



# **Social Protection, Public Services,**

# **and**

# **Sustainable Infrastructure**

## **March 2019**

### A substandard situation in IRAN

A study by the Women's Committee of  
the National Council of Resistance of Iran








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**A substandard situation in Iran**

*A study by the Women's Committee of the National Council of Resistance of Iran - March 2019*

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# Introduction

Sixty-three years after the formation of the UN Commission on the Status of Women and despite international advances made over this period, Iranian women and girls are living under increasingly inhuman conditions under the rule of the misogynist dictators in Iran.

Most working women receive wages that are far below the poverty line. They are deprived of adequate social protection. In step with poverty going rampant, a growing number of young women are deprived of education. The official policy of privatization of hospitals have not helped the situation of Iranian women, either. There are no public medical insurances particularly for low-income and poor women. Young Iranian women are deprived of scientific opportunities due to gender-based admissions to many fields. And these are but a handful of numerous obstacles hindering empowerment of Iranian women.

The grave economic situation and deep social divisions augment Iranian women's problems every day. In March 2018, a member of the mullahs' parliament admitted that 80% of Iranians live below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> In fact, the ruling regime's policies against the interests of the nation and widespread corruption of the ruling clique along with gender and social class inequality that are institutionalized in the country's laws do not leave any source of funding for improving infrastructure, public services, and social protection to empower women and girls.

A group of the officials' close-knits, accounting for 4 percent of the entire Iranian population,<sup>2</sup> have taken over all the resources and decision-making positions, controlling the private and public life of the entire population in the most unfair manner. They adopt political and legal mechanisms which confine women to their homes without giving them any financial or legal backing, forcing them to live as the poorest of the poor.

This situation forces women more and more into unofficial, substandard and even unpaid jobs. Although these kinds of work are slightly different in the city and the countryside, not only they do not provide for women's livelihood but jeopardize their dignity, health and well-being.

In Iranian villages, women have practically become slaves. Without receiving any wage, support or even insurance, they often work continuously for up to 20 hours a day in farming or livestock work, along with all the tedious and hard work related to the daily routine of rural life.

Most villages lack piped water, electricity and gas, roads and health clinics. Many receive water by tankers arriving at their village

every three days at best, and women have to provide their family's water by walking long distances to fill their jerry cans.

In view of the economic situation and liquidity in Iran, it should be noted that while the minimum wage in 2018 was set to be 1,100,000 tomans (approx. \$81.5) per month,<sup>3</sup> the minimum monthly living expenses for a family of four in 2018 was 6,500,000 tomans (approx. \$481.5) and the minimum expenses of 18 basic food and commodity items for a 4-person household at the urban-level price was about 1,700,000 tomans (approx. \$126) per month for the year 2018.<sup>4</sup>

At the same time, the average salary of a teacher is 2,300,000 tomans (approx. \$170) and the salary of a retired teacher is about 1,200,000 tomans (approx. \$89). However, most teachers work on a contract basis and their salary is below 1 million tomans (approx. \$74).

A socio-economist explains about poverty of the general public in Iran.<sup>5</sup> "According to the statistics, one third of the people with a low-income of one million tomans a month (\$74), that is around 5 million people, are living in extreme poverty and hunger.<sup>6</sup> When 67% of people live below the relative poverty line, it's natural for them to feel angry!"

The CSW63 meetings are to focus on three thematic areas of social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure.

The Commission urges governments to design, fund, implement, supervise and evaluate social protection systems, public services and sustainable infrastructure in accordance with human rights standards. So that the existing services and infrastructure are affordable for everyone and acceptable to all cultures and social levels. They should not be discriminatory according to sexual norms or classified according to gender, social class or geographical location. The progress should also be continuous and should not go backward.

With this general overview, we will review the status of women under the rule of the religious misogynist dictatorship in Iran.

# Endnotes

- 1 The official website of the Iranian regime's parliament, ICANA, March 13, 2018
- 2 The state-run Tasnim news agency
- 3 Irankargar.com, September 21, 2018
- 4 There are two exchange rates in Iran. The state's official exchange rate for dollar which is used only for budgeting and state commerce, and the free market exchange rate which has been swinging from 11,000 up to 20,000 tomans since mid-2018. As this pamphlet was going under print, the official exchange rate was 4,200 tomans, while the free market exchange rate was around 13,500 tomans, which we used to make prices expressive.
- 5 Fa.shafaqna.com, February 28, 2018
- 6 Ibid.





## 01. SOCIAL PROTECTION

1. Nursing Services and Care for Children and the Elderly

Care for children and the elderly, like other social services that should be provided by governments, has no place in the agenda and budgeting of the Iranian regime.

At least 30% of the elderly in Iran do not have a job at all. Many do not have any income and live under the poverty line.

Obviously, when it comes to women, given the multifold rate of women's unemployment and the variety of existing discriminations, they often cannot afford to pay for and use nursing services despite their specific needs.

In addition, care centers for the elderly have neither quality nor quantity to meet international standards. Many of these centers have no budget allocated to them by the government.

In terms of health and medical care, old age requires social workers and nurses trained in this field,<sup>1</sup> none of which are available in Iran. Presently, there are not even sufficient facilities for the retired elderly. An overview of the status of retirement insurance funds<sup>2</sup> in Iran shows that almost all of these funds are having financial difficulties and will go bankrupt if the current situation continues. The insurance institutions in Iran lack a collective management system.

In such circumstances, Vahid Ghobadi Dana, head of the Welfare Organization, announced that the organization intends to raise the fees for the care centers for the elderly.<sup>3</sup> He criticized the parliament for not funding his organization and said, "The welfare organization estimates that implementing the law on protection of the rights of persons with disabilities would require 12 trillion tomans (approx. \$888,890), but the parliament's specialized commissions have allocated only 1.1 trillion tomans (approx. \$81481.5), less than one tenth of the estimated fund to implement the law."

Currently, about 95% of nursing homes are private and managed at the expense of charities and the families of the elderly.

Homayoun Hashemi, the head of the Welfare Organization, disclosed that over 20,000 elderlies whose identities are mostly unknown are being cared for in 150 different care centers.<sup>4</sup> The maximum amount allocated by the government for each elderly in these centers is 200,000 tomans a month (approx. \$15). Private centers, depending on the geographical area and type of services they provide, receive between 1.2 to 6 million tomans (\$89 - \$445) per month for every elderly, which does not include physiotherapy and health care. However, according to the Director General of the Office of Well Being of the Elderly, the cost of caring for the elderly is not more than 550,000 tomans a month (approx. \$41).

These rackets are not against the elderly, alone. Due to the inhumane conditions in these institutions many job seekers and those

Elderly women often cannot afford to pay for and use nursing services despite their specific needs.

Budget allocated to Welfare Organization to implement the law on the right of persons with disability is one-tenth of their needed budget

Private care centers charge the elderly from two to 10 times more than the real cost of care

trained in this area do not remain in their positions for long. Another reason for leaving is the insignificant pay that the centers allocate for their workers and trained staff despite for the hard work required of them.<sup>5</sup> A worker needs to have her life ahead of everything, because she is giving her youth through the services she is providing. Working at these centers is tedious.

Coaches who work with mentally retarded children or handicapped and care takers in the nursing homes end up with psychological problems due to depressing environments of these centers. Therefore, it is safe to say that the privileges given to the workers in this field are negligible. They have the right to receive benefits for the severity of their work, but instead are denied a decent basic salary.

Instead of receiving benefits for the hard work they do, care givers are denied a decent basic salary

2. Unpaid work for rural and urban women

According to the National Statistics Center of Iran (NSC),<sup>6</sup> 60% of the employees of the commercial and service sector did not receive any salary in 2015.<sup>7</sup> Unpaid employees include those who work as interns, trial employees, family businesses, as well as some people who were working with contracts or non-formal contracts. In such employment the workers usually are not insured and salary, pay period and hours and days worked are not usually recorded. During this year, the average working hours of each employee in the commercial and service sector were 51 hours a week, which is 7 hours more than the legal limit of 44 hours a week.



**The policy of the labor market in Iran is based on temporary labor force and removal of their legal protections against the employer and the government**

The policy of the labor market in Iran<sup>8</sup> in recent decades has been based on temporary labor force<sup>9</sup> and removal of legal protections against the employer and the government.

The political structure has also contributed to the institutionalization of this inequality.<sup>10</sup> Gender segregation has been a major factor in the growth of inequality.

Studies on the employment of women in Iran's labor market show that most of the employed women in the country are working in the services sector. According to these surveys, the share of women's employment in the two areas of agriculture and services is more than men.<sup>11</sup> A significant part of the employment of women in the rural areas is limited to family-based and unpaid jobs, which do not bear any direct material benefit for them.

Rural women face numerous obstacles in entrepreneurship due to lack of adequate financial and legal support.

### 3. Unofficial and part-time jobs, domestic employment

Given the numerous barriers to women's empowerment in Iran, they are forced to accept jobs with low pay and meager salaries in private and service related jobs.<sup>12</sup>

Hessam Nikoupour, a research associate at the Institute for Social Security Research, said, "What happens in the Iranian economy is that due to the recession and lack of production, the non-wage and wage-earning sector is expanding, reaching 45 to 46 percent of the total workforce. The first characteristic of this kind of employment is that they are not covered by the labor law, their probability of being insured is low, the minimum wage laws are not respected, the education level of workers is lower and the probability of being laid off is higher. Presently, there are some 10 million workers in the country who need to insure themselves because there is no obligation to insure the workers. The number of insured workers in Iran is about 15 million and 6.5 million workers have no insurance at all. These people are not wage-earners and at least 80% of them are women."<sup>13</sup>

Pour Moussa, the Secretary General of the Supreme Assembly of Labor Councils, also recognizes that women are inherently diligent in their work, which is why their productivity is high, but because of their great need to have a job, they would accept any difficulty which leads to their being taken advantage of.<sup>14</sup>

Contrary to the basic principles of the labor law, women are kept longer hours at work without job insurance.

Apart from jobs in the service sector, women are also employed in hard labor. They work with heavy machinery in closed environments away from the eyes of inspectors and they are given only 5 days of

**10 million Iranian workers need to insure themselves because there is no obligation to insure the workers. These are not wage-earners and at least 80% of them are women**

**Women are kept longer hours at work without job insurance. Women are also employed in hard labor.**

insurance for the whole month.

Many private sector employers terminate employment of female workers as soon as they find out that they are pregnant. In some workshops the employer limits the benefits for the number of dependents to two children; if a woman has a third child they terminate her contract.

There is no system for organizing the employment of women and men and there is no balance in the labor market. There are a large number of educated women who do not find jobs for their level and field of education; thus they are forced to accept part time and informal positions.

**Many private sector employers terminate employment of pregnant workers as soon as they find out**



Official sources announced in 2016 that the unemployment rate among young women under 30 years old was 85.9%.<sup>15</sup> Here are a few examples announced by the state media:

Maryam who has a Bachelor's of political science, earns 150,000 tomans (\$11) working for 9 hours at a falafel shop. Shahnaz, a graduate of computer engineering, receives 300,000 tomans (\$22) a month for 8 hours of work at an insurance company. Another young girl with a Bachelor's in accounting works 10.5 hours a day for 200,000 tomans (\$15) a month. No one is insured and they all have signed a consent so they can never file a complaint against their employers.<sup>16</sup>

Some women work incessantly up to 14 hours a day in sewing workshops,<sup>17</sup> while half of the workers in brick kilns are women who work under extreme conditions with no support from the law whatsoever.

Women also receive unequal pay for equal work compared to men. A survey done on more than 93,000 Iranian professionals and



managers in 22 different occupational groups revealed that Iranian women received 23% less salary than the men doing the same work.<sup>18</sup> It should be taken into account that these figures were related to high level occupations and managerial level positions. On lower levels, the difference in revenues are higher. According to some statistics, women's wages in Iran are 41% less than men,<sup>19</sup> and Iran ranks 98th in the world in this regard.

For example, the number of women working in the rice fields are less than the market demand, but many farm owners prefer to employ women because their wages are always lower than men's.<sup>20</sup>

In other agricultural sectors, despite doing the same work for the same amount of hours, women end up with half of the pay allocated to their male counterparts.<sup>21</sup> In the small production and service units, the situation of women is worse than men. For example, in women's clothing stores, women are paid less than men doing similar work.

4. Immigrants or shanty-dwellers

Another very poor social group, deprived of social protections are immigrants and shanty dwellers that due to the scarcity of life in the villages have migrated to the margins of cities and their population is increasing rapidly.

According to a number of regime officials, many villages in Iran have been left vacant due to lack of jobs.

Many residents of Sistan and Baluchestan do not even have Iranian identity cards. The exact number of the people with no birth certificates in Sistan and Baluchestan is not known. Some members of the mullahs' parliament have estimated their numbers to be as high as 100,000.<sup>22</sup> These people are deprived even of the most basic rights of all citizens.

According to the patriarchal cultural norms, when a village boy migrates to the city, he is called a migrant worker, but when a girl wants to start a different life in the city she is branded as a runaway girl and can become victims of prostitution within 48 hours. The employment path for these women is closed and they quickly get caught up in the loop of dead ends and depression.<sup>23</sup>

Many officials estimate the number of Iran's marginalized population to be 20 million, living in worn out sections in the peripheries of 495 cities.<sup>24</sup>

Farid Barati Sedeh, Deputy Director of Prevention and Treatment for the Treatment center of the Welfare Organization, declared this figure as 19 million, but added that the population of shanty dwellers who reside in the peripheries of cities have so far been lacking in statistics and not accounted for by the urban services and welfare system.<sup>25</sup>

20 million Iranians live in worn out sections in the peripheries of 495 cities



An expert on social harms says that the country's planning system has never provided adequate services to immigrants such as schools, cultural centers, clinics, green areas and streets; in other words, they did not provide their basic living needs. Now that they have to compensate, the necessary resources are not available.<sup>26</sup>

The areas where shanty dwellers live today are characterized by high population density, widespread unemployment, low average education and income, poverty, and low standard of living and this is what differentiates them from other urban areas.

