
THESIS

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For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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The purpose of this study is to analyze the participation of females in the labor force of Iran between 1956 and 1966. Selected demographic variables are age, educational attainment, employment rates, and marital status. The data are from the national censuses of 1956 and 1966. The traditional female roles are discussed. The findings of the study indicate that female participation rates increased in the educational, economical and political fields. There are indications that sex roles are being modified as related to urbanization and industrialization.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to analyze the female labor force participation in Iran between 1956 and 1966. The demographic variables to be studied are age, marital status, employment, and educational attainment. In analyzing female labor force participation these selected variables are relevant, as the female labor force is affected by changing age and sex structure. The aim of this study is to examine structural changes, for example, changes in marital status composition as related to the female labor force and employment. The degree of relationship of educational attainment of female labor force with the type of activity is also to be studied.

Background

Considerable progress was made in the struggle for women's rights in Iran during the 1960's. The movement began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in response to western liberal thought, which found acceptance among some influential social groups. At that time only a few upper-class women actively participated in community activities. The idea of giving greater freedom to women
received much criticism and opposition from various sectors of society.

In 1963 women received the right to vote and were permitted to hold public positions. Toward the end of 1963, of the total of sixty senators, two were women and of the 197 members elected to the Majlis, the national consultative assembly, six were women. The per cent of females who were employed rose from 9.2 per cent of the total population to 11 per cent in 1965 (3, p. 105). In 1964 Tehran University had 127 women on its faculty; other women were engaged as librarians, secretaries, nurses and social workers. In 1970 about 12 per cent of the economically active population were females. The Ministry of Education employed nearly 40,000 women as school teachers and administrators, mostly at the primary and secondary level. In 1971 the employment of women was highest in industry, agriculture and services. Thus 51.1 per cent of the employed females in these categories were in industry; 29.8 per cent in agriculture, and 19.4 per cent in services. In the urban areas the female population was more active in the service area than in industry. Fifty-three per cent of the employed urban females were in service areas, compared with 55.8 per cent in rural areas (5, p. 53). In the recent election, of the total of ninety-seven female candidates of the Rastakizparty, two females ran for the Senate and ninety-five for the Majlis. Only twenty-one were elected, one for the Senate and twenty for
the Majlis. Compared with the 1971 elections, there has been a decrease in female senators and an increase of two females in the Majlis. It should be noted that there has been only one female minister and no female prime minister (5, p. 75).

Despite the significant increase in the rates of female activity and educational levels and the increasing involvement of women in Iran's development process, the rate of political participation is lower for females than males. Their political participation both as voters and public office holders is quite low; females are more active in educational activities than in economical and political areas.

Methodology

Analyses of data used in the study of female labor force participation are based on percentages and rates. The basic demographic measures used in this study are the age composition as well as marriage, employment, and education rates.

Age.--The term "age" as used in this study refers to completed years. Different interval age groups are used and the age composition represents the total female population reported in 1956 and 1966 censuses (2, p. 1).

Education.--Education is defined in terms of nine categories ranging from lack of education to completion of
primary education, secondary, and university level. Females of school age are defined as persons between seven and twenty-four years of age (2, p. 6).

**Economically active.**--The economically active females were those persons ten years of age and over who were employed on the census date or who had worked on any day during the seven days preceding the enumerator's visit. Also included were those females with work experience who were looking for work and those who had an occupation but who were not at work during seven days preceding the enumerator's visit. For example, farmers, for a variety of reasons, may be unemployed for some time (2, p. 6).

**Employment.**--This term defines all females ten years of age and over who reported their principal activity as working or employed but not at work during the seven days preceding the enumerator's visit, plus females ten years of age and over who reported their principal activity as other than working if they worked eight or more hours during the week. In this study the rate of female employment ten years of age and over is utilized (2, p. 6).

The rate of female employment per 1000 =

\[
\frac{\text{number of employed females ten years of age and over}}{\text{total of female population ten years of age and over}}
\]
Marriage.--All of the female population ten years of age and over who were married at the time of enumeration were counted. The age group ten years and over is used as the standard definition in the Iranian censuses. In this study marital status is analyzed in terms of the following marriage rate (2, p. 6):

\[
\text{marriage rate} = \frac{\text{total number of married females, ten years of age and over}}{\text{Total number of females, ten years of age and over}}
\]

