GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT IN IRAN: A SOCIO-CULTURAL, POLITICAL & ECONOMIC PE RSPECTIVE

MWANIKI, MILLY WAIRIMU

Researcher, University of Religions and Denominations. E-mail: wairimumwaniki26@gmail.com

Abstract

The objective of this study is to outline a detailed understanding of economic, political, socio-cultural influence on empowerment and how it is applied strategically in supporting successful financial independence, freedom and social transformation for women. Iran being the case study for this particular research. Gender Mainstreaming is significant at ensuring focus is directed to the women empowerment agenda as they tend to face unique barriers and also continue to lag behind across major development indicators. The article explains the identities of women in Iran and how the interactions from a Feminism perspective changed or shapes various politics and policies in the country. It shows how alliance of feminists as well as non-feminists in Iran contributed to gender awareness, social transformation and shaped politics on a basis of shared goals and aspirations.

Keywords: Gender Mainstreaming, Women Empowerment, Feminism, International Relations, Gender Equality.

INTRODUCTION

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls can be advanced through policies, strategies and action plans. This can be applied by eliminating systemic barriers, unequal power dynamics and social norms. Gender Mainstreaming remains relevant as a concept and is achieved by ensuring safe, equitable and equal access to and control over resources and opportunities. According to the UN General Assembly (1997) mainstreaming a gender perspective is entirely defined as the strategy of ensuring that men's and women's concerns and also experiences are integral in policies, projects and programs through the process of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluation. This should be considered in all spheres to ensure there is equal benefit for all and little or no issues of inequality are addressed. The overall goal towards this is to achieve gender equality and the focus should be seen at economic, political and societal levels.

Oppression and Discrimination against women has been associated with the Islamic Republic of Iran for a long period but there is need to highlight their active participation and presence in public life and in various social roles. The Post-revolutionary education system has contributed to the evolution and growth of Iranian feminists in today's world. Although the system restricted freedom through regulations, there has been personal growth opportunities for women from less privileged backgrounds. The quest for Gender Equality in Iran has been a strategy to oppose the current political system and the idea of equal rights has been implemented in various programs in the current Iranian Government.

There is a shared sense of power, dignity and culture by both men and women which has highlighted the importance of women in Iran. In today's world, the presence of women in schools, universities, political spaces as a whole remains something to be celebrated, with specific reference to Iran. In recognition to the subject of gender being a social construct, the inequalities between men and women as well as the unbalanced power dynamics cannot be overlooked. The discussion outlines Women Issues with a focus on three key thematic areas; a socio-cultural, political and economic perspective. It further looks at Feminism as a theory in International Relations and its diverse contributions to the overall advancement and achievement of democracy, gender equality and social transformation in Iran.

I. LEADERSHIP, GENDER POLITICS & POLICY FRAMEWORKS

This section gives an overview of gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in the area of policies, participation and leadership in enhancing sustainable development. For an effective development co-operation programme to be achieved there should be sound policy frameworks alongside leadership commitments in the area of gender equality, empowerment and human rights. The male dominated political decision-making process in Iran continues to prevail but there has been an increase of women in the socio-political arena mainly in the era of Revolution. This has resulted to support from the Iranian government in participation of women on matters politics and planning.

The role of male actors has been given much attention during the Constitutional Revolution and this is based on the ongoing debates that mention women and the Revolution. With women not being part of the scope, the revolution has created an impression that only men aspired for freedom and self-expression. This was not the case as women gained recognition in the transformation of the political revolution to social revolution. The course of history of Iranian women and men experienced a change though the political power that was exhibited by women.

Gender Politics- Iran, in relation to the Islamic Revolution being supported by women displays opposition of the Shah. The reasons behind this include political and economic constraints. This extends to the loss of Islamic values with respect to the Pahlavi regime (Moghadam, 1995).

The participation of women in the Constitutional Revolution gives an overview of women's lives, their perspectives and national liberation struggles with a significant approach to the aspirations for women's progress. There was a great incorporation of Feminism into nationalism and an extension towards anti-imperialism. It is evident that the persistent seclusion and gender inequality did not limit the participation of women in the revolution as they were able to rise from the patriarchal polity and society. Only a handful of men supported this cause as the majority made no effort in enduring women's demands.