Shanty dwelling is also considered as one of the causes contributing to social ills such as addiction, divorce, murder and corruption, as well as petty and major crimes.

The National Statistics Center (NSC) reported that 10,000 households in Iran live in "tents, ghettos, mud houses and slums."<sup>27</sup> Of course, considering the number of mud villages and existence of earthquake victims still living in tents, these statistics seem to be very inaccurate.

The shanty dwellers living in the immediate vicinity of cities are deprived of the primary health facilities and infrastructure.<sup>28</sup> The sewage flows in open streams finding its way above the ground. This causes an outbreak of parasitic diseases that are widespread among the populations living in shanty towns. This is what shanty town inhabitants and villagers have in common.

In an epidemiological survey, over 90% of shanty dwellers were infected with parasitic diseases. In many marginalized areas, inhabitants do not have access to sanitation because the city authorities do not perform their duties and shanty dwellers are not able to finance these facilities. The use of detergents and cleaning materials in these areas

At least 10,000 households in Iran live in tents, ghettos, mud houses and slums and are deprived of primary health facilities and infrastructure

is extremely low, only 1 out of 15 homes when inspected contained soap. The toilets in these homes are made with materials such as cement blocks, bricks and stones using sacks to hold them in place. The garbage is abandoned around the road, or just stacked up into an enclosure becoming a permanent source of contaminants, attracting vile animals like rats.

Soudeh Maghsudi, a sociologist, says, "51% of the shanty town dwellers around Kerman have a monthly income less than 300,000 tomans (approx. \$22). This kind of low income causes damage to that area. 32% of Kerman's shanty dwellers are construction and seasonal workers with street vendors being part of this group as well; and some others have no employment at all which has created problems in that area."<sup>29</sup>

School dropouts and academic failure rates are much higher in the shanty towns than the rest of the country. In order to supplement their family income, boys leave school at an early age so the number of students in last year of elementary school is much lower than first years of elementary. Due to religious or ethnic beliefs and practices, girls do not go to school or else, they leave school at an early age.

Food and nutrition health is also in a disastrous state. Every day, vendors sell sacks containing slaughterhouse waste, which, in addition to the lack of nutritional value, is distributed in a totally unsanitary manner.

In the meantime, the number of children in 60 households surveyed were between 3 to 13 children per household indicating a lack of reproductive health. In addition, 10 to 12 people are forced to live in a room which adds to the health dilemma they are facing.

These areas are generally crime ridden and dangerous posing compound risks for women. In the year 2000, we witnessed a chain murders of women in these areas with 16 victims in a short span of time.<sup>30</sup>

In the past, the discussions on shanty town dwelling focused only on Tehran and its marginal areas. But now Tabriz, Mashhad, Ahvaz,<sup>31</sup> Ardabil, Sanandaj, Hamadan, Zahedan and Karaj<sup>32</sup> are also cities where their marginalized population is increasing day by day and the situation in these cities is also critical.

**A survey done on 60 households revealed lack of reproductive and general health. There are 3 to 13 children to every household, and 10-12 people living in the same room**

## 5. Health and care services during the life course, and ensuring accessibility and affordability of health care services for all, including for delivery

In identifying the concept of women's health, all aspects of their physical, psychological and social health should be considered. Sexual discrimination and the existence of inappropriate culture on the role of women in the development of society are all factors that affect women's health and their ability to use the existing facilities and resources available in different realms of society.

Various factors affect people's health, including social status, occupational status, stress, addiction, food, social protections, economic and political environment and etc.

In Iran, institutionalized repression, misogynist rules and standards, and routine scenes of violent crackdowns in public, create tremendous stress in society and adversely impact the health of Iranian women. Iran, despite its material wealth, is among the top 10 countries with the highest depression<sup>33</sup> and the 14th saddest country in the world.<sup>34</sup>

Statistical reports show that there are 6.4 million depressed people in Iran, and according to the regime's Health Minister, women have a greater share of depression.<sup>35</sup>

In underdeveloped areas and in villages, poverty, malnutrition, and heavy work contribute to health problems among inhabitants, especially women and children.

Although the Iranian regime has claimed that Iran will deliver on its pledge to reduce maternal mortality by 2030, painful examples show the bitter truth. As a matter of fact, the health system under the mullahs' rule in Iran has been incapable of responding to its most basic responsibilities.

### *The status of hospital treatment for pregnant women*

In December 2018, a 37-year-old pregnant woman, who was waiting for the birth of her third child, was operated on due to a ruptured membrane.<sup>36</sup> Upon closer inspection, it was found out that she had suffered internal hemorrhage and died due to lack of attention from the hospital staff.

Again in December 2018, a woman died in Hamadan due to the injection of antibiotics that she was allergic to.<sup>37</sup> The injection was made despite nurses' cautioning the physician about her allergy to antibiotics.

In October 2017, a 28-year-old mother at the last stage of her pregnancy was taken to hospital overnight due to severe coughing. She was placed in the infectious diseases' section. The patient

**There are 6.4 million depressed people in Iran, with a greater share of women**



was left alone until her blood pressure started falling and she had problem breathing. Her family immediately asked the medical team to intervene. With her situation worsening, the medical staff took her to a room on the first floor, attached two beds together to perform C-section on her. But after a short while, they announced that both mother and the baby had died.<sup>38</sup> Her husband was cited as saying, "The situation and the location of the cesarean was so inadequate that some hospital staff even asked us to sue the hospital because of the treatment of our patient."

Another pregnant woman who had come to hospital due to early pain and contractions and given birth to her child died in November 2016 due to medical failure at Khomeini Hospital.<sup>39</sup> Upon giving birth, she had trouble breathing and suffered internal hemorrhage, but the medical personnel were late in finding out. And even when they were notified the on-call physician was not available. This was despite the fact that the patient's medical records contained information about her sensitive condition and risks, emphasizing that a heart and anesthesia specialist must be present during delivery and that the patient must be transferred to ICU immediately after delivery but none of them were observed.

In January 2017, the 32-year-old Zahra Hosseini was taken to Chamran Hospital where she gave birth to beautiful twins. Meanwhile, instead of administering oxygen they gave her a combination of carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide.<sup>40</sup> After a few minutes the screams of the young mother could be heard through the hospital. Due to this horrific mistake her mouth, nose, eyelids and lips were burned and she had to breathe through a device for a long time unable to eat, drink or talk to anyone for months. The burns did not only obscure



**Zahra Hosseini, 32, burned during delivery in Chamran Hospital**

the beauty of her face, but they were forced to pierce her esophagus and operated on her lower eyelids many times to prevent them from drying. A month after the incident, Mohammad Taghi Halimazar, the president of Chamran Hospital, said, "We do not know why this news has been published in the cyberspace."

In December 2015, Khair-on Nesa Jadgal, 23, and her baby died at a maternity hospital in Chabahar Hospital.<sup>41</sup> The baby's head was detached during delivery as the midwife had applied too much pressure. In order to remove the baby's body from the mother they resorted to surgery but the mother never regained consciousness and died a few days later.

To stop the news from leaking to the media, hospital officials threatened the family that if they file a complaint it will go nowhere but if they forget the incident the hospital will forfeit the 11 million toman bill they owe for the services. The family of the young mother unable to pay the hospital bill accepted not to press any charges.

In August 2014, a young pregnant woman gave birth to her baby in the hospital's toilet because the hospital refused to admit her.<sup>42</sup> Parvaneh who was in severe pain when she went to the hospital in Kohdasht, but was told that she had to go to the hospital in Khorramabad. Having no choice, she went to the hospital's dark toilet with the help of her sister to give birth to her child.

**A young pregnant woman gave birth to her baby in the hospital's toilet because the hospital refused to admit her**

### *An example of women's hospital in Iran*

A close look at the conditions of obstetric hospitals is a better predictor of the dire systematic situation.

Kowsar Gynecology and Obstetrics Hospital in Urmia lacks the necessary medical facilities for pregnant women.<sup>43</sup> According to the previous governor, this hospital has not had any change after 30 years. Kowsar Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital in Urmia, which is the only specialized maternity hospital, has only 62 beds. Most women who come to the Kowsar Obstetrics and Gynecology Hospital in Urmia, give birth to their children in the corridor and spend their recovery in the corridors of the hospital and are discharged while still at the corridors of the hospital.

Urmia has more than 73,000 inhabitants and is the center of the West Azerbaijan province in northwestern Iran.

**Most women in Kowsar Hospital in Urmia give birth and recover in the corridor, and discharged from the corridor**

### *Hospital behavior towards patients with financial problems*

People who do not afford hospital expenses are treated in two ways, either they are not admitted to begin with, or they are held hostage after treatment.

In February 2018, a 35-year-old mother from Mashhad who had

**Hospitals either do not admit patients with financial problems or take them hostage after treatment until they pay their fees**



**Zahra Karimi, 14, who died due to wrong injection in a Yazd hospital.**

normal delivery, was taken hostage for 5 days and not allowed to leave the hospital due to lack of financial resources to pay her hospital bill.<sup>44</sup> Hospital officials had insisted that she would be able to leave the hospital only if she made full payment of 1.2 million tomans (\$89). It should be noted that with the passing of everyday 380,000 tomans (\$28) were added to her bill. This despite the fact that the state's health rules specifically point out that natural births are free of charge.

A deeper look at the healthcare issues in Iran reveals that the lives of human beings have no value under the rule of the clerics.

In September 2018, Zahra Barghi, 3, died due to blood infection after the state hospital refused her admittance despite the treating physician's order, saying there were no empty beds for non-emergency patients. Despite her father's insistence that he would hold his daughter in his arms and stay in the hallway, he was thrown out of hospital using foul language and insults. On the way to another hospital, little Zahra suffered seizures and nausea and died less than 24 hours later.<sup>45</sup>

A couple of days earlier, a 14-year-old girl in Yazd, Zahra Karimi, lost her life due to being administered the wrong injection in the emergency department at Afsharieh Hospital.<sup>46</sup>

In April 2016, the lifeless body of a 13-year-old girl was held hostage as a result of her father's inability to pay the hospital bill.<sup>47</sup> Shokofeh Fathi Kamalabad went to Noorabad hospital for pain in her abdomen. She underwent appendicitis surgery, but became worse and subsequently died the next day in another hospital. According to one of the nurses, the girl was suffering from appendicitis but part of her stomach and intestine were also removed.

The girl's father tried to retrieve her daughter's body from the hospital but they told him that he had to pay 87 million tomans (\$6,444) to the hospital. The father who was a construction worker was begging the hospital authorities but they replied that they had administered 39 injections to his daughter costing 42 million tomans (\$3,111).

The father said that the doctors repeatedly told him that they had no hope in his daughter's survival and did not say anything about administering expensive injections. Finally, with the help of other family members and signing promissory notes and documents, the girl's body was released to her family after three days.

An 18 year old orphan girl was kept as a hostage for at least seven days in March 2016 in the city of Yazd for not being able to pay for her treatment cost.<sup>48</sup> She went to the hospital's emergency room where she underwent surgery. The cost of treatment for her seven-day stay was 4 million tomans (\$296) but she could only afford to pay one million of the amount, and the hospital prevented her discharge.

The cost of treatment is generally very high, and since many

people do not have insurance, they cannot afford to pay for their treatment. The increase in hospital accommodation in the current situation is such that 40% of the beds of private hospitals in the country are vacant due to high prices.<sup>49</sup>

The clerical regime with its irresponsible policies has no intention nor the ability to resolve this crisis. The health budget for the year 2018 was only increased by 6.4% compared to the prior year, while the Ministry of Health had a deficit of 15 trillion tomans (\$1.1 million).<sup>50</sup> On the other hand, from September 2017 to September 2018, the price of food items increased 170%.<sup>51</sup>

## **6. Provision of maternity leave and raising a child through government guarantees**

The misogynist clerical regime has repeatedly emphasized the policy of keeping women at home. Therefore, it would be totally meaningless to expect such a regime to create a guaranteed maternity leave entitlement program for women.

Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' Supreme Leader, in a speech on May 1, 2013, to his supporters<sup>52</sup> spoke about the special privileges of women that included nothing but housekeeping, childbirth, and the raising of children. He emphasized, "Taking care of the home and child-bearing is a great and artistic feminine virtue that is associated with patience, affection and emotions." Following this speech, the Parliament began adopting a misogynist bill focusing on "child-bearing" and population growth.

One of the bills was the maternity leave plan, which was adopted on May 23, 2013. The second amendment to the bill states, "The government is allowed to increase maternity leave for a period of nine months with two weeks of compulsory leave for the husband."<sup>53</sup> Taking a closer look at the bill we realize that instead of empowering women, this bill actually pushes them further away into isolation from society and employment.

Mohammad Hossein Ghorbani, a spokesman for the Healthcare Commission in the mullahs' parliament, once admitted that population growth is a hollow motto. He said, "There is a maternity leave clause in this law for working women, but no support is given to women who work on the farm, who burden the greater load of population growth."

The law allows the government to extend the time limit for the leave. Considering that the different government agencies are not obliged to obey with the leave extension they can therefore reject the request.

Under such a law, even the 6-month maternity leave could be

**The increase in hospital accommodation in the current situation is such that 40% of the beds of private hospitals in the country are vacant due to high prices**

**Government agencies are not obliged to extend maternity leave. The new bill does not oblige employers to pay the salary of the woman who is on maternity leave**

**74,000 women were fired from their jobs after returning from maternity leave. Some government bodies, such as Education Ministry, does not grant maternity leaves due to lack of funding**

questioned. Also, the six months' maternity leave used to be with pay and all government agencies had to conform, but in the new bill, there is no obligation to pay salaries of mothers on maternity leave.

The state-run Fars News Agency cited Fatemeh Sadeghi, a professor at Tarbiat Modarres University, on June 16, 2015, saying that 74,000 women had been fired from their jobs after taking maternity leave. In other words, one in every three women were returned home after returning from maternity leave.<sup>54</sup> Earlier, some government agencies, such as the Ministry of Education, had declared that due to lack of funding, it was not possible to grant female workers maternity leave.

