

A Social work Study of Socioeconomic status, Women in Iran

Dr. Mohammad Reza Iravani

Assistant Professor

Department of Social Work, Islamic Azad

University Khomeinishahr Branch

Daneshjou Blvd, Iran.

Abstract

The necessity of preparing women`s development and participation grounds in different economic, social, political and cultural areas of Iran, while the women`s economic expansion, that is, suitable using of human power, along with development goals in industrial developed countries is a symbol of development, it seems that women`s occupation out of house in Iran is confronted with some misinterpretations, critiques, misjudgments and misgivings. In addition to effects of some factors like economic depressions, unemployment, unequal job opportunities for men and women in labor market of Iran that has a immediate effect on the level of women`s economic participation, we can add some other cultural and social factors like some certain interpretations of women`s occupational role and negative attitudes toward women`s activities that block the research processes and development of women`s participation in economic activities. In this article, the author, based on some theoretical deliberations and findings of empirical researches, tries to study these blocks.

Keywords: Socioeconomic status, Politic, participation, Education

Introduction

Women`s working has been always one of the main economic and socially controversial issues in recent decades. Immediately after the issues of women`s working, using them in production and service processes and their relative economic independence, the issue of women`s social and political rights is brought forth for discussion. The issue of women`s independence, employment and participation have been one of the most important considerations through all historical periods, whether at the time of primitive agricultural innovations by women that started the matriarchal period or at the time of patriarchal period or at the time when there was an equality in couples` rights and women had a leading role for undertaking in and out of home affairs. Generally, through all historical periods, women have had social, political and economic participation and even governmental responsibilities. In view of the fact that jobs are different and are dependent on people`s talents, capacities and mental and bodily differences, some jobs are suitable for men and others are suitable for women. But these differences should not make one group inferior to the other.

In most countries, of course, there are such limitations for women and although the number of employed women in those countries has been increased since two decades ago, this increase in the number has not been in accord with a just distribution of jobs and incomes between men and women. Now that we find this issue important, it is necessary for us not to ignore it carelessly. Women play many roles in different societies and ignoring their role is ignoring the role of half of the world population. Iran has been no exception to the worldwide phenomenon of gender inequality. The data on Iran gathered in 1991 showed that malnutrition in girls was nearly twice as much as in boys whether in urban or rural areas. While 13.5 per cent of the rural and 11 per cent of the urban girls were malnourished in 1991, the corresponding figures were 7 for rural and 6 for urban boys. (Bina, 2002, p: 15). Similarly gender inequality in education and employment has continued to exist in Iran. But it has undergone certain changes in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution.

Considering the women`s problems and issues in universal conferences and holding meetings with successful and educated women of the societies, shows officials` concentration on this part of the society. Nomination of one day as the day of woman and mother is to appreciate the women`s efforts and devotion, especially in our country that women had a significant role in movements against the Imperial Government of Iran. Many of them were arrested and jailed and some of them were on the rack or even were executed. During the revolution, Iranian women played a very significant role. In addition to enlightened and educated women who were fighting by reason of culture and politics, other religious women considered this revolution as an Islamic duty. Women in partnership with men fought to achieve this goal. It was very remarkable that some women, hugging their babies, were participating in demonstrations.

These women, in every area, established committees and were organizing their endeavors that included helping to those who were seeking protection or making explosives to explode tanks. Women`s great role in this social movement has been unique in Iranian history. It can be said that, during that period, the distance between man and woman had been forgotten. Also during wartime, they made supreme sacrifices and helped their husbands and children in frontlines and prepare their essential equipments. If we glance our eyes through the history of our country, we could find women`s role very impressive and I should say that without women, we never could gain the victory and development of the society was unachievable. So we, as educated part of the society, have a duty to deal with and solve the women`s problem in participating in social activities.

The importance of the issue

One of the main criteria for the national economic and social development and renovation is the women`s participation in economic activities. The necessity of women`s participation in developmental programs has been always under consideration of history of human progress. However, in backward and developing countries, has not been established yet an acceptable equality between men and women opportunities for having economic participation and making use of their talents to develop the country. The backward process of development in recent years has been due to the ignoring and limiting the women`s economic participations.

In Iranian traditions that all philosophy and beliefs had been affected by superiority of men and manly interpretation of religion and literature and even proverbs paved the way to make women be completely inferior to men, one of the main dimension of development, women`s right, had been completely forgotten. Not only men, but also women themselves believed in such a inferiority to men and this misconception had been dominant for centuries in our culture. The history just mention the seditiousness or courtly plot forming of women or limit their roles as a sweetheart in literature or as a slave girl in harems. The number of famous women whose names are mentioned in Iranian history is limited to poetesses and writers or those women who helped men, for example the women who were responsible to protect the kingdom when there was not any other full-grown man to govern the nation. It can be said that the only honorable women in our history has been the Imams and messengers` daughters, mothers or wives. Therefore, the only positive and accepted role for women has been working as a housekeeper, wife or caretaker.

Industrialization and mechanization further marginalized women. The introduction of large scale production moved production away from the hut into the factory. The large industries gradually drove the home industries out of business. Women lost their hold on production because the type of products they were making came to be replaced by products which were being made by the factory. With mechanization the work that women had been doing was, by and large taken over by machines and women were either placed in substitute jobs or thrown out of work. But this did not and does not generally happen with men, as, most often they are absorbed in other jobs. Either because of their biological functions or because of lack of access to skill acquisition women easily succumbed to the pressures of a capitalist mode of production (Tong, 1989, p: 42). Therefore, for the reason that the superiority of men is dominant in society and in families, the women are underestimated and this atmosphere has affected even the women`s belief. The employed women do not have any freedom in their work place and are confronted with decaying their social rights and don not allow themselves to have any particular motive in this respect. So, it is our duty to pay attention to this issue and try to do justice to them because not paying attention to them is ignoring the half of the population.

