

**Analysis of the Position of Women's Education in Iran during the Past One Hundred Years;
An Interdisciplinary Approach¹**

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Received 23 February 2013

Revised 10 April 2013

Accepted 19 May 2013

Abstract: *Iran is a developing country in which the women despite the growth of rate of education in two recent decades have suffered a vast gender gap in education, during the past one hundred years. The aim of this paper was to present a portrait of educational position of women in Iran, during the past one hundred years and to analyze the obstacles of females in to achieve to equal educational opportunities with males in this period. The main questions in this paper were: has there been any different between women and men in education in Iran, during the past one hundred years? If yes, how much vast is the gap? What are the effective factors in this process? For to answer these questions, I studied the education position of women as a position relative to men' education is disadvantaged socially, culturally, politically, and economically. I investigated the obstacles of gender-equitable education such as the lack of knowledge and awareness, societal, cultural, political and economic climate. In social and cultural dimensions, I specially emphasized on traditions; religious norms; class status, family values and gender socialization. In the political dimension, I focused on the social-cultural structure of governments and governors attitude about women, women's abilities and their capacities. Finally; I analyzed the policies and strategies that the governments have applied for to decrease the gender gap in education. The most important of resources were statistical information which is gathered every ten years by statistical center of Iran. The main reference of this information was statistical publications of statistical center of Iran and especially statistical year book of the country.*

Keywords: *gender, education position, economy, government, sociopolitical structure.*

Introduction

Education is a key part of strategies to improve individuals' well-being and societies' economic and social development. The men and the women are the two wheels of the society, if one of the two falls defective, the society cannot make progress. Hence we need education for the females as we need for the males. Gender inequality in education is extreme. Girls are less likely to access school, to remain in school or to achieve in education. Education helps men and women claim their rights and realize their potential in the economic, political and social arenas. It is also the single most powerful way to lift people out of poverty. Education plays a particularly important role as a foundation for girls' development towards adult life. It should be an intrinsic part of any strategy to address the gender-based discrimination against women and girls that remains prevalent in many societies. If a girl is educated then she can also opt for a job if the need arises. So she would not be considered as a burden on the family. As an educated wife she would be interested in family planning as well. Studies have shown that illiterate women have high fertility and mortality rate. Being educated she would certainly understand the advantages of a small family. Also being educated she would be able to participate in the day to day proceedings of the family. An educated mother would be more conscious about the health and hygiene of the family than her illiterate counterpart.

Women's ability to choose the number and timing of their births is a key to empowering women as individuals, mothers, and citizens, but women's rights go beyond those dealing with their reproductive roles. Education is the single most important determinant of both age at marriage and age at first birth. Educated women generally want smaller families and make better use of reproductive health and family planning information and services in achieving their desired family size. Women with more education also tend to have healthier families. A recent study of 19 developing countries, including Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, concluded that a country's long-term economic growth increases by 3.7 percent for every year the adult population's average level of schooling rises (UNESCO 2002). According to the United Nations Population Fund, countries that have made social investments

¹ This paper has been presented at the WE-ASC Education Culture Congress World Education - Arts, Sciences and Education Culture 12th - 15th January 2011, New Delhi, India.

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in health, family planning, and education have slower population growth and faster economic growth than countries that have not made such investments (Daisy & Bruce 1988). With respect to the importance and necessity of the women education, over the past decades, the policy-makers of education consider the gender gap in education. According to UNESCO statistics; in thirty years ago girls represented 38 percent of primary enrollments in low-income countries and boys, 62 percent. Today, the gender gap has narrowed with girls representing 48 percent and boys 52 percent of primary enrollments (OECD/UNESCO, 2005). Gross enrollment rates for girls in some low-income countries have gone from 52 percent to 94 percent over that same period. These averages, however, hide sharp differences among regions and countries. Between 1999 and 2006, the worldwide number of children not in school declined rapidly from about 100 million to 75 million. However, girls still constitute 55% of all out-of-school children, down from 59% in 1999. Worldwide, for every 100 boy out-of-school there are 122 girls.

Gender disparities still remain in both primary enrollment and school completion rates. However, many low-income countries have registered improvements in primary school completion rates, with an average increase of 6 percent (from 63 percent in 1999 to 74 percent in 2006) (World Bank, EdStats, 2008). The completion rate for girls rose by 9 percentage points, from 57 percent in 1999 to 70 percent in 2006, whereas the primary school completion rates for boys increased only from 63 percent to 70 percent during the same period in low-income countries (World Bank, EdStats, 2008).