In September 2017, the general board of the Court of Administrative Justice revoked a directive by a Labor Ministry director general who had previously banned the expulsion of working mothers by the end of their two-year lactation.<sup>55</sup>

The Director General for Labor Relations and Compensation Services of the Labor Ministry had issued a directive No. 49517 dated June 9, 2014, according to which "the expulsion of employed women during maternity leave and lactation (until the child's two years of age) is prohibited under any pretext."

## 7. Provision of a decent job for everyone

As we have seen in the previous sections, the Iranian regime not only does not intend to empower women, but it is actually trying to keep them out of the labor market as much as possible.

Ali Khamenei, the supreme leader of the clerical regime, explicitly outlines the attitude governing these laws. He said, "God has created women for a particular area of life ... Employment is not a major issue for women."<sup>56</sup>

The Constitution of the Iranian regime instead of defining woman as a person of a specific social, political and civil status only points out their role as a mother whose duty is solely to bring up and raise children. Therefore, having a decent job is not among the fundamental rights of women at all.<sup>57</sup>

The Constitution also stipulates that heading the family is an inherent duty of men, and requires women to have their husband's permission to leave the house. The law also allows men to prohibit their spouses from working. The population growth bill approved by the parliament in 2013 prioritized employment in all governmental and nongovernmental sectors to men with children, then to married men with no children and women with children, while the right to work for other women has been ignored.

Article 8 Chapter II of the guidelines on administrative offenses

approved by the mullahs' parliament has stipulated in paragraphs 120 and 121 that failure to observe the Islamic Hijab (veil) and non-observance of Islamic rituals, are categorized as administrative offenses, which could lead to the expulsion of women from their jobs.

Another bill approved in January 2016 stresses that the recruitment of women in shops and businesses should be limited to the timeframe from 7 am to 10 pm and the working environment must be gender segregated.

The recruitment of women in government jobs is confronted by obstacles every year. In 2017 state employment test, 961 job opportunities were allocated to men and only 16 were allocated to women.

In a directive in 2014, the Municipality of Tehran instructed its directors to recruit only men as their employees. Such laws and directives are justified by the rules of veiling and religion and are practiced in many government and semi-governmental departments.

A Ministry of Education directive, which became public in the summer of 2018, contained a high-profile list of chronic and impulsive illnesses that could lead to disqualification of teachers applying for teaching positions. Section 17 of this directive contains a large list of women's diseases, including irregular menstruation, facial hair, infertility, and cancer of the uterus, ovary and breast, whereby women are excluded from employment.

In response to public outcry to the directive, a Ministry of Education official revealed that the Ministry of Education has for many years recruited teachers on these terms, and this is not a new directive.

Although unemployment is rampant in Iran, but according to statistics released by the National Statistics Center in Iran, the share of women in unemployment is higher than men.<sup>58</sup>

Government media have pointed out that the youth unemployment rate by gender reveals that the unemployment rate of young women has always been higher than young men, and this gap has increased in recent years.<sup>59</sup>

With an annual growth rate of 3.8%, the population of unemployed women has risen to a record 1.037.516 in 2017 which is the highest unemployment rate (32.3%) for women.

The state-run ISNA news agency reported on November 30, 2018, that women's unemployment rate increased from 17 percent in 2005 to more than 20 percent in 2016.

The Special Commission for the Protection of National Production and Monitoring of the Implementation of Article 44 of the Constitution, dated November 21, 2018, reported "the unemployment rate of young educated women reaches 78 percent."

In a speech in October 2017, Masoumeh Ebtekar, head of the presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs, said that the

**Non-observance of the compulsory veil is an administrative offense which could lead to the expulsion of female employees**

**According to the Iranian Constitution, a mother's role is to give birth and raise children. Having a decent job is not among women's fundamental rights**



**Women's employment in Iran is negligible even in comparison with developing countries**

unemployment of women in some provinces is more than three times higher than men.<sup>60</sup>

The state-run Iran-Estekhdam website reported that women's recruitment in Iran during 2015 was zero percent.<sup>61</sup>

Women's employment in Iran is negligible even in comparison with developing countries. They are continuously deprived of the possibility of proper employment and are generally employed in low-paid informal sectors.

In the disastrous economic situation in Iran and the regime's predatory economic policies, some handicraft and non-industrial professions, which traditionally have been the share of women, are in decline. One of these professions is carpet weaving.<sup>62</sup>

**8. Cash assistance to vulnerable individuals and female heads of household**

Women heads of household are among the most vulnerable sectors in Iran. There are about 3.6 million female heads of household in the country who face serious problems in finding jobs due to the numerous barriers imposed on women's employment.<sup>63</sup> Only 180,000 of the female heads of household are covered by the Welfare Organization and receive a monthly pension of 70,000 tomans (\$5) which is less than 10% percent of the designated minimum wage of 1,100,000 tomans (\$81.5).

"For every 100 men employed, we have 22 employed women," said Anoushirvan Mohseni Bandpay, head of the Welfare Organization, adding, "With regards to job loans to women without guardians or with bad guardians, however, the organization faces major challenges."<sup>64</sup>

Female heads of household are forced to resort to unconventional measures, such as selling their body organs, to meet the needs of their families.<sup>65</sup>

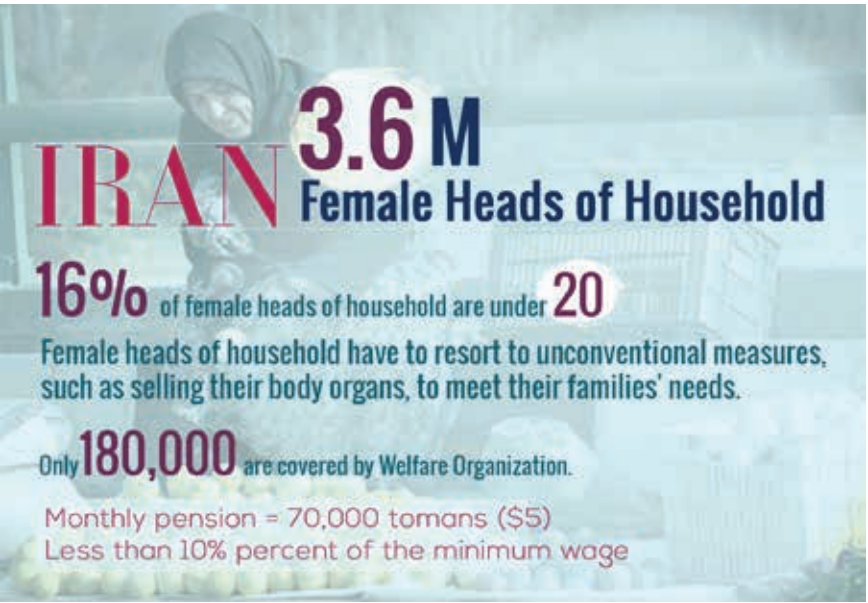
Of course, the Iranian regime acts in a non-transparent way in all areas, and the statistics provided by the authorities and government media are contradictory, but each of these figures reflect a deep and profound pain.

Massoumeh Ebtekar has declared there are more than three million unemployed women heads of household.<sup>66</sup>

Zohreh Ashtiani, secretary of the Family faction in the mullahs' parliament, also revealed on July 10, 2018, that 16 percent of women heads of household in Iran are under the age of 20.<sup>67</sup> According to her statistics, this only includes women who have been identified or have introduced themselves to support centers.

Parvaneh Salahshouri, chair of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, has previously declared that in the 2018 budget,

**Three million women heads of household are unemployed. 16% of women heads of household are under 20. 70% of carpet weavers are women and the majority of them are heads of household**



instead of poverty reduction we are aiming at increasing poverty. She pointed out that over 30% of the insurance credit allocated for women heads of household with three or more children has been eliminated.<sup>68</sup>

Abdullah Bahrami, CEO of the Handwoven Carpet Alliance, said in an interview on May 16, 2018, that "women make up 70% of country's carpet weavers."<sup>69</sup> He added that there was a time when the country's carpet weaver population was 2 million, which was reduced to one million through unfair policies directed towards them. Only 320,000 of the one million are covered by insurance. They had promised to give insurance coverage to at least one million non-insured carpet weavers by the end of 2019. Not only did it not happen but more than 150,000 people who had insurance ended up losing them.

For women heading households in Iran the step after unemployment and poverty is, unfortunately, homelessness, which is rapidly expanding.

Homeless women experience very difficult conditions, while in many cities in Iran, including Ahvaz, supplying shelters for these women is not on the agenda of the local government. So far, 2,700 homeless women have been identified in Ahvaz with no place to sleep at night.<sup>70</sup>

In bad weather conditions, especially during summer, there is only one transit shelter for women, which only operates weekdays from 8 am to 2 pm. This means that homeless women who sleep in cardboard boxes at night are deprived of staying at this center at night or during the long extremely hot summer days.

There is another shelter in Ahvaz recently reopened after a long period of closure. The problem with this shelter is that because of

**For women heading households in Iran the step after unemployment and poverty is homelessness, which is rapidly expanding**

**Of the 19 warm shelters in Tehran, only one is for homeless women which can accommodate only 200 of an estimated 3,000 homeless women in Tehran**

severe restriction of entry, like having a special letter from the judiciary, most homeless women who spend the nights sleeping in cardboard boxes are not able to use the shelter.

According to the latest statistics provided by the Tehran Municipality, there are about 19 warm shelters in Tehran, of which only one is for women.<sup>71</sup>

According to Ali Sadeghi, a social support deputy at the Tehran Municipality, the capacity of warm shelters in the city to hold homeless women sleeping in cardboard boxes is only 200.<sup>72</sup> The number of homeless women sleeping in cardboard boxes in Tehran was estimated to be at least 3,000 by 2014.

**9. Social welfare, like health and unemployment insurances, for severe illnesses, disability and aging**

Every year, the social security office issues statistics on the number of insured persons. In this year's statistics, the number of insured women was one-sixteenth of insured men.<sup>73</sup>

Given the set of conditions already described with regards to women's social support, it may be sufficient to review just one example here.

**Azemat R. K. works as a seasonal rice field worker in the city of Sari, capital of Mazandaran Province in northern Iran. She is one of the women who does not have any insurance.**  
**Azemat says, "Female workers face more problems at work than men do. Now, at 45, I work with great strength and I receive my daily salary. But this physical strength does not always remain with us, and one day we need to receive health care and retirement due to aging and work-related injuries. As a worker, you never know if you are going to get involved in a work related accident. In the most optimistic case, if we do not get hurt in a car accident while getting transported to our work place, there is always a chance of falling from a citrus tree as has happened to many women here. These kinds of accidents have confined some of my colleagues to home temporarily, or permanently in which case they are not able to receive any pension for the rest of their lives."**

**10. The country's legal and judicial system should include gender-sensitive social protection**

The structure of the clerical regime in Iran is fundamentally not consistent with giving any particular privileges to women and providing for their specific needs. But observing the legal tricks they use is interesting.

According to Article 20 of the Constitution, all citizens, both men and women, are equal before the law and with the observance of the Islamic principles they enjoy all human, political, economic, social and cultural rights.<sup>75</sup>

Article 21 of this law also states: "The government is committed to guaranteeing the rights of women in all respects in accordance with Islamic principles."

The condition of "Islamic principles", which is frequently included in the laws, is in fact the mechanism of circumvention of all laws against women.

Although the basic principles of misogyny are set out in specific terms in the law, but using the stipulation of "Islamic principles" allows the regime's oppressive judges to abuse women in any way they see fit.

According to Article 1210, the age of puberty is 9 lunar years for girls and 15 lunar years for boys. In addition, in Article 1041, the marriage of girls under 13 years of age is permitted with their guardian's permission.

Article 1114 obliges a woman to live in a house designated by her husband.

According to Articles 1123 and 1124, a man can divorce his wife for many reasons, including various illnesses and blindness in both eyes. Even if these conditions existed when he had first married her.

By contrast, according to the regime's Civil Code, women face many obstacles and complications in filing for divorce.

According to Article 860, the mother does not have the right to appoint a guardian for her child, and it is only the father or the grandfather who has the given right.

In accordance with Article 907 of the Civil Code, a son inherits twice as much a daughter.

The mullahs' Punishment Law defines the age of girls' criminal responsibility at 9 lunar years (that is 8 years and 9 months), but the value of her testimony is half that of a man.

Article 301 of the Punishment Law effectively permits the father and the paternal ancestors the killing of wife and daughter.

Article 550 determines the penalty for the killing of a woman as half the penalty for killing a man. Accordingly, if a Muslim woman is deliberately killed, if the murderer is a Muslim man, the victim's family

**The laws in Iran allow a man to divorce his wife without informing her, and to kill his wife or daughter without accounting for it**

should pay the amount of their daughter’s blood money to the family of the male murderer to have him punished according to the law of “Retribution.”

The clerical regime has prevented the adoption of any gender-sensitive legislation

Lashing has been defined as the punishment for crimes that violate public chastity. Clearly, in the clerical culture, the crimes of chastity are primarily those which fail to observe the compulsory veil. In addition to the legislations adopted in the early years of the mullahs taking power, the clerical regime has prevented the adoption of any gender-sensitive acts over the years.

11. The financing of social services systems from the tax system to benefit women

In light of the above-said facts, it is beyond expectation for the clerical regime to allocate funds to social services facilitating empowerment of women.

MP accuses government of increasing poverty rather than reducing it, for cutting down on budgets for empowerment of women heads of household and insurance for housewives

The total budget of the presidential directorate for Women and Family Affairs was 21 billion tomans (\$1.56 million) for the year 2018,<sup>76</sup> while the budget of the Council of Policy-making for Women’s Seminaries was set at more than 270 billion (\$20 million).<sup>77</sup>

According to Parvaneh Salahshouri, a member of the mullahs’ parliament, “In the Sixth Development Plan, we had two items on the agenda; one was the empowerment of female heads of household, which was a very important plan. But instead of increasing the allocated amount we ended up seeing it decreased from 20 billion to 15 billion tomans.<sup>78</sup> It looks as though instead of reducing poverty we are aiming at increasing poverty. The second plan was to insure housewives with three and more children; again the allocated amount suddenly dropped by more than 30%. ”<sup>79</sup>

This is while the clerical regime is spending huge sums of money to spread terrorism and support fundamentalist groups, which is now the focus of a global concern.