Political Participation can be defined as the process that leads to a wide selection of political leaders and contributes a great determinant towards public policy. There are major indicators that are associated with democracy in a political system, such as the civil rights of individuals and suffrage rights (Nicholas and others, 1909). The increased sense of power and self-

confidence was experienced by women especially in the time of the Revolution through their participation in anti-shah rallies and demonstrations. The Woman at this point was regarded a political force with the significant engagements they had in public political activities. The Islamic Revolution in 1979 symbolized women's role through its victory against the Pahlavi regime.

Kian (1995) states that the Iranian state's policies on women can be distinguished in two major phases. The Revolutionary period and the Reconstruction period. During the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the women's presence and condition was not a concern in terms of political and religious elite despite their aspiration and support to the government. The condition of women in Iran was improved by the end of the war and through the implementation of policies termed as Reconstruction. Moinifar (1999) denotes how the implementation of change in conditions for Iranian women continues to face obstacles and this is linked to traditional, social, cultural and legal aspects.

Iran presents itself as a significant case study of Affirmative action in the world. In order to prevent the Iranian state that represents culture diversity from acquiring an ethno-majoritarian character, the concept of Affirmative action was implemented. Paidar (2002) outlines the importance of having proper strategies in enhancing the participation of women in development. The goal in this case is to achieve mobility, generate feasibility and support self-respect. The "Facilitating project" in Iran is an example of a strategy that enables participation of women in economic, political and social spaces. The victory of Islam and freedom from captivity was partly an effort of women's participation in the anti-Shah Revolution. There was a shift on balance of power towards supporting reforms and change through the women's participation in electoral processes.

Fundamentally, issues such as right for divorce, child custody and division of wealth play a major role in contributing to the various challenges that women face in the legal and judicial system. A policy shift towards these issues should be considered by the Judiciary towards the modification of certain family laws and the implementation of new bills in favor of women. The integration of women in politics remains a challenge due to the male dominated arena, resistance of male politicians and the opposition of women's political participation by political parties. Additionally, the inadequate access of funds by female candidates for parliament and lack of laws that support women in managerial positions continue to contribute as barriers that face women in the arena of power and decision-making. Impeding laws and gender biased attitudes prevent full participation of women in politics and this continues to be an area of concern in Iran. Half of Iran's population comprises of Women thus more opportunities should be accorded and more positive response to gender differences, ideologies and inequality is needed.

Further recommendation for research should be done on social movements and democratization in Iran to address transformation of political and civil rights with an overall goal in achieving gender equality. Iranian women continue to push gender boundaries and work towards the promotion of gender interests and bettering the lives of all women.

II. WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

The fifth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by the United Nations (UN) supports and creates emphasis to Gender Equality and empowering of all women and girls. Iran ranks 150th among 156 countries, in the World Economic Forum's 2021 global gender gap index. It is one of the countries identified with the largest economic gender gaps in the world (World Economic Forum, 2021).

Basu and Maitra (2020) emphasize on the employment and participation of women in the labor market in Iran as having been negatively affected by the cultural and institutional factors. Ganle et.al (2015) points out the need for obtaining the power to exercise choices that can benefit an individual's well-being because it brings in an Empowerment perspective as it eliminates the limit of power choice and freedom.

Minot (2018) states that Empowerment can be impacted by various factors such as age, gender, nationality etc. Nazier and Ramadan (2018) describe Women's Empowerment as a phenomena that is both dynamic and context-specific. This makes it a multi-dimensional process. The extents to its definition may vary in terms of economic and socio-cultural factors to a wider extent in terms of legal, political, interpersonal and psychological.

Female labor force participation is one of the factors addressed in the Economic perspective. The prevailing low female participation in Iran is primarily associated to the custom and belief that men are the breadwinners and the responsibility of the home should be given to the woman. The Sharia law also identifies with permission seeking as women are required to ask beforehand on their need to work outside the home. Ideally, the negative impact of economic sanctions on Iranian economy is a determinant to the identified low participation of women in labor force (Khaz Ali, 2010).

The Women Empowerment Framework (WEF) seeks to focus on equality in the directive and approach that it does not treat women in isolation but rather addresses to what extent are they equal and empowered in relation to the men. This should be applied in Iran as it generates a balanced and inclusive framework. Socio-political dynamics and women's issues are also a major concern thus the framework should embody the need for change and effective ways to achieve it (Leach, 2003).