Urbanization and Demographic Changes

The first census of population was held in November, 1956; the second was held in November, 1966. During these ten years many changes have occurred in every field. In 1956 the cities were estimated to include six million inhabitants or 31.4 per cent of the total population. The census of 1966 showed the urban population was about 9.8 million, approximately 38.5 per cent of the total population. The urban population has increased about five per cent per year since 1966 (4, pp. 80-81). A comparison between 1956 and 1966 shows that the population is constantly moving from rural to urban areas. Some reasons have been cited for this trend: migration of rural inhabitants in search of work and achievement of a higher standard of living in cities and town, expansion of villages into towns and cities, and expansion of cities until they contain some of the outlying villages and suburban settlements. According to the 1966
census, the urban population was concentrated in five states: the Central State with 70.3 per cent of the urban population; the State of Esfahan with 52.8 per cent of the urban population; the State of Khuzistan with 51.7 per cent; the State of Khorasan with 28.8 per cent, and East Azarbaijan with 28.7 per cent of the urban population (4, p. 79). In 1966 fourteen cities had populations of over 100,000 persons and accounted for 57 per cent of the total figure, whereas in 1956 there were only nine cities of that size, constituting 51 per cent of the urban element. Tehran's population (2,695,283) was over six times greater than that of the country's second largest city, Isfahan (423,777). Only two other cities, Mashhad and Tabriz, had more than 400,000 inhabitants. The population of the ten next largest urban centers ranged from just over 100,000 to 271,000 persons (4, p. 82).

The 1956 national census estimated the country's population at 18,954,704, giving an average of 11.5 persons per square kilometer. The second national census placed the country's population at 25,488,699, an average of 15.4 persons per square kilometer. The distribution of people differed widely from region to region. In 1966 four states and one governorate, all in the north and northwest, had population densities of 100 or more persons per square mile; six states and three governorates had population densities below the national average of 41 inhabitants per
square mile. The Central State, incorporating the capital city of Tehran, had a density of about 145 persons per square mile (1, p. 56). Geographical and climate conditions, particularly elevation and rainfall, are the primary factors influencing the country's population density. Sharp variations among the states are evident. A larger percentage of people live in the north and northwest, with the heaviest concentrations along the Caspian Sea.

Iran has a youthful population, as do other Middle Eastern countries. Statistics showed a substantial decline in the median age from 20.2 years in 1956 to 16.9 years in 1966. This reduction was related to a decrease in infant mortality and more accurate reporting of the lower age groups in the latest census. Demographic information for 1969 showed that over 46 per cent of the inhabitants were under fifteen years of age and that almost 68 per cent were under thirty years. According to Table I less than 15 per cent of the inhabitants were over forty-five years of age, indicating that the proportion of older people declined during 1960 (see p. 8).

The general life expectancy at birth, although increasing, is still only about forty-five years. A large number of the population is economically dependent because of its youthfulness. Table II represents the increased youthfulness of Iranian population which occurred during the 1956-1966 period, resulting from the faster rate of
TABLE I
POPULATION OF IRAN BY AGE, SEX AND URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE 1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 15</td>
<td>6070500</td>
<td>5568700</td>
<td>4353800</td>
<td>7285400</td>
<td>11639200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>2633700</td>
<td>2789900</td>
<td>2376700</td>
<td>3046900</td>
<td>5423600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-49</td>
<td>2870400</td>
<td>2415900</td>
<td>2041100</td>
<td>3245200</td>
<td>5286300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>919200</td>
<td>908700</td>
<td>721400</td>
<td>1106500</td>
<td>1827900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and over</td>
<td>504100</td>
<td>462600</td>
<td>347400</td>
<td>619300</td>
<td>966700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12900</td>
<td>12145800</td>
<td>9840400</td>
<td>15303300</td>
<td>25143700</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


growth of the 0-9 years age group than of the group aged ten years and over.

TABLE II
AGE STRUCTURE OF IRAN'S POPULATION, 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thousands</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-9</td>
<td>6171</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>8543</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 and over</td>
<td>12777</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>16536</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age not reported</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18955</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>25721</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

During the period 1956-1966, the annual growth rate was 3 per cent (4, p. 79). According to the official census, urban areas had higher growth rates than rural areas because of an excess of births over deaths, migration from rural areas, and the expansion of city limits. Birth rates are generally higher in rural than in urban areas; the rapid growth of urban centers consequently resulted more from internal migration to cities than from other contributing factors. The high fertility rate is associated with the importance of marriage and the value of children in the society. About 50 per cent of the women marry before the age of twenty (4, p. 83). The development of new medical techniques and increased availability of health facilities throughout the country resulted in a lowering of the annual death rate to twenty per 1000 by mid-1969 (4, p. 83).

