relevant agencies, to prepare and announce within no more than three months after the Law enters into force the necessary legal program and measures for preventing and combating unlawful abortion and to propose amendments to the regulations of the competent authorities.

2.1.4. Intervening Institutions

Institutions serving an interventionist function in prevention have likewise not been overlooked by the Law, which assigns specific responsibilities to them. Article 59 of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law identifies the Ministry of Intelligence and other security agencies as interventionist institutions involved in preventing offenses related to the Law. The Article provides that the Ministry of Intelligence and other security agencies, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, the Law Enforcement Command, the Medical Council Organization, the Legal Medicine Organization, and other relevant bodies, shall use existing systems and public reports to identify offenders involved in the sale of abortion-inducing drugs, participation in unlawful abortion, websites and online platforms introducing centers and individuals involved in abortion, health and medical personnel making recommendations outside statutory regulations, and persons promoting unlawful abortion, and shall report such cases to the judicial authorities in their capacity as judicial officers.

2.1.5. Economic Factors

Considering all factors and institutions involved in crime prevention, it becomes evident that economic circumstances exert a particularly strong influence on crime reduction. Economic measures therefore seek to improve individuals' financial circumstances and provide greater peace of mind to those who initially intend to establish a family and have children but postpone their decisions because of various obstacles. Some families are concerned about the substantial present and future expenses associated with raising children, and such concerns constitute a serious barrier to childbearing. These families believe that they may initially be able to meet the costs associated with children, but that as children grow older, expenses relating to education, subsistence, and leisure may become increasingly unaffordable. Some lower-income families are concerned about such substantial costs from the very beginning of a child's life. Responses from participants suggest that, under current circumstances, the perceived costs associated with children exceed the perceived benefits. Although certain facilities and

benefits have been provided during recent years to mothers with children and families with newborns, in the longer term the balance remains weighted toward costs rather than benefits, meaning that these incentives have limited capacity to produce profound attitudinal change within society (Moradi & Safarian, 2024).

According to a survey conducted by the Civil Registration Organization, the results of which were published in 2018, approximately 60% of Iranian women in 2016 expressed a preference for having two children in the future. Nineteen percent preferred one child, while 11% desired three children. The corresponding proportions among men were 56%, 17%, and 12%, respectively. Another survey indicated a substantial gap between Iranian mothers' desired and actual fertility. According to that survey, Iranian mothers desired an average of 3.1 children, whereas their actual fertility rate was 1.7. Concerns about children's future, difficulties associated with child-rearing, and the high costs of having children were among the most significant factors contributing to the considerable gap between desired and actual fertility. For example, according to a report by the Statistical Center of Iran, the inflation rate in November 2021 was nearly 36% higher than in November of the previous year, indicating a substantial increase in living costs. As long as economic and livelihood trends remain unfavorable, citizens can reasonably be expected to approach childbearing decisions cautiously (Nematian & Noghani Dokht, 2021). Accordingly, the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law gives particular attention to economic issues and provides a variety of facilities and benefits in this area. For example, Article 6 provides housing facilities for families having a third or subsequent child and requires governmental agencies to allocate at least 70% of organizational residential properties to such families. The Central Bank is also required, through authorized banks, to provide interest-free housing loans with 20-year repayment periods to families with three or more children.

The Law also provides financial incentives including childbearing loans, tax exemptions, reductions in engineering-service and building-permit fees, support for employed mothers, insurance benefits, and facilities relating to youth education and employment. Nevertheless, because of fundamental economic problems such as inflation, unemployment, and income inequality, these incentives are unlikely to generate profound and sustainable effects. Instead of relying predominantly on temporary incentives, the legislature should have addressed structural economic problems more comprehensively in order to facilitate the effective implementation of population policies.

2.2. The Role of Penal (Reactive) Prevention

Penal prevention occupies an important position in the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law, and the legislature has sought to reduce future offending through the criminalization of new forms of conduct. Reactive prevention is inherently an ex post intervention and is implemented following the commission of criminal conduct through penal mechanisms operating within the criminal justice system (Niazpour, 2023).