Endnotes

1	The state-run Tejarat—e Farda (Trade of Tomorrow) website, September 26, 2015	50	The state-run Bartarinha website, January 27, 2018
2	The state-run Eqtesad News website, May 17, 2017	51	The state-run Entekhab.ir, December 4, 2018
3	The official IRNA news agency, January 13, 2019	52	The state-run Mashreq news, May 1, 2013
4	The state-run Mashreqnews.com, August 24, 2014	53	The state-run Fars news agency, June 25, 2013
5	The state-run Tejarat—e Farda (Trade of Tomorrow) website, September 26, 2015	54	The state-run khabaronline.ir, April 13, 2014
6	The official website of the National Statistics Center of Iran, June 12, 2018	55	The state-run Tasnim news agency, September 15, 2017
7	The state-run ISNA news agency, June 25, 2018	56	The official website of Ali Khamenei, April 19, 2014
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10	The state-run faratab.com, March 8, 2018	59	The state-run asriran.com, December 20, 2017
11	The state-run agronic.ir, June 23, 2017	60	The state-run ghanoondaily.ir, October 30, 2017
12	The state-run ISNA news agency, February 27, 2015	61	women.ncr-iran.org, April 4, 2016
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14	The state-run ISNA news agency, February 27, 2015	63	Massoumeh Ebtekar, the official IRNA news agency, October 7, 2018
15	The state-run Mehr news agency, January 5, 2016	64	The state-run Tabnak website, February 13, 2018
16	The state-run Shahrvand newspaper, on June 28, 2017	65	women.ncr-iran.org, February 19, 2016
17	The state-run faratab.com, March 8, 2018	66	The state-run ISNA news agency, July 7, 2018
18	The state-run khabaronline.ir, June 28, 2017	67	Interview with the state-run Shahrvand daily, July 10, 2018
19	The state-run faratab.com, March 8, 2018	68	The state-run ISNA news agency, December 18, 2017
20	The state-run ILNA news agency, March 4, 2018	69	The state-run ILNA news agency, May 16, 2018
21	The official IRNA news agency, November 22, 2018	70	The official IRNA news agency, May 16, 2018
22	The official IRNA news agency, October 6, 2016	71	The state-run vaghayedaily.ir, September 17, 2017
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## 02. PUBLIC SERVICES

The 63rd Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has called on states to consider the special needs of women in the design and implementation of public services, particularly in the areas of health, education, childcare and care for the elderly in accordance with human rights principles.

This means that a comprehensive set of services have to respond to the distinctive but equally important needs of women and girls throughout their life cycle. The CSW insists that the availability of public services is not sufficient and high quality, affordable and accessible services must be provided.

Public services for women have become more important especially as poverty is prevailing the Iranian society. The Iranian regime, however, has made life even more difficult for women in Iran through its predatory and anti-popular policies coupled with a focus on misogyny as one of the main pillars of preserving its rule.

Naturally, in such circumstances, paying attention to the particular needs of women is out of question. So, we would try to look at the state of public services in Iran to have a picture, though incomplete, of this situation while taking into account the misogynist rules and conditions imposed on Iranian women.

**1. Rules, policies and social norms should not prevent women from accessing social services, in the fertility health, for example, or cultures that prevent girls' education**

At a roundtable discussion held in February 2017 by the official IRNA news agency, Behshid Arfania, a university lecturer, highlighted the existence of "innumerable loopholes" in the law, adding that the law places women inferior to men. According to Arfania this vacuum has contributed to violence against women at home and in society at large.

Arfania asserted, "All these originate from Article 1105 of the Civil Code which states that husband is the head of the household. Any child who is born from an Iranian man, whether inside Iran or on a foreign soil, will be an Iranian citizen. But if an Iranian mother gives birth to a child, the child will never have an Iranian nationality, neither because of the blood nor because of being born on Iranian soil. In Article 4, the Civil Code prefers foreign women to Iranian women."

Tayyebbeh Savoshi, member of the women's faction in the mullahs' parliament, refers to other instances of women's inferiority in the law by saying, "Sometimes women are brought under financial pressure or are not permitted to leave home. Presently, there is no bill in Iran for women's security while there is one in Afghanistan."

Ashraf Gerami Zadegan, a legal consultant for the presidential

directorate for Women and Family Affairs, also points out the constant hypocrisy in the Iranian regime's laws for spreading misogyny. She says, "The law stipulates that marriage with step daughter is forbidden unless approved by a competent court of law through acquisition of consultative opinions." She believes that the term "unless" opens the path for such marriages. Gerami Zadegan reiterated that before the adoption of this law, such an act used to be considered ugly in the Iranian society.

Then she implied in her remarks that the plans dealing with women's rights are of temporary and propagandistic nature. "For example, one of the imperative issues of our time was fighting against acid attacks. Such a bill was proposed by some members of parliament but was subsequently muted. They said the Punishment Law is sufficient to deal with the issue."

In another example, she spoke about a part of the family protection law, which states, "Women must be present in all courts of law as consultants." She further revealed, "Under the pretext of lack of sufficient budget and resources, the Judiciary Branch has refused to admit these 500 women in courts, women have been practically deprived of the minimum support inside the courtrooms."

In the case of the theocratic regime ruling Iran, the problem is not negligence or delay in drafting laws in support of women. Rather, the laws have been drafted cunningly and deliberately to suppress women and eliminate their roles. And all the policies are based on these laws. The regime has at various stages resorted to gender segregation and gender quota plans to hinder the progress and education of women and preventing their financial and personal independence.<sup>1</sup>

The laws have been drafted cunningly and deliberately to suppress women and eliminate their roles

Innumerable loopholes in the Iranian law place women inferior to men



2. Prevention of legislations that institutionalize violence and abuses such as discrimination and denial of services particularly to minority and disabled women

Most Iranian women have been subject to sexual harassment, at least once in their lives.<sup>2</sup> According to the Iranian officials, 66% of Iranian women have experienced domestic violence. This is twice as much as the world average. Nevertheless, it must be considered a blatant minimization of the reality.<sup>3</sup>

66% of Iranian women have experienced domestic violence. This is twice as much as the world average. Nevertheless, it must be considered a blatant minimization of the reality

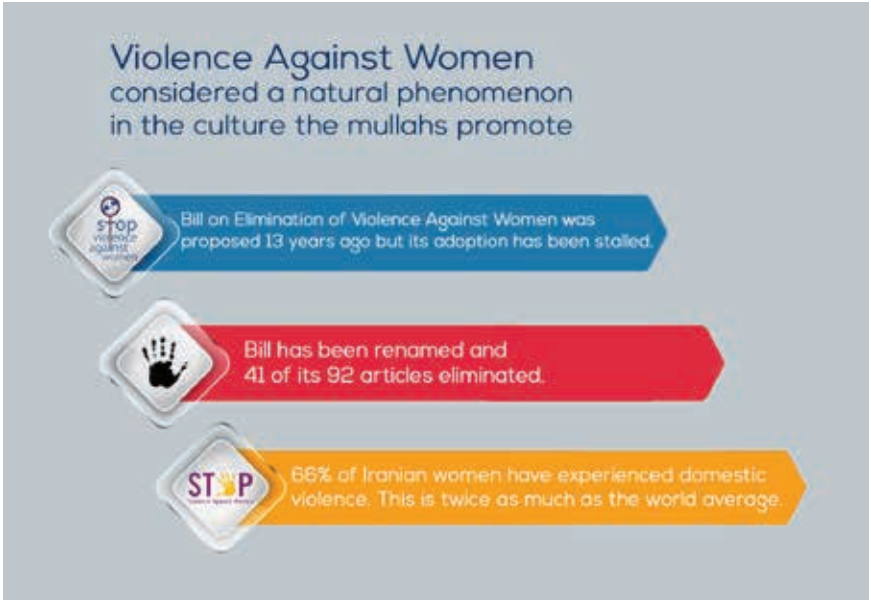
Violence against women is considered a natural phenomenon, with no legal consequences, in the culture promoted by the clerical regime. A bill on Elimination of Violence Against Women was proposed some 13 years ago to the parliament but its adoption has been stalled. The Judiciary has changed the name of the bill to "Provision of Security for Women" while eliminating 41 of its 92 articles. Still, the bill has not been returned to the parliament for adoption all the while that the laws facilitating violence against women are already institutionalized.

According to Article 1133 of the Iranian Civil Code, only the man is entitled to divorce,<sup>4</sup> and he can file in a petition with no justifiable reason. A woman's request for divorce, however, is subject to certain conditions. She also faces many forms of opposition and obstructions at various stages of the trial.

According to Article 1130 of the Civil Code,<sup>5</sup> a woman may in some cases apply for a divorce when she can prove to the court that the duration of the marriage is a source of hardship, that is to say, the continuation of life for the wife is unbearable.

According to the law, cases of hardship for women are defined as when:

- The husband leaves family life for 6 consecutive months or 9 months alternately within a year without a justifiable reason;
- The man is addicted to a type of drug or alcohol that affects the foundations of family life while he refuses rehabilitation or it is impossible to send him for rehabilitation during the period prescribed by the physician. And if he does not comply with his promise or restarts his addiction after he quits;
- The man is definitively convicted to imprisonment for 5 years or more;
- The man beats or continuously abuses the wife which is intolerable for the woman;
- The man has serious psychiatric or contagious illness or any other health complication that disrupts his marital life.



Obviously, all these conditions can easily be circumvented making it impossible for the woman to prove her case. Expressions such as "without a valid excuse", "which can really be intolerable", "that disrupts marital life", and various other conditions for the possibility of abandoning addiction are always used for extrajudicial judgments to circumvent even these primitive laws.

Polygamy for men is also recognized in the laws of the theocratic regime of Iran. Article 16 of the Family Protection Act<sup>6</sup> defines a condition for a man's polygamy that clearly manifests the prevalent atrocious attitude towards women. Some of the conditions which sanction polygamy for men are as the following:

- Failure of the first wife to perform marital duties,
- Non-compliance of the woman to her husband,
- Insanity or fatal illness of the woman,
- Conviction of the woman,
- Sterility of the woman.

All of the above conditions can be used as an excuse for violating the basic human rights of a woman.

Under the regime's Punishment Law,<sup>7</sup> abortion is considered a crime, even if it is an undeliberate miscarriage.

Article 718 of this law states, "Whenever a woman destroys her fetus, at any stage, deliberately, pseudo deliberately or by mistake, the fetal blood money must be paid by the perpetrator or her guardian." More interestingly, fetal blood money of 4-months-old son is twice as much as his own mother's.

In addition to all such legal instruments, the Iranian regime never

Under the clerical regime's laws in Iran, polygamy is recognized for men, women are incriminated for carrying out abortion, and punished for not observing the compulsory veil



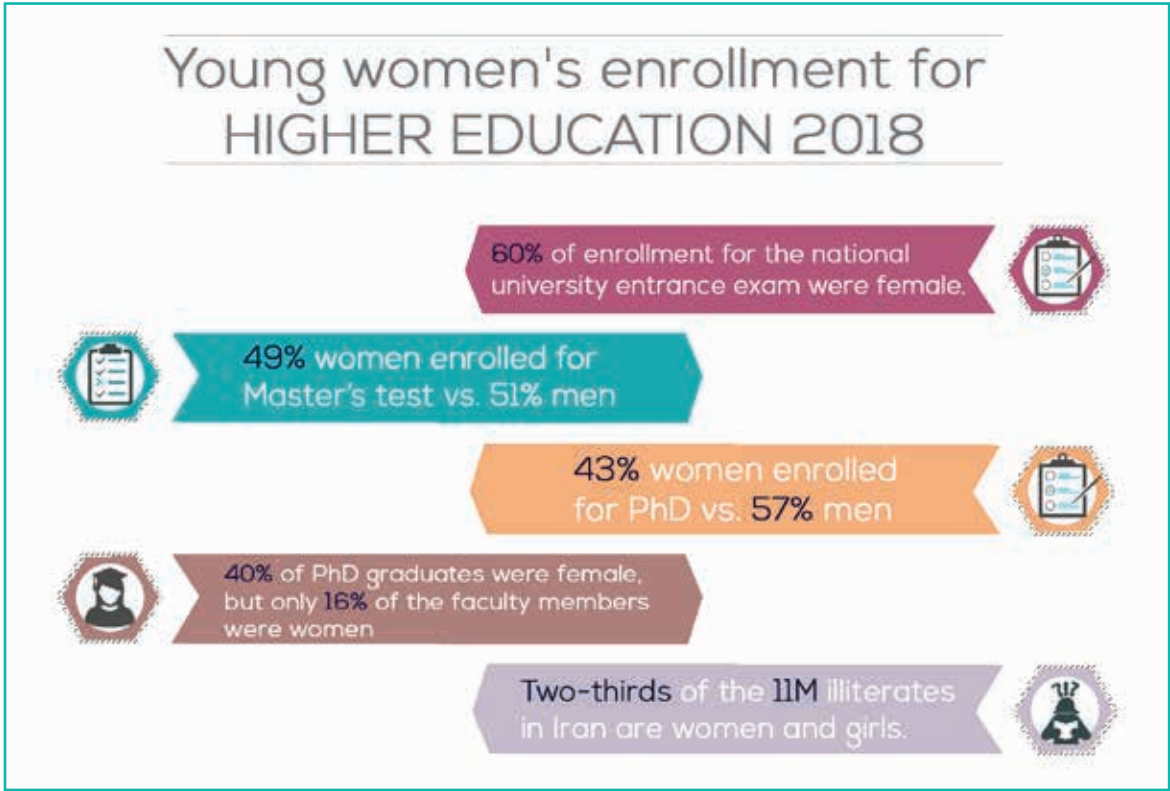
stops to approve new legislations and bills to deny Iranian women their rights. The pretext for many such schemes is the compulsory veil,<sup>8</sup> which is used for widespread state-sponsored violence against women.<sup>9</sup> This coercion is not only applied in the form of arrests, fines and imprisonments and whipping up women, but it even went as far as systematic government-backed acid attacks that had grave repercussions in society.<sup>10</sup>

3. Education and astronomical tuition fees

The Iranian regime's officials are investing hugely on propaganda that more than 50 percent of graduates of Iranian universities are young women. Of course, one can see in this the Iranian women's profound desire for progress, but according to what the state media have admitted, the realities on the ground are quite different.