The decline in the rate of economic activity of the population in the 1956-1966 period is considerable: from 47.2 per cent in 1956 to 46 per cent in 1966 (1, p. 16). Rising rates of school attendance among youth are related to a decrease in labor force participation. Also the rate of growth of the labor supply was lower than the rate of population increases over the 1956-1966 period. The censuses indicate that a reduction in agricultural workers and increases in industrial workers were two results of migration to urban areas. The proportion of the agricultural sector decreased from 56.3 per cent in 1956 to 46.2 per cent in
1966, but the labor force in the industrial sector increased from 20.1 per cent in 1956 to 27.1 per cent in 1956 (1, p. 16). These changes reflect the development of industry and manufacturing, which is the most important factor contributing to congestion in Iranian cities.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

DESCRIPTION OF ROLE CHANGES IN WOMEN'S STATUS

Women in the Muslim World

Any analysis of women's status must be within the general cultural context. It is the role of the culture, and its influence on social relations, that significantly determines attitudes and norms of society.

Most of the female population in Muslim countries has traditionally functioned under religious and legal prescriptions defining the institutional position of the Muslim women; for example, Islamic law, which in all Muslim countries governs family behavior, does not provide for the principle of sex equality within the family.

The Muslim woman, in the reality of her everyday life, has had to adjust her behavior to a religious and legal endorsement of patriarchy and polygamy; to the unilateral power of her husband in divorce; to the granting of custody rights to the father of minor children in event of divorce; to the husband's right to restrict a rebellious wife to the conjugal home; and to the unequal weight given a woman's legal testimony in court (12, p. 209).

The control of Muslim women is the province of only male relatives who are expected to provide economic support for their women at all times. Under these traditional conditions, the need to work for economic survival was eliminated from the woman's existence. Women were not only economically dependent, but politically, socially, and psychologically
dependent as well. The low level of female participation in the public life in traditional Muslim society can be explained by the patterns of female exclusion. Women were socialized not to participate in the outside world and personally motivated towards avoidance of public activities.

The position of women in the Muslim world did not significantly change until a few decades ago. Since about 1960 developmental changes have improved women's status in almost all Muslim countries. For example, in Tunisia, religious law (sharia) has been replaced by the Civil Code, thereby placing family law under civil legislation. In Iran the family protection law had as its aim the equalization of sexes, particularly within marriage. For example, formerly, if a man divorced his wife three times he could not remarry her again unless she had remarried and been divorced. That provision has been limited, so that such a divorce is now regarded as singul and revocable.

Perhaps the most important factor influencing the increase in women's status in Islamic society is the growing acceptance of their rights for educational opportunities. Significant changes have occurred since the 1960's. In Saudi Arabia and Tunisia female education, except for a small elite, at even the primary level, did not begin until 1960 and 1956. In Turkey, however, female education has been compulsory since the 1920's and women have been accepted in all universities since 1926.
The low literacy level among the adult female population in the Islamic society largely reflected the low respect in which female education was held in the past. The differences in level of education between the youngest age group and subsequent age groups are considerable. In Tunisia, for example, in 1966, 34 per cent of women aged fifteen to nineteen were literate, compared to 6 per cent of women aged twenty-five to thirty-four and 3 per cent of the thirty-five to forty-four age group. In Algeria in 1966 the differences were not quite as pronounced: 24 per cent of women aged fifteen to nineteen were literate, while the rate for the twenty-five to thirty-four age group was 6.6 per cent and for women thirty-five to forty-four was 4 per cent. In Iran the number of younger women who can read and write is nearly double that of the twenty-five to thirty-four age group and between double and quadruple that of the thirty-five to forty-four age group (10, p. 530).

The changing educational behavior of women in Muslim countries can also be illustrated by the progress they have achieved in secondary and higher education. At both these levels female enrollment, compared with males, is increasing. In Iran and Egypt, for example, over one-third of all enrolled students in secondary schools are female; approximately 30 per cent are females in Turkey, Algeria, Iran, Morocco, and Tunisia; and one-fourth are female in
Syria. In Libya and Saudi Arabia one out of every five secondary school students is a woman. Typically, female attendance at this level in Muslim societies averages 34 per cent of the male attendance rates.

The culturally accepted practice for women to continue their education after marriage and to enroll at secondary school and university level has meant delay in marriage. Women's interests have expanded beyond familial activities. This process is apparent in Turkey, where the percentage of women married before they were nineteen declined from 33 per cent (1960) to 22 per cent (1965) and in Tunisia, where the percentages for that age group were 40 per cent (1956) and 18 per cent (1966) (9, p. 178).