Table (1) Unemployment rate for people aged 10 and over during 2000-2008(percent)

Year	Unemployment Rate		
	Women	Men	Women& men
2000	16.5	13.8	14.3
2001	19.9	13.2	14.2
2002	22.4	11.2	12.8
2003	21.2	10.1	11.8
2004	17.8	9	10.3
2005	17.1	10	11.5
2006	16.2	10	11.3
2007	15.8	9.4	10.5
2008	16.7	9.1	10.4

Source: Iran's Statistical Center

The table above shows that: Unemployment Rate is another important measure of the labor market. In Iran’s first census report published in 1976, the unemployment rate was 10.2 percent. 30 years later this figure changed to 11.3, reported in a 2006 census. However, these figures are not comparable, because of the differences in the definition of employed and unemployed in the two censuses. Based on Iran's statistical center reports during the last ten years (1999-2008) the unemployment rate was as it can be seen in the table above. As it is expected the UR for women is much higher than for men. The lowest UR (9 percent) for men is seen in 2004 while the maximum UR for this group belongs to the year 2000. For women 1999 was the minimum UR (13.6) while the maximum rate (22.4) was reported in 2002.

The physical differences between men and women and the different roles that is applied in socialization methods of two genders, have prepared the ground to occurring a kind of work distribution according to the gender. How much this kind of work distribution is rational? What are its cultural grounds and social consequences? Does this kind of distribution lead one of the genders to deprivation? The data gathered about our country in 1991 show that malnutrition in girls is nearly twice as much as boys whether in urban or rural societies (for easily comparing, we have organized the data in a table).

Table (2) Comparing malnutrition between urban or rural societies

malnutrition	rural	urban
girls	5 . 13 %	11 %
boys	7 %	6 %

In the poor provinces, the level of malnutrition is generally high. Thus, bringing up a sound and safe mothers who can motivate their children to develop is unlikely. Another social factor that is very important is education. The first school that was special for girls was built around 70 years ago and the data gathered in 1922 show that the number of girls and boys who registered at schools had been 7239 and 35000 respectively. This numbers clearly show the girls retardation that year. In 1956, the percentage of educated men and women had been 22 and 7. 3 respectively. In 1991, this number for men and women reached to 81 and 67 respectively. Although, the level of women education has had a significant increase, daringly, we can say that its increase in recent 10 years is not comparable with 50 years ago. But the number of educated women has been always less than educated men. In 1956, 1 percent of rural population had been educated that reached to 54% in 1991. It is a development but we must remember that 64 % of rural women are still uneducated. But the number of educated men has been always more than women. In 1991, just 50 % of rural women have been educated. Nowadays, around 15 % of rural girls do not go to school when they are 6 to 9 year old. Although, this number, in comparison with previous years, is very small, but warns us about another generation of uneducated mothers. Women need have an education higher than a primary level to have an active social participation in society.

Table (3) Comparison with previous years of women Education level

Women Education	1976 – 1977	1991 – 1992
Primary	38 %	47 %
Secondary school	36 %	42 %
High school	40 %	44 %
Technical & Professional	20 %	7. 19 %

Many girls, unlike boys, still do not register at school (15% of rural and 7% of urban girls). Only 9% of all the girls who have registered at high school and 23% of the girls who have registered at secondary school are rural. In 1976 and 1992, respectively, just 30% and 28% of all the university students were girls. So, it can be said that, nearly, no change has been taken place in the number of girls. That gathered data show that the number students in agricultural and veterinary fields at ingenious level is less than one percent and at BA is around 5 . 5% and at MA and PhD is 4%.

The number of girls graduated from technical school and university in the technical and industrial fields that are essential for industrial society, are about 23% and 3 . 7% respectively. In the second development program, the Plan Organization had suggested that some especial policy should be adopted in order to decrease rural women deprivation. Another social factor is marriage. The statistic shows that in1991, 2. 2% of 10 to 14 year old has married. After 1976 and notably in recent years the number of girls who marry in their 10 to 14 year old has had a significant increase. Before these girls can finish their education, must take the role of a mother.

An issue that is worth noting is that from 25 marriages that take place in these ages, one has been led to divorce. According to statistic, around 50% of girls get marry before 19. Certainly, these women by marrying at an early age not only increase the vulnerability of family but also cannot be mothers who can motivate their children to develop.

Active Population

The global statistics of active population of women is ambiguous. The population of 15-54 year old active women are 50% for North America, 43% for Europe, 53% for the Far East, 36% for South Asia, 42% for Africa and 25% for Latin America. In view of the fact that women in the Third World work without any or much payback (homework, handicraft, cooking for her family) these figures are low in these countries. It is maybe because the conception of job refers more to a kind of work for which you receive regular payment and other kinds of work do not be identified as job and thus, in statistics, we just consider the works with payment. The researches show that if we use co-operative observation in our research, instead of questioning men and women, the figures of the statistics will be changed.

The victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran changed the circumstances of women noticeably. In basic principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran, except for the 115th article which according to it, a woman cannot be the president, both men and women have equal opportunities for education and occupation. The twentieth article says: (all people of the nation are backed up by law equally and enjoy all human, political, economical, social and cultural rights by considering Islamic scales.) Despite all developments and successes that women have achieved in playing their role as a mother and wife in home and also as an active and efficient citizen in society with equal opportunities to men in productive and economical activities, but still there are some discriminations and inequalities of opportunities for women to work out of house. We hope that women by learning more about their role and adopting appropriate strategies can diminish these discriminations and change their potential powers to the actual one and play their role in developing the economy of Islamic republic of Iran.

Nowadays, the level of women employment is one basis of development in industrial economy. The factors like wrong cultural manners, unfair social rules and lack of facilities for participation of women in social and economical affairs can lead to women unemployment and supporting family just by men. Women Participation In years from 1976 to 1986, the population of 10 and more year old women that was around 11/2 million reached 16 million with an increase at about 3/7 % per year; in these two periods the number of active women were 1/3 million (8/2%) and 4/1 million (12/9%) women respectively.

The general rate of women participation has had a decrease at about 1% per year and regarding the fixed proportion of job seekers, the rate of decrease in women employment is definitely more. At the same time, the rate of men participation has had an increase at about 3/2% per year on the average. The population of inactive women reached from 9/8 million (87/1 % of 10 and more year old women) to 14/7 million (91/8 % of 10 and more year old women). Because of the small number of unemployed women who have income (0/8% of 10 and more year old women) and large number of women (91% of 10 and more year old women) who have not any economic participation and income, men have a hard work to support their family. The following table shows the general rate and proportion of the participation of 10 and more year old women.

When there is an equal job opportunity for men and women, just those women are employed who have a higher education than their male coworkers; it is really a kind of sexual discrimination. Other issues that show clearly the sexual discrimination, spread through the society, are the decrease of women`s mission, at home and abroad, in years after Islamic revolution and men`s salary and fringe benefits that is higher than women for a job identical to what women do.

Questions this view point and feels that "ale property ownership is not the only basis for male" supremacy. Class societies make a sharp dichotomy between the domestic and public spheres of life. This domestic power is not transit able into social Power or position in the public sphere. Moreover, in class societies the economic and political autonomy of a household is quite restricted. This probably militates against even domestic equality (Sacks, 1975, p: 229). Thus along with private property not being available to women the existence of class society has further pushed women into the background, (Benston, 1969, p: 205)

Table (4) Labor force participation rate for people aged 10 and over during 2000-2008 (percent)

Year	Women	Men	Women& men
2000	11.9	62.1	37.2
2001	11.8	62.1	37.2
2002	10.8	62.8	37.2
2003	11.5	63.7	38.1
2004	11.4	64.9	38.6
2005	17	64.7	41
2006	16.4	63.9	40.4
2007	15.6	63.5	39.6
2008	13.6	61.9	38

Source: Iran's Statistical Center

The table above shows that: rate for the total population as well as male and female at the age of 10 and over, during the years 2000-2008. The data is shown separately for men and women. Based on the information provided in the table above, in 2008 the LFPR for population at the age of 10 and over regardless of sex was 38 percent. For men this rate was 61.9 percent and for women only 13.6 percent. The LFPR in the country's rural areas was 41.5 while in urban regions this figure was 36.5 percent. Based on this data the LFPR for the 35-39 years age group was the highest (56.9 percent) but it was different for the two sexes; with 95.1 percent for men and only 23.6 percent for women. Another social factor involved in access women to education is marriage. As per statistics of 1991, 2.2 per cent of the girls in the age group of 10-14 years in Iran were already married (Ghiasi, 2000, p: 28). It means that before these girls could finish their education, they had to assume the role of wife/mother. It may also be noted that one out of the 25 marriages that took place in this age group ended in divorce. Around 50 per cent of girls in Iran got married before the age of 19 years. (Bina, 2002, p: 16). In marrying at an early age these girls not only increase the vulnerability of family but also are likely to fail as mothers who can motivate their children to develop themselves.

Gender discrimination in education has been quite evident in Iran. The first special school for girls in Iran was established in 1922 and the number of girls and boys who registered at schools in that year had been 7239 and 35000 respectively. (Bina, 2002, p: 17). These figures clearly show the girls' retardation in education in 1922. In 1965 the percentage of educated men and women had been 22 and 3.7 respectively. In 1991 there has been substantial improvement in women's participation in education. The percentage of the educated was 81 and 67 among men and women respectively in 1991. (Ghiasi, 2000,p: 56). Although the level of women's education has had a significant increase, it is a fact that the number of educated women has been always less than that of educated men. The situation has been worse in the case of rural women. In 1991 just 50 per cent of the rural women in Iran have been educated (Ghiasi, 2000, p: 79). Nowadays, around 15 per cent of the rural girls of the age group of 6-9 years do not go to school. (Bina, 2002, p: 16). Although this number, in comparison with previous years, is relatively small, it is adequate to be of concern.