In general, reactive or penal prevention refers to penal measures applied before and after the commission of an offense that seek to reduce crime rates through mechanisms of the criminal justice system. The reactive preventive approach relies on individual and general deterrence and exemplary punishment in order to prevent both initial offending and recidivism.

Although criminal sanctions have traditionally constituted the most significant form of enforcement against crime, they have never been the only available form of intervention (Rezaei & Khosravi, 2021). When criminal measures are integrated with non-penal preventive mechanisms and both approaches are applied in a complementary manner, they can contribute significantly to reducing crime within society. Because penal prevention entails numerous disadvantages and may adversely affect offenders' physical and psychological well-being and create difficulties for their subsequent reintegration into society, it should be employed as a measure of last resort against criminality. In general, the objectives of penal prevention include rehabilitation of offenders, protection of society, deterrence of individual offenders, and general prevention through deterrence of others.

The Law introduces a number of new offenses and also provides sanctions for officials and authorities responsible for implementing the Law when they refuse to discharge their statutory duties, thereby seeking to deter conduct through the threat of criminal sanctions. For example, under Article 58, distributing commonly used abortion-inducing drugs outside the regulations established by the Ministry of Health, buying or selling such drugs, or possessing and transporting them without a physician's prescription are subject to Grade 3 to Grade 6 discretionary punishments as a form of penal prevention. Similar

provisions apply to offenses under Article 56 concerning abortion, Note 4 to Article 56 concerning the provision of instruments for abortion, Article 61 concerning large-scale abortion, and other related provisions.

3. Gaps in the Preventive Framework

Managing the national judicial system without timely utilization of preventive mechanisms is exceptionally difficult and makes the achievement of judicial objectives within an appropriate timeframe problematic, while exposing the Judiciary to an unmanageable volume of cases. The prison population currently exceeds institutional capacity, and certain diseases and criminal subcultures emerge or become reinforced within correctional institutions. Such conditions illustrate the problem of penal-population inflation. Consequently, in order to reduce the material and non-material costs of crime, offenses should be prevented before they occur, and all available preventive capacities should be utilized to protect families and promote a youthful population so that the creation of new offenses under this Law does not itself contribute to an increase in the number of incarcerated individuals. There is no doubt that the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law recognizes the importance and effectiveness of crime prevention and contains various direct and indirect preventive mechanisms. Nevertheless, two forms of prevention—secondary and tertiary prevention—have largely remained outside the legislature’s attention.

3.1. Secondary Prevention

The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law overlooks one of the most important forms of prevention that could have played a substantial role in reducing offenses associated with the Law: secondary prevention. By emphasizing secondary prevention, the Law could have provided necessary support to at-risk groups and individuals requiring assistance.

The following table identifies priority groups, individuals, and institutions in relation to social problems:

Table 2. Distribution of Priority Individuals and Groups in Crime Prevention

Level	Priority for Intervention
Individual	Offender
	Person at risk
	Victim
Institutions	Disintegrated families
	Families at risk of disintegration
Community	Criminogenic communities
	Deprived communities
Society (national level)	Lack of social trust

Source: (Aliverdinia, 2014)

Secondary prevention involves the application of methods designed to support individuals who are approaching a state of risk, including persons with substance dependence, homeless individuals, and orphaned or street children. This form of prevention consists of measures directed toward a specific group or an at-risk population in which the probability of harm or offending is particularly high (Molaei & Alizadeh Sarkhabi, 2021).

The objective of secondary prevention is to prevent offending among individuals experiencing critical circumstances. For example, children from economically disadvantaged families, residents of impoverished neighborhoods, and women experiencing unintended pregnancies may constitute at-risk groups. Such individuals require support to prevent problems such as delinquency, unlawful abortion, and increases in the number of working and unaccompanied children. The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law appears, however, to adopt restrictive provisions concerning pregnancy and abortion rather than providing sufficient support to such individuals, which may be regarded as inconsistent with the underlying rationale of secondary prevention. The establishment of centers providing family crisis intervention, specialized counseling, anger management, communication skills, and education concerning healthy sexual relationships is also necessary. The Law therefore requires reconsideration in order to provide more effective protection for families at risk.