Higher education for women in Islamic society may be related to the reduction of the birth rate within marriage. Perhaps the best documented evidence of this relationship is for Turkey and Egypt, where it has been shown that the fertility level decreases as women's educational achievement increases. For example, for each hundred Egyptian wives with a university education there were 394 children; for those with secondary schooling, 583; for those with primary education, 703; and for those with no education, 708 (1, p. 138).

Higher education also permits women to seek employment and become economically independent. In Muslim society women's activity rates in the economic sector increase at each successive educational level. For example, among adult
Turkish, Egyptian and Syrian women, less than 4 per cent of those who had some primary schooling were working, while 21 per cent of women with a secondary school were employed, and two out of every three female university graduates were in professional occupations.

Despite the significant increase in the rates of female economic activity and educational participation in Muslim societies, the proportion of women in these societies who are employed in the economic sector is still low when compared with rates of female employment in other modernizing countries. The mean work participation rate for most Muslim countries is only 4 per cent in non-agricultural economic activities, ranging from a low of 1.2 per cent (Jordan) to a high of 13 per cent (Iran) (12, p. 56).

Women in Iran

The Islamic era of Iranian history began with the Arab invasion and conquest in the seventh century. While the Islamic state was founded upon the Koran, composed of the prophet Muhammad's spiritual and moral teachings, the society was organized on the principles of Islamic law, sharia. Islam established itself as a "way of life", moulding and influencing social relations. It is asserted that Islam upgraded the status of women, in reference to Muhammad's famous saying that a "Heaven is under mother's feet" (5, p. 34). Muhammad commanded Arabs to abandon
their tradition of burying girls after birth, yet that practice did not completely disappear. The impact of Arabian customs was felt so strongly that an Iranian stated, "It were best for a girl not to come into existence, but being born, she had better to married or buried" (12, p. 220).

The traditional view of women's nature is a case in point. Women were considered as "erotic creatures who were continually giving trouble to men" (9, p. 65). These imperfect beings were described in an Iranian novel as "capricious and of ill repute, hazarding this world and the next for the sake of a moment's desire" (4, p. 125).

This negative view of female nature resulted in the order of Islamic social relations. Marriage became a mechanism to facilitate and protect male authority over females, and a process of transference of authority from father to husband. According to the traditional Islamic view, marriage, as a common core of the contract, "shows traces of having developed out of the purchase of the bride; the bridegroom concludes the contract with the legal guardian of the bride and undertakes to pay the nuptial gift mahr not as was customary in the pre-Islamic period, but to the wife herself" (7, p. 93). Marriage is analogous to a commercial transaction in which the woman is the object of transaction to be exchanged for the mahr. According to this point of view, while women were given private property rights, they were privatized as property. This was accomplished through the
institution of marriage, which caused the female to be considered "the property of her husband, who having in fact paid for her, regards himself as entitled exclusively to her services" (4, p. 93). The traditional Islamic culture established the role of male denomination and superiority.

It is assumed that the modernization of Iran has been related to the changing status of Iranian women. Significant landmarks in the liberation of Iranian women have occurred recently. Women were granted suffrage in February, 1963, permitting participation in parliamentary elections, and election to the national legislative and local elective councils. Toward the end of 1963, of the 197 members elected to Majlis, five were women; of the sixty senators, two were women. In the present Majlis (270 members) eighteen are women; of the sixty senators, two are women. There has been only one female minister, who was replaced, and no female prime minister. The low degree of women's participation in positions of formal authority can be partially explained by the high degree of illiteracy of females.

The granting of legal rights does not necessarily change the actual status of women, especially in an environment not conducive to change. There are new provisions in Iranian civil codes intended to improve women's situation by prohibiting the practices of some of the old Islamic laws. The effects of these changes are minimal for the majority of Iranians. Thus, Article 1041 of the Civil Code prepared an
age limitation for marriage in order to prevent fathers' arranging marriages for their daughters, regardless of their young age. Currently the minimum age for marriage is fifteen for females and eighteen for males. Nevertheless by 1971, nearly 1 per cent of the total married female population was between ten and fourteen. The young age of marriage occurs more frequently in rural than in urban areas.

Similarly, the inadequacy of legal reforms in changing women's status is demonstrated by the 1967 family protection laws (F.P.L.) and the Family Protection Court. Like the voting rights of 1963, the F.P.L. brought only theoretical and not practical change. The goal of the F.P.L. was to "supervise the formation of families and prevent their break-up" (1, p. 63). The law attempted to discourage polygamy by requiring men to obtain legal permission for remarriage. But polygamy continues to be practiced, not under Sharia but under the legal reforms. Earlier provisions of the civil codes required a woman to have her husband's permission to acquire employment; the F.P.L. granted women that right to work but the law states that, in absence of her husband's consent, she can work to support the entire family.