Research background

The researches in this field show that the prime roles of women, in all societies, are playing as a mother and wife. Paying most attention to this point, thus, other issues like their employments are considered as the less important issue. For girls, the possibility of finding job is affected by different factors like their socialization. At the prime of their life, they find that they are not on equal terms with boys in taking the opportunities and social advantages. Difference in opportunities for distribution available to each sex' (Friedl, 1975, p:19). Changes in modes of economic and social life saw a marked change in the position of women vis-à-vis men. When men began to gain control over the modes of production and relegate women to the domestic sphere, the motion of man as the 'producer' and woman as the 'consumer' gained ground. The establishment in the institution of marriage and family further suppressed women because child care which was hitherto the responsibility of the community was thrust society on women. With domestication of plants and animals a large number of societies came under the fold of agriculture and animal husbandry. The planting of crops as a technique for food acquisition resulted in marked differences as compared with hunter gatherers, not only in work habits but also in social, political and religious organization. (Friedl, 1975, p: 46). In the last two decades issues concerning women have received global attention. A large volume of literature pertaining to women and development has also been generated.

However, until recently development specialists did not take a very serious note of the gender dimension in development and hence development theories did not address themselves to women's roles and responsibilities. It was (Boserup, 1989: p: 32)

The Problem

The official statistics, spread abroad by Statistics Center of Iran, show that according to ups and downs of recent enumeration, the level of Iranian women's economic participation is much less than this level in developed and even in some developing countries, It seems that, generally, Iranian women's life is mostly affected by men's behavior and attitudes. A man as a father, for instance, controls the level and the kind of his daughter's education and marriage. And the same man, as a husband, can decide about his wife's education, social activity and occupation; particularly, laws, in Iran, allow husband to prevent his wife to educate herself or work out of house if it was against family policy. Regarding these situations, we can expect that women's occupation and development of their economic and social activities are mainly affected and determined by their fathers' and husbands' attitudes and decisions. In this manner, thus, the men's agreement or disagreement about their daughter or wife's economic activities, along with some other economical and social factors, plays a very important role in developing or restricting women's opportunities to enter to the labor market and to gain suitable jobs. The increasing number of female students who study in different levels of higher education facilitates entering to labor market for women and girls. This is a phenomenon that is experimented practically in recent years in Britain.

When Iranian women remove this obstacle, that is, the absence of enough education in order to achieve better jobs and occupational situations, they strike other social and cultural snags like employers' tendency to employ men rather than women and generic discrimination, etc. The level of women participation in economic and productive activities has been decreased since fifteen years ago. In years between 1976- 1991, in spite of increasing the number of active women from 1449 to 1630, the level of women's participation in economical activities has been fallen from 12 . 9 to 8 . 7 that is because of the structural blocks in labor market. This decrease is inconsistent with the high investment that is invested in educating 6 and more year old women that increased their level of knowledge from 35. 5 percent to 67. 1. The number of women, educating in higher education, has increased from 75000 to 258000 and the number of women educating in secondary school has increased from 306000 to 1703000. these findings show that, at least for women, the conditions necessary to use this investment in human resources is not ideal and we cannot expect. that increasing sum of money invested in, can lead to increasing women's participation in economic activities. Another issue on constant development that we must pay attention to, is the people's cultural attitude toward women's occupation.

The mass media, unfortunately, especially movies and textbooks, do not set a suitable cultural pattern about women's occupation. Rectification of cultural attitude of society to women's occupation in producing or doing social services can improve the position of women in their participation. After the Islamic revolution, the officials have paid must attention to women's education, especially higher education. The statistics show that 60% of those who passed the Entrance Examination of universities in 2001 were women that indicated their social and mental development. Regarding the increasing number of women who pass the Entrance Examination of universities, it is inevitable that we must make a good plan to enjoy their enormous capacity, It seems that, regarding the increasing number of women who pass the Entrance Examination of universities in recent years, on one part, it gives to the society a window of opportunity to discover and use these faculties and on the other part, it may lead us to another imminent job crisis if we don not appropriately prepare the situations. Ignoring the occupations and economic activities of women is to keep half of economically active population away from economic activities and without paying attention to this issue, it is not possible to achieve economic growth and development.

The dual role and responsibility of the post-Revolutionary woman is clearly reflected in the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Constitution "considers women's employment and their social and economic activities to be very meaningful and conducive to social well-being" and at the same time emphasises the role of the woman "as a mother and her significance in maintaining strong family bonds and affectionate relationships" (Women's Bureau of the Presidential Office 1997: 58). We are not the guardians of women to give them something by force or take it away from them. We are only preparing the ground for women to recognise their rights and capabilities, and acknowledge their own merits.

Once they have done that, they will reach their rightful position in society. And the first prerequisite is to increase women’s knowledge and education (La’li, 1999, p: 239). This issue needs a lot of studies and researches because of its importance that can be used by economists, programmers and development managers. Without an essential research, we cannot achieve a appropriate programming.

Table (5) Distribution of the sample by age groups

Age groups (in years)	Frequency	Percent
Below 20	48	5.5
21-35	287	32.5
36-50	372	42.3
51-65	73	8.3
Above 65	100	11.4
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square= 474.46 ; P=.000

A total of 880 samples was selected for the present study, of which we find majority of the sample belonged to the age groups of 36-50 and 21-35 years (42.3% and 32.5%) and above 65 years constituted 11.4%. Further, 8.3% of the sample was in the age group of 51-65 years, and lastly, 5.5% of the sample was in the age group of below 20 years (Figure 4.1). Chi-square test revealed a significant difference between frequencies of respondents in different age groups.