In 2018, about 60 percent of those who enrolled for the national university entrance exam were female. At later stages, however, women lose their motivation to enter higher levels. For example, in the same year's master's test, about 51 percent of volunteers were men and 49 percent were women, and in the doctoral exam, about 57 percent were male and only 43 percent women.<sup>11</sup>

This is rooted in severe discrimination against women in



employment and the patriarchal system's failure to see women's abilities and talents. According to the advisor to the Minister of Science, Research and Technology in women's affairs, in the 2016, while 40% of PhD graduates were female, they constituted only 16% of the faculty members of universities.<sup>12</sup>

As for economic and political management opportunities, it is sufficient to say that the Iranian regime ranked 142 among 149 countries in the 2018 Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum. This shows that young women and their families lose their motivation to invest in the education of their daughters. This situation concerns the intellectual classes of the society who are concerned about the progress of their daughters.

But the Iranian society, in general, faces a more bitter reality. Two-thirds of the 11 million illiterates in Iran are women and girls.<sup>13</sup> In addition, every year, at least a quarter of Iran's students are forced to drop out of school, with many of them becoming child laborers. Generally, rural girls are converted to unpaid domestic workers at an early age. Nomad girls are forced to go to livestock breeding, sheep minding and hard labor with no opportunity to study.<sup>14</sup>

Rezvan Hakimzadeh, deputy Minister of Education in elementary affairs, says that 40 to 50 percent of girls in secondary and high schools in many border provinces, leave school for various reasons including "early marriages", "school being too distant from the village", and "lack of female teachers."<sup>15</sup> In many villages in Iran, such as the village of Abrizak in Kohkiluyeh, the youth, especially girls, study only up to the third year of secondary school because there is no high school in the village and families cannot afford to send their children to the city to continue their education.<sup>16</sup>

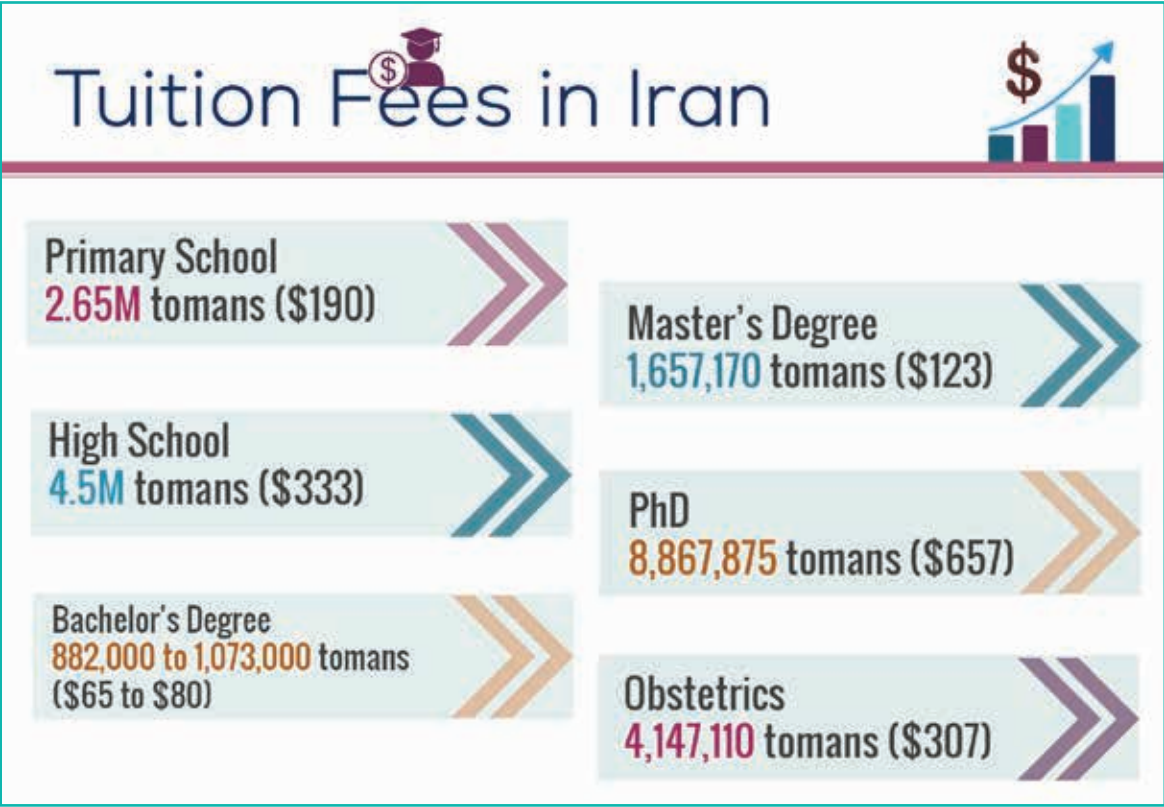
40 to 50 percent of girls in secondary and high schools in many border provinces, leave school for various reasons

School fees

The fact that free education is among the basic human rights and is greatly emphasized in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is totally neglected in Iran.

Education is so fundamental that according to the 3rd clause of the 3rd principle of the Iranian Constitution the government is obliged to provide "free education for everyone at every level until higher education."<sup>17</sup> On the ground, however, Iranian families, the majority of whom are poor, can never afford to pay for the huge expenses of education.

Mojaba Zeinivand, head of the organization of schools and non-governmental centers of the Ministry of Education, said that the minimum fee for primary schools as designated by this ministry for the Iranian year 1397 (March 21, 2018 until March 20, 2019) is 2.65 million tomans (\$190). For secondary school it is around 4.5 million



Public schools and universities no longer make any sense as all of them have been sold to people linked to the regime for commercial purposes

tomans (\$333).<sup>18</sup> These fees have increased between 13 to 15%.<sup>19</sup> Public schools and universities no longer make any sense as all of them have been sold to people linked to the regime for commercial purposes. The Azad University, for instance, is under the presidency of Velayati, one of the closest confidants of Khamenei, the mullahs' Supreme leader.<sup>20</sup> This university charges a monthly fee of 882,000 to 1,073,000 tomans (\$65 to \$80) for bachelor's degrees in the academic year 2019 - 2020. The fee for master's degree is 1,657,170 tomans (\$123) and for PhD, 8,867,875 tomans (\$657).<sup>21</sup> For obstetrics, students will need to pay 4,147,110 tomans (\$307). Despite huge profits Iranian universities make by stealing food from the tables of Iranian people, they do not offer even the least services such as food, accommodation and safety. The low quality of food has been the subject of rightful protests by Iranian students on numerous occasions. Recently, on December 25, 2018, while transporting students to the main entrance, a bus belonging to the University of Sciences and Research of Azad University in Tehran, veered off its route and after rolling for 90 meters it crashed into the concrete walls of the water facilities and was almost destroyed.<sup>22</sup> In this accident 10 students, including 3 female students, died and 28 students including 9 young

women were seriously injured. According to the students, all the buses of this university are out of order and there is always shortage of buses and they always carry from 60 to 70 people more than their total capacity. This accident was caused due to the brake's failure.

4. Actions taken in response to natural disasters such as earthquake

Not only there are no governmental mechanisms in Iran to deal with natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, but due to widespread official corruption even popular and international aid cannot get to the victims. In this situation, women bear the brunt of all the problems. For example, in the 2004 earthquake which shook the city of Bam in Kerman Province in southern Iran, two thirds of the city's residents died and in some regions all of the houses were destroyed. The official plan was to finish reconstruction of this city by summer 2005. Thirteen years later, however, the residents of Bam continue to lack the most basic needs of a simple life and hundreds of people live in the outskirts of the city in trailers.<sup>23</sup> A mother of six says, "For three to four years after the earthquake, we lived inside tents and now after 14 years, we still live in trailers."<sup>24</sup> Shanty towns in the outskirts of Bam are a post-earthquake phenomenon. Azam lives in a shanty town with her three children. Two of her daughters go to school and she also has a little boy.<sup>25</sup> Her husband is a daily worker who is an opium addict and practically does not work at all. For the past 11 years, Azam has been working in a date farm to pay for her daughters' school expenses. She and her family live in two small trailers with no bathrooms. There is no electricity and every now and then officials cut off her water supply, too. There is a similar situation in Kermanshah Province, western Iran, which was struck with a 7.3 Richter earthquake in November 2017. Some 450 people died, 7,100 people were wounded and 70,000 people became homeless. After the earthquake, the region ran out of water and electricity for a long time and hospitals could not deal with such a large volume of disaster. The government was not even capable of supplying food to the victims. The earthquake in Kermanshah caused great pain and suffering to many women who lost their properties and entire wealth and belongings.<sup>26</sup> By a conservative estimate, at least 100 women lost their husbands and turned into their family's bread winners. The health situation is dreadful, particularly for pregnant women

Earthquake victim, mother of six: "For three to four years after the earthquake, we lived inside tents and now after 14 years, we still live in trailers"



**A large number of pregnant women had miscarriages, many gave birth in their tents, and dozens of children died in the freezing cold**

a large number of whom have suffered miscarriages. Pregnant women were promised to receive trailers, but this did not happen. Many women gave birth in the tents and due to poor sanitary conditions, caught infections. Dozens of children died in the freezing cold of winter.

Toilets and bathrooms are scarce and in poor conditions. Lack of cleaning material, including soaps and shampoos, wet towels, diapers and sanitary napkins for women, underwear for children and women, and also lack of bath towels are among other problems of the population of villages hit by the earthquake.

Families with nine and even more live in one trailer. Lack of powdered milk, food and medicine have caused malnutrition and various kinds of diseases.

Due to lack of regular bath for children, women and the elderly, many people have developed skin diseases such as acne, painful skin rash, skin fungus, lice and baldness.

**Soheila Jamshidi, mother of two little children and wife of an epileptic man, says "I have lost all my belongings in this earthquake and now live in a trailer that has no bathroom. My husband is always having epileptic attacks due to lack of medicine. An insect has bitten my son's face and it's completely swollen and I have no money to take him to the doctor or to a health center."**



**5. Situation of nurses and other social workers and lack of adequate laws for recruitment in public services and prevent them from danger at work**

The Health Minister, Hashemi, complains that at least 28,000 nurses have been retired over the past four years, but his ministry was not allowed to hire even one. He mentions the Firoozkooh Hospital as an example where he visited recently and says that every nurse at this hospital is responsible for 13 to 14 hospital beds.<sup>27</sup> Salaries are also paid with great delay. He admits that there are about 110,000 people working in the Ministry of Health on a contract basis.

78.5% of Iranian nurses are women<sup>28</sup> and they face a plethora of problems: shortage of work force, alternating shifts and particularly night shifts, difficulties in attending to their families like the lack of kindergartens in a number of medical centers especially during the night shifts, low salaries compared to the services they provide, difficulties for pregnant nurses, restrictions on retirement, skeletal-muscular illnesses, past due arrears, not implemented tariffs on nursing services, the miserable state of hospitals caused by privatization... And the list goes on.

The average income of female nurses was set at 2 million tomans (approx. \$148)<sup>29</sup> in 2016, but many work for 500,000 tomans (\$37) without having any insurance.<sup>30</sup>

Asghar Dalvandi, the president of the National Nursing Organization, says discrimination and injustice against the nursing community in Iran has aggravated in the past five years.<sup>31</sup> He acknowledges that the situation of nurses in Iran is worse than the situation in Kenya and Iraq.<sup>32</sup>

"We need at least another 150,000 nurses. The world standard of the ratio of nurses to hospital beds is 1 to 8 (12.5%), while in our country this ratio is 0.7% (less than one nurse for every 100 beds). This shows we are way below the standards," Dalvandi said.<sup>33</sup>

Nurse shortages have led to an increase in the number of patient companies. It has also led to overtime work and mandatory work shifts for the existing nurses. This is a problem that the regime's officials have essentially not paid attention to.

The latest example is the new fiscal year budget allocation for recruitment of new nurses which has been turned down.<sup>34</sup> The responsibility of recruiting new nurses is constantly being passed from one government agency to the other.<sup>35</sup> This while half of the nursing graduates remain without jobs.<sup>36</sup> In some provinces, 2,500 persons have graduated in recent years but only 450 of them have been recruited.<sup>37</sup>

Female nurses in Iran are not only missing their monthly salaries but are enduring great pressure at work. Since in the end, they cannot

**28,000 nurses have been retired over the past four years, without the Ministry of Health having permission for new recruitment**



Nursing is amongst the most prejudicial and hard professions, and their working hours should be reduced based on their working shift, the department where they work and their period of employment



respond to everyone's needs, they become directly face to face with the patients and their companies, and are often insulted and even brutalized. Twenty-eight nurses were brutalized in 2017, and 20 nurses have lost their lives in the past three years.<sup>38</sup>

Labor force has turned into a commodity and profit plays the central role in work relationships, overlooking even the basic standards for the minimum wage. So, not only nurses are not equipped with any safety but they do not follow many of the safety issues due to great pressure on them and the rush to do their work.

Nursing is amongst the most prejudicial and hard professions. Nurses are retired after 20 to 25 years. According to the Productivity Promotion Bill approved by the mullahs' parliament in 2009, given the three factors of working shifts, section and employment period, the working hours of nurses should also be reduced in accordance to the difficulty of their working conditions.<sup>39</sup> Neither the bill nor any of these standards are enforced.