According to the F.P.L. all divorce must be decided by the Family Protection Court. Men must have valid reasons for petitioning for divorce. Women have equal rights in submitting requests for divorce. The impact on divorce rates has been significant. For example, in 1971, of the
total 18,000 divorces, 15,000 took place in cities and 3,000 in villages (7, pp. 12-13). The higher urban rate of divorce may be explained not by liberated consciousness of women in cities but perhaps by more rapid changes in the cities.

Perhaps the most significant factor in changing women's status was the specific educational programs, as initiated by the government. These programs were established as the Women's Organization. In recent years, women's organizations have become more active. The women's organizations in Iran before 1956 had very limited activities. There were no general women's conferences and very few meetings to bring women together who shared interests. In September, 1956, a number of women leaders, at the suggestion of the Minister of Labor, planned a mass meeting of all women's organizations to discuss the role of women. Early in 1957 the Federation of Women's Organizations was formed in Tehran. Their organization was comprised of fourteen groups; two members from each organization were on the executive board, which met weekly and planned the monthly general meeting. The Federation served as the center of contact for exchange of information, joint planning of lectures, meetings with visiting women leaders and consultants. The Federation offered the possibilities for joint study and program coordination, which are needed for the promotion of a successful national
movement of women in Iran. The women in these organizations in Iran, especially in Tehran, devote a considerable amount of time performing volunteer social services. There are two main types of volunteers.

The fairly large number of women of leisure, who are well to do, upper class, mostly over fifty years of age, without special training, are pioneer leaders in women's rights and in government aid programs. They perform the bulk of remedial service and direct social service programs in Tehran. In addition to this group there is a body of younger women between thirty and forty-five years of age, mostly in the professions and well-educated, a number with Anglo-Saxon educational backgrounds. These women are primarily involved in preventive programs, social research and social education, and youth programs (11, pp. 76-77).

The United Nations social welfare training expert, requested by the government of Iran, acted in an advisory position from 1954 to 1958. As a result of consultation with government officials and personal contact with the leaders of voluntary social welfare agencies and women's organizations, the social situation was studied and a curriculum for a school of social work was outlined. An informal program of lectures and discussion seminars and advisory contact with various welfare activities and institutions helped to create a new concept of social welfare and the foundation for modern social work. Subsequently, in
1958 a pre-college training school for men and women was opened. The United Nations, in response to a request for technical assistance in the development of the new school, appointed a social training adviser (June, 1959). The Women's Organization held its first convention on October 30, 1966, in Tehran. It was attended by about 700 delegates, who approved the organization's constitution and articles of association. The Women's Organization has no political leaning and it is open to all Iranian women irrespective of their religious beliefs or political views. It has been particularly active in the fight against illiteracy.

All factors which have been mentioned did not only affect the woman's role in family and society but also aided in the expansion of the rate of female participation in the educational and economic spheres of activity.

In general there was an increase in the female literacy rate, from 8 per cent in 1956 to 17.4 per cent in 1965. The same survey demonstrated that female enrollment in education increased from 30 per cent in 1956 to 34 per cent in 1966 and in the secondary level from 24.1 per cent to 26.1 per cent. In 1956 of the total literate female population, .07 per cent had higher education levels as compared with 1.4 per cent in 1966 (7 , p. 20).

In spite of the increasing literacy rate for Iranian women, there is still a difference between literacy rates of men and women. The data in recent years indicates the
literacy rate for men is 22.2 per cent higher than that for women (7, p. 52).

The increasing rate of female participation in the labor force has increased from 9.2 per cent in 1956 to 11 per cent in 1966. The employment of women was highest in industry, agriculture and services in 1960. Thus 55 per cent of the total female population was employed in industry, 22 per cent in agriculture, and 18 per cent in services (7, p. 65). In urban areas, the employment of women was mostly in services; in rural areas the employment of women was highest in industry.