Figure (1) Distribution of the sample by age groups

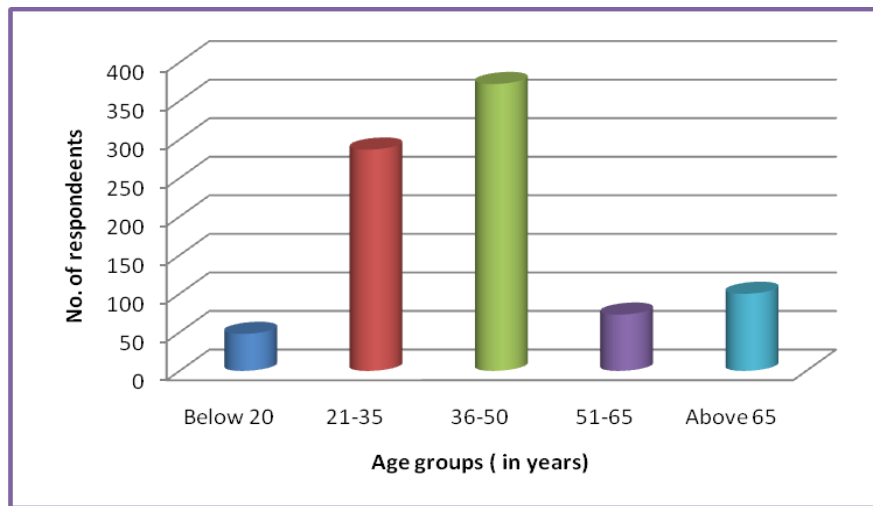


Table (6) Distribution of the sample by educational level

Educational level	Frequency	Percent
Illiterate	196	22.3
Primary	131	14.8
Middle	37	4.2
Secondary	313	35.6
Graduate	81	9.2
Post-graduate	96	10.9
Ph D	26	3.0
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square= 483.15 ; P=.000

Education-wise, most of the sample belonged to secondary level of education (35.6%), which is followed by illiterates (22.3%). A glimpse at the table clearly reveals that we find less and less number of Iranian female respondents having higher levels of education. From graduation to Ph.D we find on the whole only about 3%. Further, chi-square test revealed significant difference between different frequencies of educational levels.

Table (7) Distribution of the sample by present occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Business/industrialist	10	1.1
Salaried employment	31	3.6
Temporary govt job	10	1.1
Regular private sector job	12	1.4
Temporary private sector job	8	0.9
Petty trader shop keeper	7	0.8
Self employed professional	7	0.8
Other	3	0.3
Not Applicable	792	90.0
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square=5550.29 ; P=.000

It was quite alarming fact that 90% of the Iranian women sample selected did not have a job. 3.6% of them were on salaried employment, 1.4% of them were on regular private sector job, very few of them were in business/industrialists, few of them had temporary government jobs as well as temporary private jobs (Figure 2). When all these frequencies were subjected to chi-square analysis, chi-square test revealed a significant difference among these frequencies; further confirming that majority of the selected sample did not have the job.

Figure (2) Distribution of the sample by present occupation

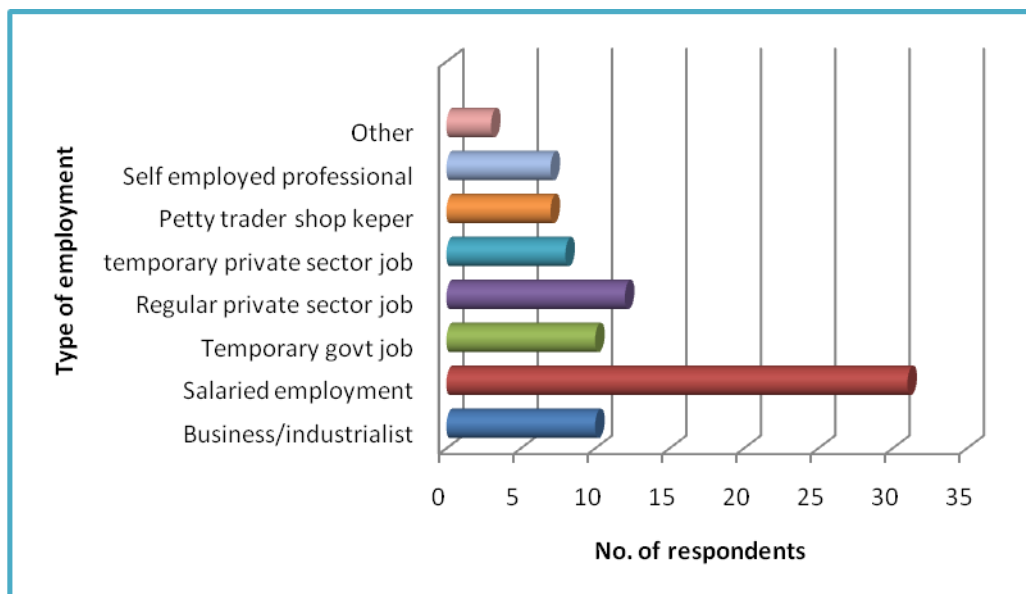


Table (8) Association between educational level and Occupational level among Iranian women

Occupation		Education level							Total
		Illiterate	Primary	Middle	Secondary	Graduate	Postgraduate	Ph D	
Business/Industrialist	F	0	0	0	0	10	0	0	10
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	12.3%	.0%	.0%	1.1%
Salaried employment	F	0	0	0	3	0	28	0	31
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.0%	.0%	29.2%	.0%	3.5%
Temporary govt job	F	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	10
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	3.2%	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.1%
Regular private sector job	F	2	0	0	6	2	0	2	12
	%	1.0%	.0%	.0%	1.9%	2.5%	.0%	7.7%	1.4%
Temporary private sector job	F	0	0	4	0	0	0	4	8
	%	.0%	.0%	10.8%	.0%	.0%	.0%	15.4%	.9%
Petty trader shop keeper	F	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	7
	%	.0%	5.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.8%
Self employed professional	F	0	6	0	1	0	0	0	7
	%	.0%	4.6%	.0%	.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.8%
Other	F	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	3
	%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.6%	1.2%	.0%	.0%	.3%
Not Applicable	F	194	118	33	291	68	68	20	792
	%	99.0%	90.1%	89.2%	93.0%	84.0%	70.8%	76.9%	90.0%
Total	F	196	131	37	313	81	96	26	880
	%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