This situation applies to nurses who care for the elderly and other nurses, too. Despite the huge sums of money spent by families on care of the elderly, the nurses who do the job get little pay. For the task of caring for children or the elderly, nurses make as much as 2,500,000 tomans (\$185)<sup>40</sup> but in reality no nurse makes 2,500,000 tomans. If the person works 24 hours a day for 6 days a week with

one day off, then the salary is 1,000,000 tomans (\$74). For those who take care of the elderly who use diapers, then the total payment with all the benefits reaches 1,400,000 tomans (\$103). Those who do the regular job make from 800,000 to 1,000,000 tomans (\$59 - \$74) every month.

Psychological pressures

Mohammad Sharifi Moghaddam, General Secretary of the House of Nurses, believes that nurses die due to factors in their work environment which impact them directly and indirectly. Indirect deaths are even more but they are never calculated in statistics.<sup>41</sup>

One of the most significant consequences of work pressure on nurses is psychological illnesses together with elements of stress.

Daily contact with patients in terminal phase together with the stress of being responsible for their lives is highly disturbing. Being under this pressure for many hours during the day causes psychological damage and depression in these public service workers.

Female nurses in Iran are not only missing their monthly salaries but are enduring great pressure at work. Since in the end, they cannot respond to everyone's needs, they become directly face to face with the patients and their companies, and are often insulted and even brutalized. Twenty-eight nurses were brutalized in 2017.<sup>42</sup>

Ali Akbar Vissi, president of the Nursing Organization of Kermanshah, states that congestion at the hospitals and admission of high numbers of patients generate a situation where even if nurses work at full capacity they cannot meet the needs of the patients. Think of a patient who has to lie on a stretcher for a long while due to lack of facilities.<sup>43</sup>

In summer 2007, the mullahs' parliament approved a bill on payment of tariffs to nurses. After 11 years, however, the act has not been enforced. Nurses do more than 80% of hospital services but there is still no law that deals with their tariffs.<sup>44</sup>

Moreover, job contracts for nurses are usually temporary and have dropped to less than three months and in some hospitals they are as short as 1 month.<sup>45</sup> For this reason, salaries have decreased tremendously and there are nurses who work 2.5 shifts to be able to support their essential needs.

Nurses die due to factors in their work environment which impact them directly and indirectly. Indirect deaths are even more but they are never calculated in statistics

The bill on payment of tariffs to nurses has not been enforced 11 years after being approved by the parliament



Even young women and girls who work at medical offices and large companies are harassed by their employers

## 6. Specific mechanisms to eliminate sexual discrimination, repression, violence at the work place and support systems for the victims

Iranian women face widespread sexual violence and harassment at their workplace. This is not a cultural issue, but the direct result of the anti-woman dictatorship of the mullahs' regime in Iran.

Widespread poverty and unemployment of Iranian women and lack of any social and legal support as well as the state's imposition of various sexual discriminations and segregations are the main causes contributing to abuse of women in Iran. While the system tries to keep women away from participating in and influencing the society, employers take advantage of the situation and try to benefit from this cheap and defenseless labor force in the worst possible way. In most cases, the violence is exerted by employers or influential people and the victim has to keep silent fearing to lose her job or damage the future of her profession.

In a limited survey carried out over 82 working women in Tehran, sexual harassment at work environment was calculated to be 75%.<sup>46</sup> Prevention of sexual harassment at work environment is generally the duty of the employer but in Iran, by using the anti-women laws, employers deliberately criminalize victims. In the best case scenario, the law enforcement and judicial institutions evade from their duties

A limited survey puts the rate of sexual harassment at work environment in Tehran at 75%

and throw the responsibility of proving the crime on the shoulder of victims.

Based on the declaration of the International Labor Organization (ILO), sexual harassment at work is the most obvious example of sexual discrimination and thus is considered as violation of human rights. In Iran, violence at work environment is used to marginalize women. Humiliation of women and offending them by delegating marginal and low level work, verbal offenses, defamation and false accusations and rumors against women are all manifestations of discrimination and violence against women at work environment.

In Iran, there is no special law on sexual harassment especially at the workplace and even Article 637 in the old Penal Code, where the offender could pay the victim a fine for the offense, was removed from the latest legislation.<sup>46</sup>

The anti-women laws of the mullahs criminalize men only for the highest degree of rape. But on the basis of these laws, if a woman can prove sexual harassment or aggression, she will most likely be fired if the aggressor is the employer or the superior. There is no protection for the victim in the misogynist laws of the mullahs' regime.

On the other hand, if the woman fails to prove her claim, she is also considered to be a criminal offender for the charge.

Another issue is the lack of supervision in this regard.

In Iran, the smaller the factories, the more violent, intense and widespread is the violence.

In manufacturing workshops, which are mostly enclosed and inadequate in underground spaces, the risk of sexual harassment and violence against women is higher, while precisely these manufacturing workshops are one of the main places for women to be employed.

In addition, the lower the level of professionalism and job position of women in different occupations and the less family support they have, they are more likely to be subjected to harassment at the workplace.

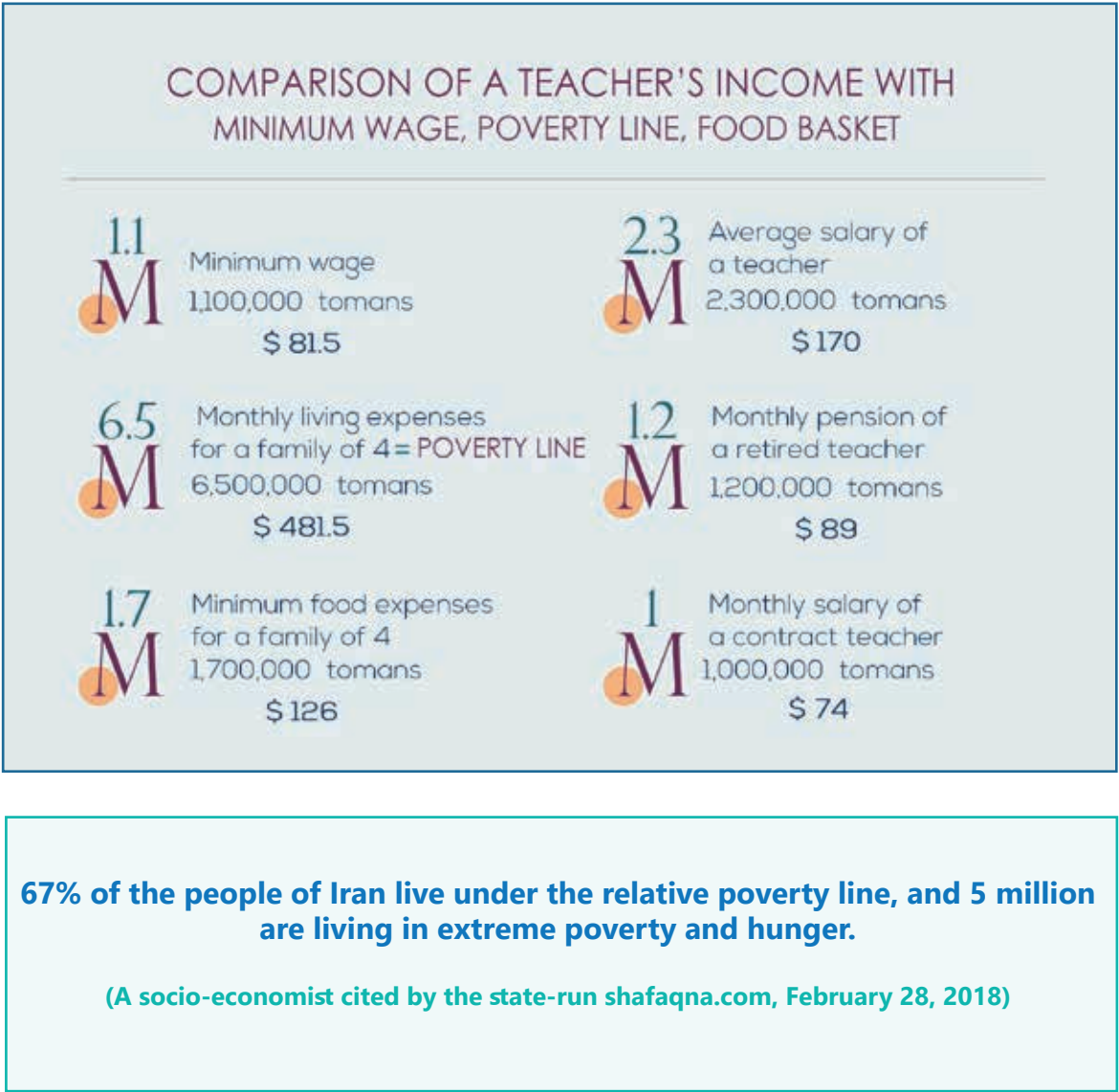
Sexual harassment of women in the workplace is to such an extent that they even leak into government media and show that even young women and girls who work at medical offices and large companies are harassed by their employers and fearful of losing their jobs they will inevitably be forced to remain silent and obey.

Humiliation of women by delegating marginal and low level work, verbal offenses, false accusations and rumors against women are examples of discrimination and violence against women at work environment



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### 03. SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the country's vast wealth, the theocratic regime ruling Iran has not been able to upkeep the urban and rural infrastructures even at its most elementary levels. This points to the massive corruption and plunder of the ruling authorities which at the same time is systematically in the interest of the regime's inhuman and misogynist policies.

Being deprived of clean drinking water, housing, usable roads, electricity and other basic facilities has turned women into unpaid domestic workers unable to think of their own basic human rights, such as the right to decent employment. This has prevented them from participating in community affairs which can bring about positive change to their lives.

Under the mullahs' rule in Iran, the institutions responsible for construction and development, just like other key institutions in the country, have been privatized. One of the most famous of these institutions is the Mostazafan Foundation.<sup>1</sup> Legally speaking, this institution is neither considered public nor private; it is supposedly a nonprofit organization without any supervision on its affairs. This organization is only liable to answer to Ali Khamenei, the mullahs' leader, and any scrutiny on its affairs is forbidden.

According to the second amendment to Article 3 of Taxation and Information Law issued by Khamenei's office, the Mostazafan Foundation is exempt from all taxes.

The revenues of this foundation in 2016 were reportedly 29.192 billion tomans (approx. \$2.61 million). The construction cost of the building facade for the Headquarters of this foundation were over 120 billion tomans (approx. \$8.9 million).<sup>2</sup> This is at a time that according to the data from the Welfare Organization, there are at least 14,000 households in Iran with at least two disabled people who are in desperate need of housing.

Unfortunately, the dismal situation of infrastructures in Iran does not allow us to compare it with international standards.

All major cities suffer from infrastructural deficiencies. The capital Tehran has one of the world's worst air pollutions. 4,500 people annually lose their lives due to air pollution in Tehran.

Ahvaz, the capital of the oil-rich Khuzestan province, has heavy air pollution sometimes reaching 60 times above safe levels. Dust storms knock out power, disrupt access to running water for hours, and result in closure of schools and public offices, while the Department of Environment does not have enough funds to put an end to the local sources of dust storms growing at an alarming rate due to prolonged drought in the province. The famous Karoun River is also at the risk of drying up.

In Isfahan, the once copious Zayandehrood river has completely dried up. Many people in Isfahan blame badly planned dam

**Iranian institutions responsible for construction and development, just like other key institutions in the country, have been privatized**

**All major cities suffer from infrastructural deficiencies. 4,500 people annually lose their lives due to air pollution in Tehran**



construction following Iran's 1979 revolution as the main factor in the river's disappearance. Others believe the central government diverted the river's flow to the nuclear and military plants of the Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC).

In northwest of Iran, Lake Urmia, once the largest lake in the Middle East, now holds just 5 per cent of its original volume. And this list goes on for other parts of the country.

The authorities have totally ignored the rural areas. The remote villages of Chabahar,<sup>3</sup> such as Gurjetak, Takhtposht, Kenardor, Rikoo, Zibdook, Sargel, Baragun, Mir Abdollah, Sirkey, Gazm Ahoo and many others have no electricity or running water. People in these villages live in dismal health conditions and no government official visits these villages.

There are no signs of mobile cell towers and antennas and no radio and television signal in the whole region. There are no roads or maps to get to these villages. For example, residents of the village of Kenardor with 40 to 50 households, still live in huts. This village lies adjacent to the Sedich River, right on the opposite side of the enormous border mountain between Sistan and Baluchestan and the province of Hormozgan.

In this section, we will be briefly reviewing the abysmal living conditions of women in some villages.

**The authorities have totally ignored the rural areas. People in these villages live in dismal health conditions**

1. Housing

One of the infrastructure needs of women, whose security, health, dignity and other basic human rights depend on it, is to have decent housing. A look at the housing situation in Iran is a glimpse of the hell the mullahs have brought to the Iranian people over the course of 40 years.

Currently, despite the fact that the Iranian regime tries its best to prevent the correct facts and figures from leaking out to the people, the Iranian media have reported that there are at least 5,000 homeless women in Tehran, alone. Given the dismal economic situation the number of homeless women are increasing on daily basis.<sup>4</sup>

In Ahvaz, the number of women who have no place to sleep at night has been reported to be 2,700 people.<sup>5</sup> A member of the Tehran City Council, Fatemeh Daneshvar, admits, "When the five-year development plan for the Tehran Municipality was presented, the main sector that was completely neglected in this program were women and children." She added, "You can see that most shelters and warm areas were specifically designated for men with no locations designated for women and children. When there are no specific and proper plans for women, children and newborns, it is obvious we will be facing social dilemmas such as abandoning children, selling their newborns or even throwing their babies in the trash bins."<sup>6</sup>

The clerical regime treats homelessness of women like any other issue it faces; that is, it deals with it as a security issue.