According to the World Bank (2012) the gender gap continues to stay unchanged in the economic and political spheres but is closing in the education and health sector. The region of Middle East is categorized to have an outstanding high youth unemployment rate worldwide, with particular reference of severity amongst young women. The limiting access of women in economic life is attributed to established societal structures across countries in this region. Women have been categorized as important actors alongside a wave of civic engagement as a result of the rapturing old structures by the Arab uprisings in 2011.

Economic growth is promoted by an increase in gender equality in areas that are geared towards achieving development and poverty reduction. The development of the small business sector goes hand in hand with having a remarkable contribution of women entrepreneurs. The

increased well-being of families and communities as a whole mainly stems from women's empowerment. It is important to address the challenges that inhibit successful growth in economic spheres in Middle East societies as they have contributed to low female labor force participation (CAWTAR 2007).

According to Stromquist (1993) empowerment and autonomy intersect to highlight various components such as cognitive, psychological, political and economic variable. Stromquist emphasizes the importance of being able make ideal choices and taking action upon them to achieve one's goals. This further creates an avenue or outlook of agency as you are able to exercise choices. Bargaining and negotiation, deception and manipulation, subversion and analysis are the main constituents to agency and in order for women to make sound decisions and choices they need to feel empowered in equal measure.

According to the United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], (2011) the empowerment of women is an aspect and subject matter that is associated with gender equality. Women's empowerment continues to be a fundamental concern in the greater determinant of women's status and position. When this concept is integrated in the economic perspective of this research, we are able to see that the principles of women's empowerment and gender equality have been preserved in the Iranian Constitution and this is reflected in many other countries. Despite the mentioned issues and concerns, Iranian women and girls have a remarkable progress in education, research, science, entrepreneurship and employment as based in the United Nations Human Development Index.

III. A SOCIO-CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Khorasani (2009) outlines that barriers to social, intellectual and educational growth continue to play part of women's experience in as far as Women's Movement in Iran is concerned. Polygamy as a social construct and institution has created mistrust among women as it signifies a form of threat to the marriage. As a result, civic associations have low participation of women which is particularly seen in rural areas. The lack of rights and second class status for women in Iran has led to increased rate of suicide amongst the women. Farhad (2012) says that the Feminist Movements such as the "new social democratic movement" have been highlighted in Iran due to the need for open public space towards democratic demands.

The opportunity for women to struggle for their rights and recognition presented itself in the 90's and 2000's as a result of the creation of a democratic space. The discourse on Gender, Islam and Feminism expanded through the growth and rise of women in media. The pro-civil society policies in the 1990's contributed to growth and development which generated a number of new Organizations in the civic space. The Women's Cultural Center was one of the Organizations that spearheaded this sector (Ardalan, 2013).

Habibi (2017) gives a discussion on how single parent households present many challenges in terms of women playing the role of head of household, having to earn a living to cater to family needs, chores that lead to fatigue and sometimes physical injuries. The multiple tasks become a form of extreme sport and multitasking may not come as naturally to individuals. Herbst

(2012) identifies that in Iran and its regions women have been characterized with feminine and domestic roles which makes it difficult for them to handle household management roles. Women seem to lack support from institutions and knowledge from basic education which results in conflict within households between how to better delegate duties putting into consideration a masculine and feminine gender perspective.

Barriers to accessing university education continues especially for the minority women who in this case are considered to belong to a religious minority that is unrecognized. There is a misrepresentation of faith in order to register for entry to university since the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution has established admissions regulations that state students must be from one of the constitutionally recognized religions. This issue affects the Baha'i women because they face great hostility from the government and the constant need to follow their religious teachings (Baha'i International Community, 2012).

Gendered division of labor for women with particular context to paid labor force implicates that there is a less likelihood for women to be identified or acknowledged as career employees. There is a relevance and comparison that is distinguished to part-time/low-wage jobs and women's caring and nurturing roles hence considered to be best delegated to the female gender. Men have gained more access to long-term, full time employment as they are exempted from household roles. Their occupations involve applying logic, authority and executive abilities that are correlated with masculine traits (Rubin, 1997).

Paidar (2001) illustrates the implementation of gender segregation outside the household whereby women were required to wear the veil also referred to as hijab. Women had to seek permission from their father or spouse in order to travel, study or work and additionally, forbidden to become judges or presidents. Hanna (2020) further explains the discriminatory laws subjected to the Iranian women especially in marriage with a shift from a legal age of nine to thirteen in 2002. In line with this analogy is that the men could have up to four wives and women only have one husband. The issue of divorce is also key to note as women had to provide proof to the court that there was a case of psychological illness, physical abuse or drug abuse in order to get divorced from their husbands. This need to have proof can create a hidden room for ongoing toxic relationships in the fear of women to openly address identified red flags.