In analyzing the distribution of the three major types of occupations, a distinction must be made between machine and hand industry, because most women engaged in the latter, weaving and carpeting, and earned very little income. There are many women in rural areas who carry more than half the burden of agricultural work but are not independent wage earners. This group of women is categorized by official statistics as an economically inactive population. ("Economically inactive" is defined in the censuses as persons who during the seven days preceding the enumerator's visit were not employed and were neither seasonally unemployed nor seeking work. The economically inactive consists, for example, of homemakers, students, and persons unable to work.) Their economic activities include agricultural work, consisting of the gathering of products, cleaning of grains, collecting and
cleaning of fruits, milking and making dairy products, planting rice and tea, making baskets and carpets, feeding animals and making bread, combined with housework for the family. These "inactive" women seem much busier than active women, those wage-earners who are employed in industry, agriculture, and services. It makes little difference whether women's employment is categorized as "active" or "inactive". While there has been an increase in the female labor force, the economically active female population is much smaller than that of men, an indication of the unequal status of women. Despite all the changes brought to Islam and all the attempts to reform the constitution, the status of women is secondary to that of men.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FEMALE POPULATION

The Characteristics of the Female Population

In analyzing factors affecting female labor force participation, a description of the characteristics of the female population is essential.

Between November, 1956 and November, 1966, the female population expanded by an estimated average annual compound rate of 2.9 per cent, or from 9,309,760 to 12,432,921. This high rate of increase is derived from a steadily declining mortality rate over the decade, combined with a virtually constant high fertility rate (1, p.12). Low death rates of the female population in Iran as in other developing countries may be related to the development of social welfare programs and the increase of health facilities. High fertility rates have been also maintained as the result of continued marriage at an early age and the virtual absence of birth control practices, particularly in the rural areas. The rate of increase of the female population was much higher in urban areas (defined as including localities of 5000 and more population in November, 1956) than in the rural areas during this period.
As compared with an average annual compound rate of population growth of 5 per cent in Iran's female urban population, the rural female population grew by an average of only 1.9 per cent (2, p. 5). The following table shows an increase of the annual growth rate of female population in rural and urban areas in both censuses.

TABLE III

ANNUAL GROWTH RATE OF FEMALE POPULATION BY AREAS: 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Annual Growth Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>9309760</td>
<td>12432921</td>
<td>312316</td>
<td>33.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2883414</td>
<td>4697592</td>
<td>1814178</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1308982</td>
<td>775329</td>
<td>1308983</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: General census 1956 and national census 1966 results.

The increase of the proportion of female population living in urban places is considerable. According to the census of 1956, of the total female population 31 per cent lived in urban places; this figure increased to 38 per cent in 1966. The following table illustrates the changes occurring between 1956 and 1966 (see p. 28).

The differences in the rates of growth between rural and urban areas may be attributed to three factors: a higher natural rate of increase of the urban population (3.14 per
TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE POPULATION IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS: 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Urban</th>
<th>% Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: General census 1956 and national census 1966, results.

cent as compared with 2.69 per cent); increases in the number of urban places (227 as compared to 186) and a significant amount of rural to urban migration (an increase of 31 per cent of urban female population to 38 per cent), over the 1956-1966 period (3, p. 9). The high rate of female migration can be explained by the power of the urban places to attract a large number of the rural-female population. According to two national surveys (1956-1966) most of the females who moved to the urban areas were dependent immigrants. Over 64 per cent of female migration was classified as dependent (3, p. 9). (The term "dependent migration" is defined in the censuses as migrants who move or follow the migration of the head of the family.) The following table indicates the reasons for female migration to the urban places (Table V, p. 29).

Age Structure

The age structure of the population is an important characteristic. The increase in the number of young females
in Iran between 1956-1966, resulting from the higher rate of growth of the 0-14 years age group than of the group aged fifteen years and over, reflects the dynamic demographic forces over these years. According to Table VI there was an increase of 3.6 per cent of the female population of the 0-14 age group over the decade; in urban areas this population increased from 40.4 per cent in 1956 to 44.5 per cent in 1966. The corresponding figures in rural areas were 42.8 per cent and 46.5 per cent respectively.

The high and constant fertility rate kept the annual number of births at a high level, while the lowered mortality rates affected the survival of infants and small children, since the advances in health conditions tended mainly to benefit such a young population. The young age of the female
TABLE VI

AGE STRUCTURE OF FEMALE POPULATION IN IRAN BY AREAS (1956-1966)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Categories</th>
<th>Areas</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Country</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% 1956</td>
<td>% 1966</td>
<td>% 1956</td>
<td>% 1966</td>
<td>% 1956</td>
<td>% 1966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>42.1</td>
<td>45.7</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>44.5</td>
<td>42.8</td>
<td>46.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 and over</td>
<td>58.9</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>53.5</td>
<td>57.2</td>
<td>53.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: General census 1956 and national census 1966, results.