CC=.609; P=.000

A significant association was observed between education level of Iranian women with their occupational level as the obtained contingency coefficient of .609 was found to be significant at .000 level. From the table it is clear that most of the illiterates did not have jobs, most of the graduates were business/industrialists and most of the postgraduates were on salaried employment.

Table (9) Distribution of the sample by monthly income

Income (in Tomans)	Frequency	Percent
No income/job	792	90.0
Less than 150000	49	5.6
150000-300000	13	1.4
300000-450000	8	0.9
450000-600000	5	0.6
600000-750000	5	0.6
More then-750000	8	0.9
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square=1042.24 ; P=.000

Income-wise analysis too revealed significant differences between frequencies of different income groups, where again majority of the sample did not have income as we find that 90% of the sample showed zero income. Of the remaining 88 sample, 49 of them were on the lower side of income (less than 150000 tomans), 13 of them were in the income range of 150000-300000 Tomans, and very few of them had higher levels of income. Further, chi-square test revealed significant difference between these frequencies on different income levels.

Table (10) Distribution of the sample by occupational experience

Experience (in years)	Frequency	Percent
None	792	90.0
Below-5	14	1.6
6-10	40	4.5
11-15	21	2.4
16-20	5	0.6
21-25	5	0.6
Above-25	3	0.3
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square=687.98 ; P=.000

Of the 88 Iranian female who had jobs, we find that 40 of them had 6-10 years of experience, followed by 21 of them had 11-15 years of experience, 14 of them had below 5 years of experience, 5 of them had 16-20 years of experience. Very few of them had above 25 years of experience. Further, chi-square test revealed a significant difference between different frequencies on number of years of service/experience.

Table (11) Distribution of the sample by marital status

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Married	848	96.4
Divorcee/separated/Widow	32	3.6
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square= 756.65 ; P=.000

Of the 880 selected sample, a large majority of the sample was married (96.45) and only 3.6% of the sample selected were divorcees/separated/widows. Chi-square value of 756.65 was found to be significant, indicating difference between frequencies of married and. divorcees/separated/widows

Figure (3) Distribution of the sample by marital status

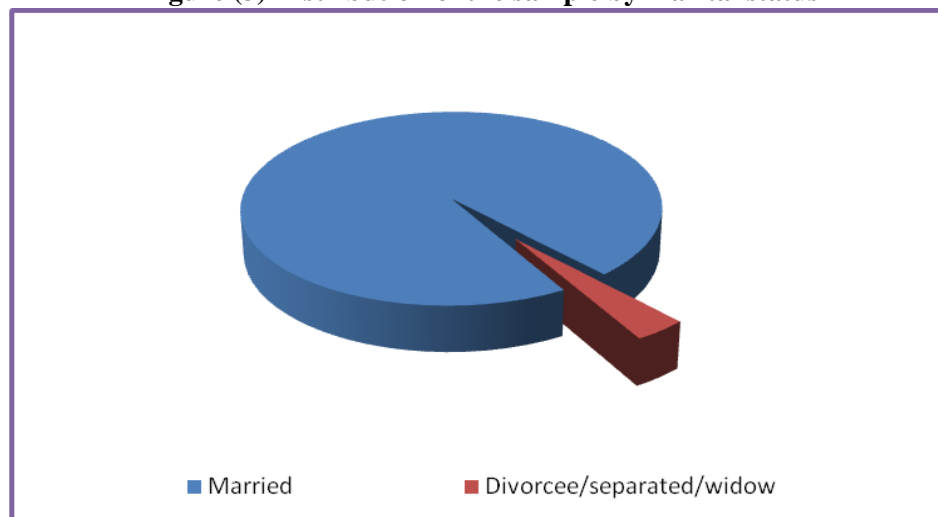


Table (12) Distribution of the sample by age at marriage

Age at marriage	Frequency	Percent
Less Than-25	795	90.3
26-30	78	8.9
31-35	1	0.1
More then 35	6	0.8
Total	880	100.0

Chi-square=2020.66 ; P=.000

Of the 880 subjects who were married, it was found that majority of the sample married less than 25 years (90.3%), followed by 8.9% of them at 26-30 years, and only 0.9% of them married after 31 years. Further, chi-square test revealed a significant difference between frequencies of Iran women.

Table (13) Percentage of Women Enrolled at Different Levels of Education in Iran in 1977 and 1992

Level of Education	1977	1992
Primary school	38 .0	47.0
Secondary school	36.0	42.0
High school	40.0	44.0
University	30.0	28.0
Technical & Professional	20.0	19.7

Source: Amini, 2001

There has been some improvement in the participation of women in education between 1977 and 1992 (Table 13). The percentage of girls at the primary level rose from 38 in 1977 to 47 in 1992 and the corresponding figures for the secondary school were 36 and 42 respectively. Similarly at the high school level women's percentage rose from 40 in 1977 to 44 in 1992. Participation of women in university and technical/professional education has remained more or less the same. The percentage of women in university education was 30 in 1977 and 28 in 1991. Similarly women constituted 20 per cent of the technical/professional in 1977 and 19.7 per cent in 1992. These fields of higher and professional education have continued to be largely the monopoly of men.