In pre-Islam Iranian traditions a notable highlight of the importance of leisure is discussed as an emphasis on the different celebrations and festivals within the entire year. The factors that have led to limited access of women in leisure activities generate from the opinions and incorrect interpretations of the principles of Islam and said cultural traditions. A good example would be women's dress code and behavior in public spaces by the morality police in the country. The negative result and connotation of this is giving men an upper hand in decision-making whilst it limits the women's contribution and freedom. This clearly shows the influence of gender drivers on women's social participation and overall well-being in Iran (Salehi and others, 2021).

This section elaborates on how various social changes continue to challenge traditional assumptions in Iran. Societal norms, cultural traditions and household responsibilities limit women's participation in various spheres of life. This means that power differences in societies need to be addressed in order to achieve social justice. Ideally, Iranian women deserve more inclusivity and participation in decision making. Further, the issue of cultural norms hinders the mobility of women, access to education and healthcare and overall control over resources

The Concept of Feminism & Advancing Gender Equality in Iran

Feminism can be defined as a theory that acknowledges the equality of men and women on a broad spectrum, that is; politically, socially and economically. On that note, it is important and ideal for women and men to have access to the available resources and opportunities. There are three underlying concepts that this theory focusses on; in every aspect of the world women have something significant and useful to contribute. In matters oppression, it has been a challenge for women in regards to receiving rewards and their wholesome participation in the community. Feminist research should be a strategy towards elimination of critiques and achievement of social transformation (Ropers- Huilman, 2000).

Feminism is responsible for "putting gender on the map" and it questions various facets as well as thematic areas in the field of International Relations. The concept of Gender from the feminist's perspective can be described as what men and women ought to be and the main characteristics to it are the socially constructed ideologies. Sex is biologically determined which gives it a different definition. It is said to be culturally shaped as it varies across time and place (Tickener & Sjoberg, 2007).

Tohidi (2002) states that before and after the Islamic Revolution, the significance of the anti-western and anti-imperialist discourse contributed to the re-examining and redefining of the relationship between the faith and feminism among women in the context of Islam and Feminism. This created gender politics and the theory of feminism in Muslim societies. Azadieh (1997) points out that Islamic feminism in Iran emerged after the Revolution which resulted to social change in the traditional and religious backgrounds by women. That is in relation to both middle and lower class. The end of the Iran War (1980-1988) has been characterized by women identified as political "subalterns" with an agenda towards contesting gender inequalities. The expansion of higher education in post-revolutionary Iran represents social and cultural capital.

Iranian Islamic Feminism is structured on social stratification and it makes reference to the Qur'an and Islam traditions. The aim to establish gender equality is attributed to the re-interpretation of Islamic laws and traditions from a perspective of gender conscious with a mobilization of Islam's symbolic capital (Parvin, 1997).

Deniz (1988) illustrates Islamic Feminism as a concept that tries to break down cultural tradition, modern values and also gender equality. The reforming of institutions and structure of hierarchical laws has led to gender equality and justice towards women which shows an attempt to liberal feminism. The challenges and barriers continue to exist but the strategy of Islamic feminists tries to challenge power relations present in the community and the state.

This can be described as bargaining with patriarchy.

There was harassment and arresting of women who opposed the emerging Islamic ruling ideology in relation to the established public roles. There are two basic challenges that Iranian women face when addressing traditions that directed and influenced cultural values to future generations. These are; gender-bias laws linked to the patriarchal culture and the self-belief that the woman has as a result of the whole patriarchal system (Sadr, 2004). For women to live a more enriched and rewarding life, they need support, guidance and opportunity to be fully empowered and thriving in their various facets of life. The concept of Women Empowerment breaks down issues that negatively affect the realization of full potential in their everyday life. In the recent years, women empowerment has been a significant determinant in the status and position of women both nationally and internationally

In the current and recent times, Iranian women are actually much more aware and informed of their roles and are quite active in the quest to address the system's inequality by finding and implementing solutions. The access to information has made women understand their rights from an International perspective and this is made possible through modern technology. Women have also been able to build a bridge between themselves and the outside world through a wide range of access to the Internet, Websites and in addition the social media platforms. This has greatly impacted a positive approach to finding their voice on a global space. Additionally, the support of various social movements such as universal access to education for women and girls, the freedom of expression, anti-domestic violence movements, campaigns on human rights and reforms associated with divorce laws.