Sardarpour, the head of social harms at the Ahvaz Municipality's Cultural and Social Organization, reported the arrest of 147 unmarried women in the city only in the first six months of the current year.<sup>7</sup>

The problem, of course, is not limited to homeless women. Most Iranian families face a serious housing problem. The Minister of Roads and Urban Development admits that the rise in prices for housing and rentals has put a lot of pressure on people.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Director General of the Ilam Provincial Relief Committee, Zia Rezaii, at least 1,200 households covered by the Relief Committee in the province, need housing.<sup>9</sup>

Mohammad Reza Rezaii Koochi, chairman of the parliamentary Housing and Urban Committee, admits that housing prices in metropolitan areas, especially Tehran, have risen dramatically, and this has discouraged families from buying homes.<sup>10</sup>

The Central Bank announced that housing prices in the capital in December grew 91% compared to the same period last year. Housing costs around Tehran are between 60 to 200 million tomans (\$4,445 - \$14,815).<sup>11</sup>

The Deputy Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Hamed Mazaherian, admits that "the number of empty houses in the country

There are at least 5,000 homeless women in Tehran. Women and children were neglected in city's five-year development plan

Soaring housing prices have discouraged families from buying homes

Cycle of Housing Price Hike



is about 2.6 million."<sup>12</sup>

"When housing prices increase, many people are not able to buy houses and they are forced to live as tenants," said Afshin Parvinpour, a consultant of the housing sector. "At the moment the situation is so bad that most people don't even have the ability to pay their rent. One of the reasons for the rise in prices is speculative trade we are witnessing in this sector. No place in the world they allow one person to own 50 residential units."<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the rental demand has increased leading to a major spike in rental prices. "In the past five years, the number of tenants has grown by 38%," said Farshid Poor Hajat, general secretary of the builders association.<sup>14</sup>

Currently, there are more than seven million families in the country who live in rented homes.<sup>15</sup> That is 36.7% of urban population.<sup>16</sup>

The cost of renting a 75-meter apartment in Mashhad, which was about 700,000 tomans (\$52) in 2016, has now reached at least one million tomans (\$74).<sup>17</sup>

These figures should be compared to the average revenue of government employees which is usually around \$80- 170 a month, way below the poverty line of \$481.5.

"Previously workers used to pay one third of their salary for rent; today, they spend more than two thirds of their income on rent," said Abolfazl Fattahli, head of the Association of Workers and Guild of Workers' Association.<sup>18</sup>

Previously workers used to pay one third of their salary for rent; today, they spend more than two thirds of their income on rent



Despite all, Hamed Mazaherian predicts that we will be witnessing higher rent prices the coming year.<sup>19</sup>

"There is no pricing law or regulations," says a real estate consultant. In the past, there was an unwritten law of 15 percent increase in the cost of rents, and now that kind of price increase is not respected by landlords."

The high real state cost and renting market have led people to live in mobile homes. Mayor of District 22, Ali Nozarpoor, even admits that in some poor areas of Tehran, such as the Golestan township, home owners rent out their roof tops to low income people who live in such horrible situation with sometimes up to 14 people cramped up in a 10 meter living space.<sup>20</sup>

The housing situation in the villages is somewhat worse.

Many people in Iran's villages, including residents of the village of Jah, in Sistan and Baluchestan province, live in mud huts and tin houses which specially during the summer time is more like a darkened prison with no windows for air and sunlight to travel through.<sup>21</sup>

Houses in many villages, such as the village of Molish, in Lorestan province, are also made of mud, with wooden beams and columns. The ceiling of some of the houses in this village are so low that one has to bend to enter.<sup>22</sup>

## 2. Drinking water and plumbing

The Iranian people are already experiencing serious water shortages. Iran's water resources seriously suffer from inappropriate governance and lack of water management. Frequent droughts with over-abstraction of surface water and underground water have brought the state of the country to a critical level.

Signs of this situation are the drying of lakes, rivers and wetlands, reducing groundwater level, subsidence, degradation of water quality, soil erosion, desertification and dust storms.

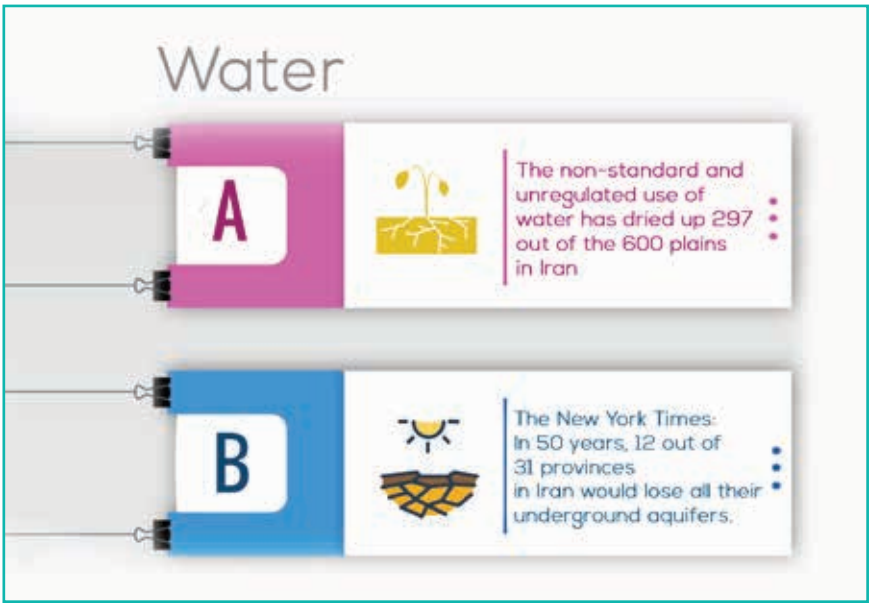
The environmental organization estimates that the speed of consumption of groundwater resources in Iran, are three times as much as the global standards. This unstandardized and unregulated consumption of water is the cause of drying of 297 plains out the 600 plains in Iran. Also, 35 billion cubic meters of water is lost in the transmission path due to failure to repair the water transportation network. The Parliament's Research Center calculated the water waste to be from 26 to 36 percent.<sup>23</sup>

In January 2018, the New York Times reported in a shocking article that in 50 years, 12 out of 31 provinces of Iran would lose all their underground aquifers.

Isa Kalantari, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency,

**The high real state cost and renting market have led people to live in mobile homes. Sometimes up to 14 people cramp up in a 10 meter living space**

**The unstandardized and unregulated consumption of water is the cause of drying of 297 plains out the 600 plains in Iran**



acknowledged that water scarcity would lead to forced migration of 50 million Iranians if not properly managed.<sup>24</sup>

Last summer, 48% of the country's population was under water stress, and this could expand rapidly.<sup>25</sup>

Two-thirds of the population of Sistan and Baluchestan province do not have access to sanitary drinking water.<sup>26</sup> For example, women and girls in Kenardar in Chabahar have to walk almost 30 minutes, 5 or 6 times a day to carry their drinking water and bring it to their homes using pots or water containers.<sup>27</sup>

The governor of Sistan and Baluchestan announced a 50 percent reduction in well water, which is the only source of drinking water for the residents of the northern parts of the province. He admitted that if this source dries up, the city of Zabol would become unlivable and everyone will be forced to leave.<sup>28</sup>

In Sistan and Baluchestan, the water of the Hirmand River, the main source of water supply for five cities located in the northern areas of the province and the provincial capital, Zahedan, has been cut off.<sup>29</sup>

Managing director of Yazd Province's Rural Water and Wastewater Company, Mohammad Fatehi, acknowledges that the water for 330 villages in this province, encompassing 22,000 people, is transported with tankers.<sup>30</sup>

In September 2018, shocking statistics on water crisis for five provinces were published, including the provinces of Sistan and Baluchestan, Hormozgan, Kerman, Fars and Bushehr.<sup>31</sup>

Hassan Rouhani, the president of the clerical dictatorship, admittedly blamed the water crisis on issuance of "wrongful licenses," but instead of correcting the anti-popular policies, expressed concern

**The water for 330 villages encompassing 22,000 people is transported with tankers**

over the security issues it may create for the government and said, "If there is no water, this will lead to other problems, these are all parts of the puzzle that make up the security of our people."<sup>32</sup>

This is why no budget has been allocated for water from the National Development Fund in 2019.<sup>33</sup> Recently, 18 members of parliament from Isfahan resigned in protest against the non-allocation of funds to supply drinking water to the province.<sup>34</sup>

Abolfazl Mousavi-Boyuki, Yazd deputy in the mullahs' parliament, also admitted that the regime's parliament suspended the water quota for farmers in east of Isfahan, which led to the farmers losing their livelihood. As though that was not enough, the regime's authorities are suggesting limiting the share of upstream water in Zayandehrood dam or the Chahar Mahal dam to this region.

Just like the president of the regime, this representative also made a security issue out of this and said, "In the past month, on two or three separate occasions, the farmers in Isfahan have broken water pipes and damaged the electrical poles. Water pipes are part of the government's property and causing damage to them is considered a crime."<sup>35</sup>

### *People's complaints about water scarcity*

Khuzestan and its cities, including Khorramshahr and Abadan, face unprecedented water shortages. For quite some time now, the drinking water from the faucets in Khorramshahr has been saline with the foul smell of sewage. This situation led to mass protests last summer and, as expected, was met with violence and arrests.<sup>36</sup>

The issue of water scarcity is seldom reported in government media. However, due to the protests during the spring and summer of last year, one can realize that the situation in different cities and provinces has become intolerable.

On Saturday, March 31, 2018, a group of women in the Golshahr City of Imam Reza in Roodbar (Kerman province) gathered outside of county governor's office to protest the problem with their drinking water. Golshahr citizens have repeatedly protested frequent water stoppage but have not received any response.

In June 2018, people in Abadan gathered in front of the city's water department protesting the salinity of their drinking water. They attached a bottle of the contaminated drinking water from their faucets on to placards to show their objection towards salinity and contaminated drinking water.<sup>37</sup>

On May 27, 2018, following 8 days of water stoppage, the residents of Khoshkabad Village in Minab gathered in protest in front of the rural water and waste water company and demanded a solution to the problem.



**People in Abadan gathered in front of the city's water department protesting the salinity of their drinking water.**

On May 30, 2018, the residents of Yas Masjid in Bukan, Iranian Kurdistan, marched in protest of the lack of water and gas to the governorate of the city. The active presence of women in the protest was significant.<sup>38</sup>

On June 17, 2018 a group of Khorramshahr residents with a noticeable number of women amongst them protested the salinity of their drinking water in front of the city's water department. A month later, the protest of Khorramshahr women continued along with other people on the 8th and 9th of July leading to unrest. A month later, the protest of Khorramshahr women continued along with other people on June 29th and 30th which led to unrest.

On June 23, 2018 in Bushehr, women protested 55 days of dehydration in Dashtestan. One of women participants said, "We have no water to drink, bathe or wash our clothing."<sup>39</sup>

The people of Borazjan, located in Bushehr Province, also demonstrated in July in the vicinity of the Mellat Bank in front of the governorate of the city.<sup>40</sup> Thousands of people gathered in the city for several days and protested till late in the evening carrying signs that read, "We do not have water."<sup>41</sup>

These gatherings continued in Borazjan on the last days of July. A woman living in Borazjan showed an empty bottle of water and said that they have not had water for 10 days.<sup>42</sup>

In the same period, women and people in the Barchi Sarcheshme area in Kerman province gathered in front of the copper complex, closing down the main road in protest of water scarcity.<sup>43</sup>

On September 17, 2018, a number of people supported by a significant number of women from Rudbar Kohbani city in Lorestan Province, gathered in front of the governorate and road and urbanization office in Kuhdasht city to protest roads and water problems.<sup>44</sup>

**From the protests during the spring and summer last year, one can realize that the situation has become intolerable**

### 3. Roads connecting cities and villages

**In the past 50 years no one has visited Javanjah village as a representative of the government, governor or the prefect, because the route is mountainous**

Many villages in Iran are even deprived of a simple dirt road. The village of Javanjah in Baluchestan is one of these examples. The connecting route to this village is hard to travel on and in some cases impassable, which is used as an excuse to avoid the addressing of infrastructure needs and services of the roads in these villages.<sup>45</sup>

The prefect of the area admits, "The route is mountainous to a point that you cannot get there using a car. The provincial officials, nor myself, have not been able to visit these villages to this point. People in these villages go to the nearest town (Bennett City) on a weekly or monthly basis to buy their supplies. The distance to Bennett is 30 kilometers, you can only travel half the distance using a car and the rest of the way you have to go on mules or donkeys."

In the past 50 years no one has visited the area as a representative of the government, governor or the prefect. 14.2% of the children who have not enrolled in school live in this province. They often don't attend school due to poverty and lack of educational facilities. The average distance between rural schools in Sistan and Baluchestan is 30 km.<sup>46</sup>

Azimi, prefect of Valuyeh village in Mazandaran Province, said several officials have promised to pave asphalts for the rural roads. The dirt roads of this village are causing the loss of livestock and creating problems for the people of the region.<sup>47</sup>

**The problem with roads is not limited to a few villages, but is omnipresent all across the country. 3,500 women die every year in road accidents in Iran**

The problem with roads is not limited just to a few villages, but is an omnipresent problem in big cities and all across the country. According to official figures, some 800,000 road accidents take place in Iran every year, making it the eighth country in the world with high casualties. According to the regime officials, at least 43 persons are killed every day on Iran's roads. In 2017, some 17,000 people lost their lives in road accidents, 22% or 3,500 of them being women.

Also, every day there are news of girl children, young women and female workers getting either killed or wounded in road accidents.

- **Nine women died in a road accident on February 12, 2018, in a bus going from Gachsaran (in southwestern Kohgilouyeh and Boyer Ahmad Province) to Mashhad, capital of northeastern province of Khorasan Razavi.**
- **On April 15, 2018, seven female workers got injured when the car transporting them from work turned over on the road from Ghaemshahr to Babol, in Mazandaran Province, northern Iran.**
- **Elite student Sara Ayineh was among the 27 victims of a horrendous bus crash on July 11, 2018, in Sanandaj, capital of the Iranian Kurdistan Province in western Iran.**
- **Two girl students died and more were injured when the bus carrying them to a compulsory camp crashed on the Tabriz road on October 10, 2018.**
- **Twenty-three women workers were injured in an accident on November 19, 2018, when the minibus carrying them overturned into a water canal**

**near the Tabaqdeh village on the fringe of the Islamabad city in Miandorud, Mazandaran Province.**

- **Fourteen female gardeners were injured on December 26, 2018, when the bus transporting from Citrus Gardens in Mazandaran, overturned.**
- **And on December 25, 2018, three female students were killed along with 7 others when an Azad University bus veered off the road on campus and crashed into a concrete wall. 28 other students were injured.**

### 4. Public buildings

School buildings are in very depressing conditions and despite heavy fees and tuitions taken from the pupils' families, school conditions are far from minimum standards.