Women and the Statistics of Active Population

The global statistics of active population of women is ambiguous. The population of 15-54 year old active women are 50% for North America, 43% for Europe, 53% for the Far East, 36% for South Asia, 42% for Africa and 25% for Latin America, In view of the fact that women in the Third World work without any or much payback (homework, handicraft, cooking for her family) these figures are low in these countries. It is maybe because the conception of job refers more to a kind of work for which you receive regular payment and other kinds of work do not be identified as job and thus, in statistics, we just consider the works with payment. The researches show that if we use co-operative observation in our research, instead of questioning men and women, the figures of the statistics will be changed.

The victory of Islamic Revolution in Iran changed the circumstances of women noticeably. In basic principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran, except for the 115 th article which according to it, a woman can not be the president, both men and women have equal opportunities for education and occupation. The twentieth article says: (all people of the nation are backed up by law equally and enjoy all human, political, economical, social and cultural rights by considering Islamic scales.) Despite all developments and successes that women have achieved in playing their role as a mother and wife in home and also as an active and efficient citizen in society with equal opportunities to men in productive and economical activities, but still there are some discriminations and inequalities of opportunities for women to work out of house. We hope that women by learning more about their role and adopting appropriate strategies can diminish these discriminations and change their potential powers to the actual one and play their role in developing the economy of Islamic republic of Iran. Nowadays, the level of women employment is one basis of development in industrial economy. The factors like wrong cultural manners, unfair social rules and lack of facilities for participation of women in social and economical affairs can lead to women unemployment and supporting family just by men.

The Women Participation

In years from 1976 to 1986, the population of 10 and more year old women that was around 11.2 million reached 16 million with an increase at about 3.7% per year; in these two periods the number of active women was 1.3 million (8.2%) and 4.1 million (12.9%) women respectively. The general rate of women participation has had a decrease at about 1% per year and regarding the fixed proportion of job seekers, the rate of decrease in women employment is definitely more. At the same time, the rate of men participation has had an increase at about 3.2% per year on the average. The Population of inactive women reached from 9.8 million (87.1% of 10 and more year old women) to 14.7 million (91.8% of 10 and more year old women). Because of the small number of unemployed women who have income (0.8% of 10 and more year old women) and large number of women (91% of 10 and more year old women) who have not any economic participation and income; men have a hard work to support their family. The following table shows the general rate and proportion of the participation of 10 and more year old women.

More than 9.7% of the general rate of women participation has been decreased. In 1986, only 987103 women were employed. Regarding the increasing population of the country, the decrease in the number of employed women is very terrible. Those unemployed women, who have poor families, suffer from terrible and unpleasant problems. The increase in population of inactive women (who are mostly students and housekeepers) which is due to the limitation of women participation, leads to a hard work for men to support their family; but women as a part of population can play key role in economical activities and thus supporting the family. Two following tables show the level of active and inactive population of women and also the proportion of their employment to the total active population respectively. Study of Women Education According to the Enumeration in 1976 and 1986

According to the enumeration in 1986, the proportion of men to women is 105%. Regarding the equal number of men and women, it is expected that both men and women enjoy the same social services and have the same opportunities for economical participation. But the statistics show that men activity is much more than women economical activity.

This difference, regarding the kind of their job, is clearly shown in their employment statistics. For example, among 1054000 people who have scientific and specialized jobs, just 243000 of them are women while the number of men reaches to 719000. Also, at the high ranking official and administrative level, while the number of women is 2000, the number of men at these levels is 43000. With a brief glance at conditions of women education, you can clearly understand this issue. Participation, but we must be careful and do a lot of subtle study to be sure of it. Moreover, by preparing educational properties and professional training, we can expect women participation in economical activities will increase and a positive relation between education level and women participation will be established. The more we prepare the education and professional training for women, the more easily they can get jobs with better salary and fringe benefits. Women education, however, have some indirect but positive effects on their economic affairs and employment. It also, increases our expectations and decreases the influences of old customs. It also, prevents women from having many children and encourages them to marry late and postpone their pregnancy. All these transformations facilitate women entrance to labor market. The main issue is that the girls are encouraged to get a job after graduating. The researches in developed countries show that if girls do not enter to labor market after graduating, it is very hard to encourage them to enter to the labor market later.

Conclusion

H1 is accepted as we find significant association was observed between occupational level and job satisfaction of Iranian women, It was found that who were working on salaried employment, petty trade shop keeping, self-employed professionals and others were satisfied with their job compared to business/industrialists, temporary jobs, private sector and temporary jobs. Similar trend was observed when we compared it with access to welfare. As and when person in a confirmed job and getting good salary, automatically it brings a kind of 'security'. A kind of tension and pessimistic mood prevails when the job situation is uncertain, which ultimately leads to lower levels of job satisfaction. Since better positions always leads to better access to welfare in the present study similar trend was observed.

Rate of domestic violence is quite high in Iran in various forms

H2 is accepted as we find in the respondents opinion that 54% of the women reported domestic violence, and most of them were in the form of verbal and physical abuse and least of not talking to each other.