Summary, Recommendation & Conclusion

United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) has shown positive commitments towards protecting women against possibilities of poverty, illiteracy and powerlessness. There have been strategies to provide women with opportunities that support economic growth and development by the UNFPA program countries. The empowerment of women is central hence the fund has put in place measures that enhance partnerships with parliamentarians in various developing countries for support in political and legislative projects (UN Women, 2010).

Empowerment is identified as giving power to women and this can be achieved through fostering education, creation of employment and supporting sustainable businesses. The effects of these are diversified in the context of economic, political and socio-cultural aspects. Women empowerment creates better attitude especially within the family and minimal cases of bad behavior or misconduct is witnessed. The entire society benefits from a result of more stability among families in the community. On the political level, women are able to cooperate in political arenas with a more sense of clarity and awareness.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has had a share of cooperation and interactions that have been successful with its commonwealth countries and this, I believe is worth noting. This is generally with regard to knowledge and experience exchange, education, transfer in technology and media, financial and economic spectrum amongst other sectors. The cooperation in this case involves the NGOs, various Organizations, institutions as well as the private sector.

Additionally, women are considered important facilitators and instruments in the creation of sustainable development. Progress has been made in reducing inequalities and improving the status of women.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran should work on initiating educational and awareness-building campaigns to basically address the roles that women play in politics, society and economy in order to limit and eliminate identified stereotypes. Additionally, support civil society organizations in the designing of policies that fully support the advancements of women and overall empowerment. The Iranian Government should also address underlying issues at the legal and judiciary level. This means directing efforts to removing requirements of women and girls in having to seek permission from male gender as this entirely limits their ability to fully enjoy basic rights such as travelling and getting married. In extent, enact legislation that puts across a clear specification of minimum legal age to get into marriage and the penalties faced in facilitation of child marriages.

The dynamic structure of Feminist consciousness and women's activities is evident alongside the transformation as women focus on improving their lives and articulate challenges within families, state and the society. The Constitutional Revolution has greatly contributed to women having the space to voice their interests and attempts to form Organizations geared to Liberal feminism.

Gender interests have overlapped the Post-revolutionary period in their efforts as women to have personal political and religious ideologies and perceptions. Under the present state, the return to public space is evident. The Feminist movement might have given birth to women who are divided in reference to the twentieth century but the values they hold often are complementary. The advancements of women in Iran experiences obstacles that are categorized as economic, cultural, political, social-cultural and legal. It is also important to recognize and appreciate the role and influence of existing NGOs in increasing awareness of women empowerment in Iran and addressing women's issues which is positive progress and a sign of prosperity.

This study brings a clear discussion of the need for distinct policies and programs in the development of small and medium enterprises to be instilled through many national mechanisms. This will be geared towards enabling women to have globalization benefits and also manage issues of poverty as well as discrimination in the workplace. To oversee such it would mean having policies and laws in employment, practical skills for training women in technology, awareness on entrepreneurship through education, access to markets and microfinance services. Work and life balance is equally important thus supporting developments that introduce policies to promote this goes a long way in the overall success to gender equality and women empowerment.

References

1) Ann Tickener, J., and Sjoberg, L., (2007). Feminism in Dunne, T., Kukri, M…and Smith, S. (eds). International Relations Themes: Discipline and Diversity. (Oxford University Press), pp. 195-212.

2) Ardalan, Parvin (2013). "Chapter 12: Feminism Democratization of the Iranian Society." In A Force Such as the World has never known: Women Creating Change, edited by Nahid Angha, Sharon G. Mijares, and Aliaa Rafea. Toronto, Canada: Inanna Publications and Education.

3) Azadieh, Kian (1997). Women and Politics in post-Islamist Iran: a Gender-Conscious Drive to Change. British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies 24(1), pp 75-96.

4) Baha'i International Community (2012). The Compliance of the Islamic Republic of Iran with the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, March, p.13.

5) Basu, Bharati; and Pushkar Maitra (2020). "Intra-Household Bargaining Power and Househild Expenditure Allocation: Evidence from Iran." Review of Development Economics, 24 (2): 606-627.