3.2. Tertiary Prevention

Tertiary prevention applies in situations in which an individual has already passed beyond the stage of risk and entered the stage of criminal offending. Such measures therefore seek to interrupt the progression of criminal behavior, prevent offenders from becoming professional or habitual criminals, and reduce the seriousness and persistence of offending (Lotfi, 2022).

For example, abortion is generally prohibited under Iranian law, but the legal framework does not provide specific penal preventive measures for repeat offenders or administrators who introduce individuals to unlawful abortion centers, such as enhanced sanctions in cases of repeated abortion-related offenses or repeated buying and selling of abortion-inducing drugs. Nor does it sufficiently provide non-penal preventive measures aimed at modifying the socioeconomic or environmental circumstances that facilitate such offenses. The legislature could have reduced recidivism by increasing sanctions for repeated abortion-related offenses and the activities of unauthorized centers as a form of penal prevention, while simultaneously reforming criminogenic environmental and economic conditions through situational and social preventive strategies.

4. Conclusion

The Family Protection and Youthful Population Law, with the objectives of reducing related offenses and strengthening the institution of the family, provides a variety of preventive measures in both penal and non-penal domains. In the area of non-penal prevention, the Law emphasizes increasing public awareness through educational institutions, the media, and support organizations. In the area of penal prevention, the criminalization of certain conduct, including unlawful abortion and the unauthorized distribution of abortion-related drugs, is employed as a deterrent mechanism.

Nevertheless, the findings of the present study indicate that the Law focuses predominantly on primary prevention and pays insufficient attention to secondary and tertiary prevention. This deficiency may create difficulties for effective implementation and obstruct realization of the Law's broader objectives. Secondary prevention, which involves identifying and supporting at-risk groups such as families affected by domestic violence, persons experiencing substance dependence, and orphaned children, has received limited attention. Establishing specialized crisis-intervention centers, providing psychological counseling and social-work services, teaching life skills, and offering legal assistance to these groups could contribute to reducing conditions conducive to offending.

Similarly, in the area of tertiary prevention, which seeks to prevent recidivism and reduce offenders' return to cycles of criminal behavior, the Law lacks clearly defined executive mechanisms. Although monitoring repeat offenders and controlling high-risk conduct, including activity associated with unlawful abortion, could substantially reduce recidivism, the Law does not establish sufficiently effective measures in this respect. Strengthening supervisory mechanisms, providing rehabilitation and correctional programs, and facilitating access to psychological and social services for repeat offenders are among the measures that could be considered in this context.

Overall, although the Law has taken important steps toward preventing offenses associated with family and population issues, its implementation is unlikely to fully prevent either the occurrence or recurrence of such offenses unless its secondary and tertiary preventive mechanisms are strengthened. Necessary reforms should therefore focus on improving social support, developing counseling and crisis-management centers, and ensuring continuous supervision over implementation of the Law.

The preventive mechanisms applicable to offenses under the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law could develop into a comprehensive preventive model through the integration of traditional and contemporary approaches. Such a model could utilize modern technologies, including social networks for online education and counseling, as well as the collection and analysis of large-scale data through advanced technologies for crime prediction and prevention. If traditional and modern preventive models are successfully integrated, a new framework and strategy adapted to the specific conditions of the country could be developed, thereby contributing to sustainable development and social security.

4. Recommendations

1. Public awareness and understanding of the Law should be increased, since some individuals may unintentionally commit violations or offenses because of inadequate knowledge of its provisions.
2. Public responsibility and cooperation should be strengthened by increasing general awareness of the objectives and importance of family formation, childbearing, and maintaining a youthful population, while clearly explaining the rationale underlying the Law and its legislative objectives.

3. Counseling centers and safe houses should be established to provide life-skills training and support families at risk in furtherance of the objectives of the Law.
4. A culture supportive of childbearing should be promoted through targeted public campaigns and support for larger families.
5. Offenders should be identified and dealt with through participatory criminal policy, while members of the public should be encouraged to participate actively through the establishment of reporting systems.
6. Supervision of cyberspace and the media should be strengthened in order to prevent offenses associated with the Law.
7. Oversight of medical centers and healthcare professionals should be strengthened in order to prevent repeat offending by individuals with previous involvement in unlawful abortion and related offenses.
8. Cooperation and coordination among governmental and non-governmental institutions should be strengthened in order to improve the effective implementation of the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law.
9. Adequate and appropriate financial resources should be provided for implementing the Law's supportive programs, enabling the government to fulfill its obligations, strengthen public trust, and thereby increase public cooperation.
10. Ambiguous provisions should be amended and inconsistencies within the Law should be resolved in order to prevent erroneous interpretations and the commission of offenses. Due attention should also be given to individuals' legitimate rights and freedoms in order to prevent offenses associated with the implementation of the Law.
11. Internet-based technologies should be utilized for online education, public information, and intelligent monitoring of offenses.