Unfortunately, the fanatical extremism has continued to resist any change that reflects social reality. The moderate ruling faction and its policy of moderation have resulted, on the whole, in the passage of certain laws relating to the status of women. To some extent, they have improved the situation. In particular, within the last ten years, they have tried to pass laws and rules to reduce the harshness of laws against women. But their efforts have never crossed the lines beyond which they could be exposed to attacks by the conservatives, who easily resort to allegations of promoting the onslaught of the Western culture as a weapon of war. The moderates have never been able, or willing, to overcome the attitude of extremist traditionalists who base their arguments on ancient interpretations of religious texts. The limit of reforms intended by the moderates has been certain changes to improve the legal rights of women.

The most disheartening part of the plight of women in Iran is the rapidly growing rate of suicide and infanticide. Daily, women are abandoning their children because they have no means of supporting them. In an effort to please their husbands, they have conceived so many children, thus disregarding their health and the fact that there is no way that they can take care of each and every one. Simply resisting the opinion that a woman's purpose in life is to produce and raise more Muslims has actually condemned women to death. The physical and mental abuse has literally pushed thousands of women over the edge. No human being deserves to live in such conditions. It is clear to see that the hardships and obstacles women face in Iran are the results of conservative teachings, a burning desire to live Allah's will, and a revolution that will never be forgotten. However, one must question whether this was totally Allah's plan. In regard to some of the quotes from the Quran mentioned earlier, if men have a "degree" over women, how could Allah have possibly declared them equal? Also, if the two genders are equal, how could a follower of Islam possibly place discriminatory laws against women to the great effect that they are? It is necessary to question if the extent to which women are discriminated against truly is necessary. The boundaries that should be in place in every society have been crossed entirely too far. After years of discrimination, it can be sure that many women must believe that they are less capable than their male counterparts (Hooda, 1995).

It is very hard to have faith in the fact that all interpretations of the Quran by governmental leaders are correct, since the words of the Quran so often contradict the opinions of leaders in certain ways. If men and women are equal, how could Allah and Mohammad possibly have also wanted women's rights to be so few and their abuse so great? That seems to be the problem with many religious-based governments. People who believe that it must be "their way or no way" often run them. Although quite possibly not the original intent of Khomeini, leaders can twist interpretations for their purposes. It is difficult to imagine how long an established regime like this would take to be turned around. It is my hope, however, that it will be - for the sake of mothers, daughters, and granddaughters especially born into these unjust societies. It is my belief that no God, of any religion, would have wanted a child of his to be treated as it shouldn't be.

Women mention many factors as the blocks to progress in their employment that contrary to public opinion is not richness or lack of interest or little education but the children existence in family because women are forced to sacrifice and stay at home and take care of their children. Second, for some women, not a single factor, but a combination of some factors prevents them from working out of house. We hope that by adopting suitable strategies, women can progress and develop their opportunities to have economic activity. In order to establish equality of opportunities between men and women, they must give equal salary and fringe benefits. The above social phenomena have a close relationship with each other. We must study them to change women circumstances in labor market. But it will not be an easy work because regarding the predominant social and cultural values most people think that men are superior to women in political, social and economic issues. One of the most important motivations that make women to work out of house is making money to support their family and if the men's income was enough to support their family, women have not a strong tendency to work. Also, there is an immediate relationship between women education and their employment, their age of marriage and their social and cultural participation.

Suggestions

The research findings suggest the following tips:

The Ministry of Labor in collaboration with other ministries should impose a ban on any sexual discrimination and give women an equal opportunity to get jobs congruent with their education.

The ministries and Social Security Organization should decrease the time that women work, so that women deal with other works related to their family.

The employed women with higher education, the employed women with more experience and married women believe that discrimination; education factors and economic issues are very influential in occurring occupational problems and the administrators must pay attention to these issues.

The governments must pay more attention to the women activities in their home and provide them social insurance and encourage them to have a job of their own and see their homework as a job.

The women must determine the kind and direction of development programs by accessing to better health, gaining more income, learning new skills and technologies, and having equal rights with men and having control over their own body.

Establishment of consulting centers for women and training them in dealing with their social and familial problems.

Approval of supportive rules to create suitable employment circumstances.

References

- Amini, A, (2001), A Survey of the Employment and Unemployment Condition of Women in Iran, in Centre of Women Participation Affairs, A Collection of the Developing Women and the Diversity of Roles, Tehran University Publications.
- Benston, M, (1969), the political Economy of Women's Liberation Monthly Review, 21(4), September.
- Bina, D, (2002), Women Education in the Developing Countries , Sharif Journal, Vol. 2.
- Boserup, E,(1970), Woman's Role in Economic Development, London; Earth Scan.
- Friedl, E, Women and Men, (1975), An Anthropologist's View, New York; Rinehart Holt and Winston.
- Ghiasi, Mino, (2000), A Study of the Trend in the Educational Status of Women in Higher Education in Iran (Public Sector) from 1990 to 1999, Tehran, Institute for Research and Planning in Higher Education.
- La'li, Mas'ud, (1999), What is Khatami Talking About?, Tehran, Ekhlal Publications.
- Sacks, K, Engels Revisited, (1975), Women, the organization of production, and private property, in R.R, Reiter, towards Anthropology of Women, New York, New York Monthly Rev, Press.
- The Statistics Center of Iran- The Statistical Yearbook of Iran (1976- 1986)
- The Statistics Center of Iran- The Statistical Yearbook of Iran (1976- 1996)
- Tong, R.M, Feminist Thought, (1989), A Comprehensive Introduction, Rutledge, London.