A total of 11 provinces are below the national average in terms of educational space. Schools in the provinces of Tehran, Khorasan Razavi, Gilan and Sistan and Baluchestan are most in need of renovation and fortification.<sup>48</sup>

The lack of 800,000 square meters of educational space, lack of easy access to schools, lack of toilets in many rural schools, and the commute of students with pickup trucks to schools that are three kilometers away are only some of the problems that children face in going to school in rural areas.<sup>49</sup>

Regime officials acknowledge that from the 18,934 classrooms that are currently being used in Sistan and Baluchestan, 6,181 must be demolished and rebuilt. Another 4,358 must be fortified.<sup>50</sup> Alireza Rasheki, the director general of the Sistan and Baluchestan School Renovation, Development and Equipping Organization, also acknowledged that "in the rural and deprived areas of the province, there are currently 708 mudbrick schools and 543 temporary schools held in mobile homes."<sup>51</sup>

A significant number of children in the province go to school in makeshift sheds.<sup>52</sup> These types of shed classrooms also exist in other provinces in Iran, including Kerman, Lorestan and Isfahan, which lack minimum health, cooling and heating facilities.<sup>53</sup>

Malekabad village in southern Iran has not had any schools for the past 15 years. The 40 school children of all ages who live in the village sit on benches in a shed while others sit on the rubble on the ground. The children carry the blackboard a long distance every day to the shed.

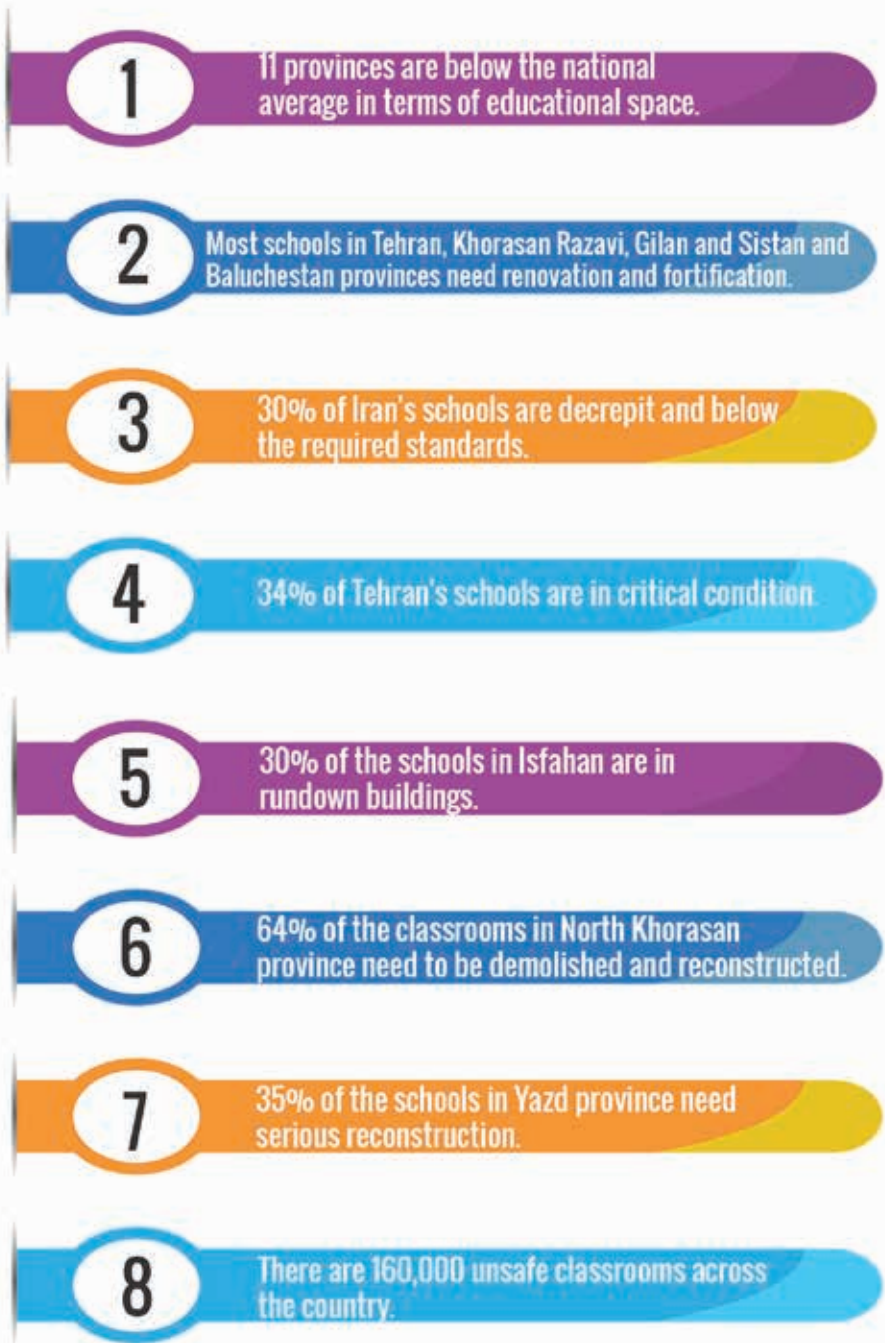
30 percent of Iran's schools are decrepit and do not have the required standards for students, but Iranian children continue to study at these schools.<sup>54</sup>

In August 2017, a school wall in Chabahar (one of the largest cities in Sistan and Baluchestan province) collapsed on a 7-year-old girl who died under the rubble.<sup>55</sup>

**Lack of 800,000 square meters of educational space and easy access to schools are but part of the problems rural children face before they can get an education**



# Public buildings



34 percent of Tehran's schools are in critical condition.

"If an earthquake strikes when students are present, a disaster will occur," Mehraleh Rakhshani Mehr, the head of Iran's School Renovation, Development and Equipping Organization said.<sup>56</sup>

The Director of Isfahan's School Renovation, Development and Equipping Organization, Seyed Mohammad Mirbod, also said that "more than 30% of the schools in Isfahan were in rundown buildings" adding that the government credits were not adequate for their renovation and reconstruction.<sup>57</sup>

64% of the classrooms in Northern Khorasan province are unstable and require demolition, reconstruction and fortification.<sup>58</sup>

More than 35% of the schools in Yazd province are rundown and need serious reconstruction and improvement.<sup>59</sup>

Rakhshani Mehr pointed to the existence of 160,000 unsafe classrooms across the country and requested that a \$3 billion budget be allocated under the sixth development plan to secure schools.<sup>60</sup>

Rouhani's government is constantly requesting help from charities to provide Iran's educational needs while his government does not provide most of the allocated budget for education.

Due to the lack of facilities and basic safety standards in classrooms, a fire broke out at a girl's elementary school in Salas-e Babajani in the western province of Kermanshah on the morning of Wednesday January 30, 2019.

Four pre-school and elementary girl students lost their lives in a fire on December 18, 2018, at a non-governmental girls' school in Osveh Hassaneh in Zahedan, capital of Sistan and Baluchestan Province. The victims were Mona Khosroparast, Maryam Nokandi, Saba Arabi, and Yekta Mirshekar who died two days later in hospital.<sup>61</sup>

In a horrific incident on December 5, 2012, the elementary school of Shinabad village caught fire due to mal-functioning of a kerosene heater. 37 girls burned in the fire, two of whom died as a result of severe injuries. Twelve girls who were seriously injured in this incident have not received full compensation from the government and their treatment has not been completed. For seven years, they have been suffering from injuries caused in this accident.

Despite repeated reports given to provincial government officials on the condition of unsafe heating systems of schools in the province, no measures have been taken to provide standard heating facilities.

Mohammad Ali Bathaie, the Minister of Education, told reporters on December 12, 2018, "Given the credit the government and the Education Ministry have, it is not possible to remove (the non-standard) heaters from schools in seven or eight years."<sup>62</sup>

The same official had previously announced that 42 percent of Iranian schools do not have a safe heating system.<sup>63</sup>

34 percent of Tehran's schools are in critical condition

The Ministry of Education does not have sufficient credit and budget to remove unsafe heaters from schools

### 5. Healthcare

The health and hygiene of Iranian people especially women is the first thing that is affected in Iran's deplorable infrastructure. The condition of rural women needs special attention.

Valuyeh-ye Olya Village in the northern province of Mazandaran province is the landfill site for the city of Sari, the capital of Mazandaran.

The garbage in the landfill is as high as a mountain and can have irreparable dangers for the residents of the village. Infectious hospital waste will lead to environmental and humanitarian crises. According to Azimi, the head of the village council, 250 to 300 tons of waste is deposited in this area every day. The occurrence of infectious diseases among the people is common in the region.<sup>64</sup>

Abrizak Village in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province has no health and hygiene facilities. Due to the lack of proper roads in the village, roads are blocked off during the slightest rainfall, which poses serious risks for villagers who get sick during these times.

Water passes through the village to other areas, but villagers are deprived of clean drinking water. Villagers have to travel with donkeys to the closest area with water which is kilometers away. The village is less than a kilometer away from a power line, but lacks electricity.<sup>65</sup>

Villagers in the Molesh Village in the province of Lorestan also have difficulty in accessing health centers. The mothers in this village are so ignorant of their rights that they consider all illnesses to be predestination.<sup>66</sup>

People in the village of Kenardar in Sistan and Baluchestan's Chabahar region have no drinking water, electricity or health facilities. One report says that there was no medicine or doctor in the village to treat a one-year-old boy whose hand was blistered after being burnt. According to the villagers, the boy identified as Mohammad who was crying from pain, had only drunk tea for the past eight months because his mother did not have any milk to give him.

"We have no money to buy him milk," a villager said. Mohammad's complexion was yellow due to malnutrition.

All the people in the village share the same fate. They do not even have birth certificates, let alone insurance. They also do not receive government subsidies. The closest clinic to this village is 40 kilometers away, which does not always have a doctor. The villagers do not have a car to get to the clinic. The closest hospital is 100 kilometers away.<sup>67</sup>

Villagers in Javan Jah in the impoverished province of Sistan and Baluchestan do not have access to the hospital. Over the past few years, several pregnant mothers have died on their way to the hospital. The closest clinic to the village is in the city of Bent which is 60 kilometers away, and takes around five hours to reach by foot.<sup>68</sup> One of the reasons that children drop out of school in this village is

**A one-year-old boy in a village had been give tea instead of milk for eight months. He was seriously mal-nourished and there was no doctor in the village to treat his burned and blistered hand**

**Several pregnant mothers have died on their way to hospital, because the closest clinic is 60 kms away. Children drop out of school because they cannot afford to buy glasses**

poor eyesight because villagers cannot afford to buy glasses for their children.

The conditions described above are that of rural areas while Iranian cities also suffer from poor conditions.

### 6. Landscaping and green space, gender segregation of parks and sports facilities

In Iran, more than any other country, women feel that the city does not fit the needs of their own, because with the mandatory veil and constant security monitoring in public places, they are always under control and suppressed. In such a country, the availability of green spaces and recreational places is more than ever needed by women.

Most Iranian women suffer from osteoporosis and vitamin D deficiency due to lack of mobility and lack of sunlight.

Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, former Mayor of Tehran, admitted, "We made a masculine city, and we did not feel that women have needs in this city. If women are not given the right environment and the right position in society, they will have to return to their homes after finishing their education, which will leave them with nothing but depression in their lives." Of course, he did not refrain from recapping the regime's misogynistic beliefs about women and added, "We believe that no responsibility and mission for women is more important than their motherly role."<sup>69</sup>

Instead of changing its misogynistic policies, the clerical regime took advantage of this need as a propaganda tool to further step up repression of women. By placing the policy of gender segregation of parks on its agenda, they sought to further isolate women.

In 2008, the municipality of Tehran began construction of the so-called 'ladies' gardens', according to the city council law, and gradually five single-sex parks were built for women in Tehran.<sup>70</sup> Of course, the creation of a special atmosphere for women under a totally misogynistic and oppressive state will only result in isolating women in public places.

Of the 1,500 parks in Tehran, there are only 5 special parks for women.<sup>71</sup> Other cities have created similar or even smaller opportunities for women.<sup>72</sup>

The space of these parks is generally limited and some of them are not well-maintained. The sanitary facilities of some of them, such as the Narges Park in Tehran, do not have warm water, and make the situation difficult for women who always have small children with them.<sup>73</sup>

An official government website writes, "The Mellat Park of Mashhad is nothing but a fence around a very limited space. In this

**Most Iranian women suffer from osteoporosis and vitamin D deficiency due to lack of mobility and lack of sunlight**

**Out of 1,500 parks in Tehran only 5 are allocated to women. Other cities have created similar or even smaller spaces for women**

Despite the declared goal, these parks do not even have a covered space for women’s free sports

space, the simplest of women’s needs is also not taken into account, while the per capita space for the volume of visitors is insufficient.” <sup>74</sup>

Despite the declared goal, these parks do not even have a covered space for women’s free sports. Wearing sports shirts and pants in these parks is prohibited, and if a woman wants to wear sports clothes, the park’s guards will give them warnings.<sup>75</sup>

It is also forbidden to take pictures and films in these places, and the officers will warn people if they see any photography and filming.<sup>76</sup>

In addition, there are conflicting rules overriding the parks. For example, the entry of men is forbidden, and even boys over 7 years of age are prevented from entering. While the arrival and departure of male workers and employees in the park during the week and while women exercise is not a problem.<sup>77</sup>

A similar situation exists in the Mother Park in Arasbaran, Tehran. The outer space of the park is completely impassable and dominated by law enforcements and is partly considered as masculine space. This makes the park more unsafe than public parks.

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A study by the Women's Committee of  
the National Council of Resistance of Iran

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