Ethical Considerations

All procedures performed in this study were under the ethical standards.

Acknowledgments

Authors thank all who helped us through this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

Funding/Financial Support

According to the authors, this article has no financial support.

References

- Aliverdina, A. (2014). Crime Prevention Management in Iran. *Quarterly Journal of Macro and Strategic Policies*, 2(8), 37-58. https://www.jmsp.ir/article_7769.html?lang=en
- Lotfi, A. (2022). Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency in Iranian Law. *Journal of Research and Studies in Islamic Sciences*, 4(39). <https://joisas.ir/fa/showart-07d1f9828aac76817e1a748abc275a0e>
- Moghaddasi, M. B., & Roustaei, M. (2021). Population Growth through Criminal Interventions: A Review of the Legislative Process and Challenges in Implementing the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law. *Criminal Law Teachings*, 18(22), 285-312. <https://doi.org/10.30513/CLD.2022.3919.1625>
- Mohammadi Bijani, M., Hatami, S., & Tayyebbeh, M. (2018). The Role of Family, School, and Media in Crime Prevention with Emphasis on International Standards Governing State Obligations in Education. *Teaching and Research Scientific Quarterly*, 6(4).
- Mohammadi Mehr, M., & Keykha, A. (2020). A Systematic Review of Changes in Learning Resulting from the Growth of Technologies. *Educational Studies Journal*, 8(1). <https://nama.ajaums.ac.ir/article-1-340-fa.pdf>
- Molaei, H. A., & Alizadeh Sarkhabi, R. (2021). The Status of Secondary Prevention in the Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents. *Qanun Yar*, 5(19). <https://ensani.ir/file/download/article/1650366683-10125-19-18.pdf>
- Moradi, A., & Safarian, M. (2024). Developing a Youthful Population Model with Emphasis on Childbearing: A Case Study of Employees of the Kermanshah Police Command. *Population and Progress Quarterly*, 2(1), 11-42. https://pdj.ihu.ac.ir/?_action=article&au=687506&_au=Mohsen++Safarian&lang=en&lang=fa
- Najafi Tavana, A. (2007). Conflict and Deadlock in Iran's Criminal Policy. *Azad Legal Research*(1). <https://sid.ir/paper/395145/fa>
- Nematian, S., & Noghani Dokht, B. (2021). The Decision-Making Process of Couples in Delaying Childbearing and the Social Conditions Involved. *Sociology of Social Institutions*, 8(18), 139-173. <https://doi.org/10.22080/ssi.2022.22905.1955>

- Niazpour, A. (2023). *Crime Prevention*. Dadgostar Publishing.
- Razi, E. (2018). Community-Based Preventive Policies for Juvenile Crimes. *Journal of Legal Studies*(19), 85-105. <https://jlawst.ir/article-1-776-fa.pdf>
- Rezaei, Q., & Khosravi, M. M. A. (2021). Criminal and Non-Criminal Prevention in Crimes Related to the Monetary and Currency System. *Iranian Political Sociology*, 26(5), 1011-1025. <https://doi.org/10.30510/PSI.2022.304677.2301>
- Roustaei, M., & Moghaddasi, M. B. (2022). Evaluation of Population Policies in Light of the Principles of Criminalization: With Emphasis on the Family Protection and Youthful Population Law. *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology*, 10(20), 117-150. <https://doi.org/10.22034/JCLC.2022.328186.1646>
- Sobhdel, M. (2017). The Legal Status of the Judiciary in Social Prevention. *Qanun Yar*, 4(4), 93-108. <https://ensani.ir/file/download/article/20180416100831-10125-44.pdf>