The population is an important factor which contributed to the median age of females during the 1956-1966 period. The following table shows changes in median age of female population between 1956 and 1966.

TABLE VII

MEDIAN AGE OF MARRIAGE OF FEMALES IN IRAN IN 1956 AND 1966 *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The sex ratio in Iran was high in 1956. There were 103.6 males per 100 females; in the 1966 sex ratio there were 107.3 males per 100 females. Iran is one of the few countries
having a population of more males than females. The following table illustrates the changes which occurred in the sex ratio between 1956 and 1966.

**TABLE VIII**

SEX RATIO IN IRAN AND URBAN-RURAL RESIDENCE 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>103.6</td>
<td>107.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>106.5</td>
<td>108.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>102.3</td>
<td>106.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: 1956 and 1966 census results.

According to the United Nations data, in the age group fifteen to thirty-four years, the ratio was approximately 102.7 women to 100 men. Among populations over thirty-five years of age, men greatly outnumbered women. This excess may result from the preferential care given to boys and young men, the underreporting of females, and the generally hard life of women who marry at an early age and have many children. Men are also suspected of overstating their ages to avoid conscription into military service.

**Educational Attainment**

The most striking feature of education in Iran is the increase in literacy (in 1956 and 1966 censuses, literacy was defined as "the ability to read and write"). According
to the census of 1956, of the total female population (seven years and over) only 8 per cent were literate. This figure increased to 17.4 per cent in 1966. In urban areas the per cent literate also increased from 22.4 per cent to 38.3 per cent. In rural areas the figures for 1956 were 1.2 and 4.2, respectively. The increase in literacy of the female population which occurred over the decade may be related to such governmental policies as the creation of compulsory education and the educational activities of the women's organization against illiteracy. The following table shows the per cent of increased literacy among female population in both censuses.

**TABLE IX**

**LITERACY OF FEMALE POPULATION OVER SEVEN YEARS OLD BY AREAS IN 1956 and 1966 (per 1000)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Pop.</td>
<td>Literate Pop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>2255</td>
<td>506</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>9766</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculated from data of the 1956 and 1966 censuses.

According to the 1956 census, 75.2 per cent of the female literate population was in the primary level of the education system, 24.1 per cent in the secondary level, and
.0.7 per cent in the university level. Corresponding figures for 1966 were as follows: 72.5 per cent in primary; 26.1 per cent in secondary; and 1.4 per cent in university level (Table X).

TABLE X

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF ATTENDANCE OF FEMALE POPULATION SEVEN YEARS IN IRAN 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>% Primary Level</th>
<th>% Secondary Level</th>
<th>% University Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>75.2</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>72.5</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73.8</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96.9</td>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.8</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Social and Economic Change of Iranian Women, Tehran, The Planning and Budget Organization, L971.

Employment Rates

A discussion of the labor force in 1956 is necessary to understand some of the changes that occurred. According to the 1956 statistics, of the total economically active female population, 99.6 per cent were employed; in 1966 this figure decreased to 91 per cent, reflecting in part, an increase in the rate of school attendance of the female population. Table XI describes the changes occurring between 1956 and 1966.
### TABLE XI

DISTRIBUTION OF ECONOMICALLY ACTIVE FEMALE POPULATION BY URBAN-RURAL AREAS IN 1956-1966 (per 1000)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Economically Active Pop.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Employed Pop.</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>573</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>387</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Selected statistics in 1973, Tehran, Iran Statistics Center.

During the decade, the highest employment rate for females was in the aged group, ten to twenty-four. The following table indicates that after age twenty-five there was at first a sharp, and then a more gradual decline in the proportion of the female population which was employed. The rate of employment for females aged forty-five years and over declined during a period where rates for all other groups were increasing. This pattern reflected the fact that women were marrying, starting to raise families, and apparently not returning to work in any great numbers.

#### Marital Status

In addition to a differentiation of Iranian female labor force on the basis of education and age, the labor force was also differentiated by marital status. According
TABLE XII

PERCENTAGE OF DISTRIBUTION OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT
BY AGE GROUP 1956-1966 PERIOD*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>% 1956</th>
<th>% 1966</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10-24</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-44</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>36.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-64</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and above</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: General census 1956 and national census 1966, results.

to the 1966 census the highest employment rates were for divorced women (over 27 per cent). Married women, on the other hand, had a much lower employment rate. The following table indicates the female labor participation by marital status.