6) CAWTAR (2007). Women Entrepreneurs in the Middle East and North Africa: Characteristics, Contributions & Challenges. CAWTAR, Tunis.

7) Deniz Kandiyoti (1988). Bargaining with Partriachy. Gender and Society. September, 2 (3), pp. 274-290.

8) Ganle, John Kuumuori, Kwadwo Afriyie & Alexander Yao Segbefia: (2015). "Microcredit: Empowerment and Disempowerment of Rural Women in Ghana." World Development, 66: 335-345.

9) Habib TZ (2017). Challenges of the female heads of household in Bangladesh: a qualitative inquiry. J Adv Soc Sci Humanit. 3 (6): 36160-9.

10) Herbst CM (2012). Footloose and fancy free? Two decades of single mothers' subjective well-being. Soc Serv Rev.; 86 (2): 189-222.

11) Khaz Ali, A. (2010). Iranian women after the Islamic revolution. In Beirut: Conflict Forum Monograph [Farsi].

12) Khorasani, Noushin Ahmadi (2009). How Social Movements Can Change Iran. The Feminist School, June 12.

13) Khosrokhavar, Farhad (2012). "Part 1: Theorizing Civil Society in Iran, Chapter 3: The Green Movement in Iran: Democratization and Secularization from Below." In Civil Society AND Democracy in Iran, edited by Ramin Jahanbegloo. Global Encounters: Studies in Comparative Political Theory. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books.

14) Kian, A. (1995). Gendered Occupation and Women's status in Iran. Middle East Studies, Volume 31, Number 3.

15) Leach, Fiona (2003). Practicing Gender Analysis in Education. Oxford: Oxfam.

16) Moghadam, V. M. (1995). Gender and revolutionary transformation: Iran 1979 and east central Europe 1989. Gender and Society, 9(3), 329-358.

17) Moinifar, H. (1999). Family Planning Programs and Population Growth in Post-Revolutionary Iran, PhD. Thesis, Durham University.

18) Nazier & Ramadan (2018). What Empowers Egyptian Women: Resources versus Social constraints? Review of Economics and Political Science, 3 (3/4): 153-175.

19) Nicholas, Abercrumby, and others (1999). The Culture of Sociology. Pp. 54-64.

20) Nicholas Minot (2018). What Factors Explain Women's Empowerment? Decision-Making among Small-Scale Farmers in Uganda. Women's Studies International Forum, 71: 46-55.

21) Paidar, P (2001). Gender of democracy: The encounter between feminism & reformism in contemporary Iran. Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development.

22) Paidar, Parvin (2002). Encounters between Feminism, Democracy and Reforminism in Contemporary Iran. In: Gender Justice, development and Rights. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

23) Parvin, Paidar (1997). Women and the Political Process in Twentieth-Century Iran, Cambridge University Press.

24) Ropers-Huilman, B. (Ed). (2002). Gendered futures in higher education: Critical perspectives for change. Albany. NY: SUNY.

25) Rubin, J (1997). Gender, equality and the culture of organizational assessment. Gender, Work and Organization 4 (1), 23-34.

26) Sadr, Shadi (2004). Iran-rights: Shadi Sadr Describes Iranian women's Movement. Global Information Network, May 27. Accessed February 2, 2014. http://search.proquest.com.epz01.library.qut.edu.au/docview/457552873

27) Salehi, A. et al. (2021). Young Women living in Iran: Gendered drivers influencing social participation and well-being. Journal of Gender Studies, 30 (4), 478-495.

28) Stromquist, N. (1993). Women, Education and Empowerment. Pathways towards Autonomy, Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo (ed). Report of the International Seminar held at UIE, Hamburg. 27 January- 2 February.

29) Tohidi, N. (2002). Review of the book Islam and gender: the religious debate in contemporary Iran. International Journal of Middle East Studies, 34 (1), 170-171.

30) UN General Assembly (1997). Report of the Economic and Social Council of the Year 1997. UN Doc. 1997 A/52/3-18.

31) UN Women (2010). UN Creates New Structure for Empowerment of Women. Retrieved September 10, 2012, from http://www.unwomen.org/2010/07/un-creates-new-structure-for-empowerment-of-women

32) World Bank (2012). World Bank Report 2012: Gender Equality and Development.

33) World Economic Forum (2021). Global Gender Gap Report. Geneva.