TABLE XIII

FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION
BY MARITAL STATUS (per 1000)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Total Female Population Over 10 Years</th>
<th>Female Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married women</td>
<td>9877</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmarried women</td>
<td>2132</td>
<td>365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced women</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed women</td>
<td>862</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Iranian Statistical Center Plan Organization, National Census of Population and Housing, Tehran, 1968,
Iran's high rates of labor force growth have been related to the rapid expansion in the female labor supply, which increased at a rate over three times greater than did that of males, as indicated in Table XIV.

**TABLE XIV**

SIZE OF LABOR SUPPLY BY SEX, 1956-1966*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>1956</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thousands</td>
<td>Per Cent</td>
<td>Thousands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5491</td>
<td>90.5</td>
<td>6760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>576</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>1028</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6067</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>7788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Calculated from data of the 1956 and 1966 censuses.

Most women have entered the work force, not of course, at the earning level of men, but have secured low-paying jobs as clerks or other service-oriented personnel in the cities and as workers in rural industries.


CHAPTER IV

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

The preceding analysis of age structure, educational attainment, employment rates, and marital status of Iranian women provides some understanding of female participation in the labor force between 1956 and 1966. The findings derived from the analysis indicate that the female population is predominantly young. There are many implications and problems associated with a young population. In the past, the youth of Iran have faced problems in acquiring a satisfactory education. Not all school age children could attend school, and many high school graduates were obliged either to cease further education or to go abroad to complete their studies. At present the various youth organizations have organized to coordinate their activities.

As in other developing countries the death rate in Iran has decreased considerably with the improvement of water supplies and large-scale disease control programs (such as mass innoculation and insecticide control campaigns mounted by the government).

Another change which was noted was the growth in the number of urban centers and the concentration of population in areas where greater economic activity was available. These centers have served to attract rural population.
With the introduction of mechanized farming in many parts of the country, the additional or surplus rural manpower had no alternative but to migrate to cities.

Between 1956 and 1968 the percentage of the female population increased in the lowest age category and decreased in the higher age categories. The high fertility rate has been associated with a continuation of early age of marriage. The impact on Iran's labor market of the rapid increase of the female population was less than is suggested by two important factors: the greater rate of female population growth in the age group below labor force age (i.e., under ten years) and the decline in the rate of labor force participation among females aged ten years and over. Thus the growth in female population rates between 1956 and 1966 was much greater than the growth rate of the labor supply. The decline in the female employment rate is related to the tendency for young females to continue their education rather than seek employment.

According to the 1956-1966 censuses, there has been a reduction in the size of female population engaged in agricultural activities, and an increase in the industrial sector. These changes are related to migration of rural female population to urban areas in response to the economic aspects of job availability.

The statistics for 1956 and 1965 indicate a rapid change in the traditional pattern of females in education. The
increasing literacy among females is related to modern forms of communication and increasing public interest in economic and political areas. During the last decade the Iranian government has placed an emphasis on education programs for females in both rural and urban areas. Perhaps the most important factor related to the increasing literacy rate of females is that of compulsory education and establishment of women's organization with educational activities.

In the 1956-1966 censuses, labor force participation was cross tabulated by marital status. These figures show that if a woman worked, it was usually before marriage; if she worked after marriage, it was most likely before the advent of children. In both censuses the higher employment rates were for single women. Married women, on the other hand, had a much lower employment rate in the labor force.

In conclusion, to understand fully the development on modernism and the significance of changes in the status of women in Iran, two important factors should be considered: first, the comparison of changing status of women in Iran with changes in developed countries, and second, recognition that developmentalists overlook the fact that women's rights and statuses in most developing nations are nationalistically, rather than individualistically oriented. In other words, the concept of improving women's status is closely associated with potential contribution of females to national development
rather than with their own self-realization and self-actualization. One implication of this orientation is tension between the drive to develop to become modern (economically, educationally, and socially) and traditionally-deferred roles. Western influence produced a social environment in which the doors to educational, economic and political institutions were opened to women. Despite these opportunities, differences continued between level of activity of men and women in political and legal arenas, as well as in the areas of employment and education. The educational systems, along with political, legal, and economic institutions in effect uphold male hegemony. In the past few years the literacy rate has increased, but differences still exist between level of literacy and gender. Moreover, educational opportunities are more open to men than to women, particularly in the urban areas. In spite of significant changes brought to Iran by an imported constitution, the position of women remains secondary to that of men. Women attained rights in 1963 but they continue to have their law status in the civil and criminal codes. Although there have been many changes, women have not fundamentally altered sexual power relations, and there is emphasis on the erotic and sexual role of women, a characteristic of traditional Iranian or Moslem society.
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