Iran is a Middle East country and education in the modern method was established in the Qajar era by Amirkabir. The first girls' school in European Style was established in the Naser Al-Din Shah era but Moslem girls weren't allowed to be present in these schools. In 1907, in the eighteenth principle of the Constitutional Amendment, education has been considered free for whole the public without emphasis on gender and after this establishing the girls' school was possible. In 1934, women higher education was confirmed by the government and in 1937; the first group of women in the medicine discipline was accepted in the Tehran University. Despite of these progresses, the illiteracy of women was much extended so that in the census of 1956, 92 percent of Iranian women were illiterate. In the educational years 1924-25 the girl students were only 380 and in 1939-40 they increased to 3,367 (9 times) while the boy students were 1,496 in 1924-25 and reached to 1,0442 (7 times) in 1939-40 (table 1).

In the first census (1956) the literate women was only 23.9 percent while this rate is 46.7 percent in the last census (2006) (table 2). In the end of the second Pahlavi total of the students were 176,000 while it is 3,572,000 now. A review of the statistics related to the rate of the women who has been accepted in universities, after the Islamic Revolution shows the growth of the rate of these women. IN this paper our goal is that:

- A) To show a picture of the trend of the education change in Iran during the past one hundred years.
- B) To compare the trend of the education change in Iran before Pahlavi and after Pahlavi eras.
- C) To analyze the influence of cultural and socioeconomic factors on the women education.
- D) To present the legal barriers for to access to equal higher education.

Research Methodology

The relationship between gender and education is a topic that is now being debated more than ever before. The difficulty originates from the different shapes and forms gender inequalities and education take depending on the legal, economic, social and cultural context. In this paper, the study was documentary and the method research was based on analyses of documents. The most important of resources were census statistics which gather every ten years by statistical center of Iran. We also used the statistics of the ministry of education, ministry of sciences research and technology and Islamic Azad University. The main reference of this information was statistical publications of statistical center of Iran and especially statistical year book of the country. Furthermore, we used the historical resources. The important indexes were sex, literacy, accepting in the university, public and private universities, courses and academic fields.

Data

In this part the data will present in three parts:

Education in the Qajar Era

Prior to the mid-nineteenth century, it was traditional in Iran for education to be associated with religious institutions. Knowledge of reading and writing was not considered necessary for all the population, and thus education generally was restricted to the sons of the economic and political elite. Typically, this involved a few

years of study in a local school, or *maktab*. Those who desired to acquire more advanced knowledge could continue in a religious college, or *madrasedh*, where all fields of religious science were taught. A perceived need to provide instruction in subjects that were not part of the traditional religious curriculum, such as accounting, European languages, military science, and technology, led to the establishment of the first government school in 1851 (Arasteh 1968:135). Education in the modern method was started by to establish the Dar Al-Fonoon School, in the Qajar era by Amirkabir (1858). In this era, there was three method teaching: Maktabkhaneh, Elmieh Hozeh and private teaching in the personal homes that was special of the aristocrats. The first girls' school in the European method was established in the Naser Al-Din Shah period but Moslem girls weren't allowed to be present in these schools. One of the first high schools, Madrasseh Almieh, was opened in Tehran in 1898. In this period, with the peak of modernism and the pressure of the upper classes that had cultural and trade relationship with other countries, the girls of these classes could enrolled in the American schools. The first American school was "Franko Persan" (Arasteh 1969).

In 1901 there were seventeen elementary schools in Tehran and one each in the cities of Tabriz, Bushehr, Rasht and Mashhad. All had been started and financed by individuals, with little interest or support from the government (Angove 2007:235). As the urban population and the liberal national movement grew, the demand for modern schools increased. Traditional Schooling could not prepare the individual for a new way of life, and many parents were determined that their children would receive the new education, even if they themselves had to help finance the schools. And so they did. Parents were rewarded for their efforts when they witnessed the progress of their children.

In 1902, Nesa khamom came to Tehran, for to establish a girl' school but she failed. One year later, Tooba Roshdyeh established the Girl' School of Parvaresh in a part of her own house and welcomed by the people. In the first three days after establishing it, 17 people enrolled in this school but in the fourth day it was closed by the government (Menashri. 1992). The public, now appreciative of the value of literacy, responded enthusiastically to the development of these schools. At the same time the newly-formed society for the development of public education, with government aid, established ten more schools between 1898 and 1906. The revolution 1906 and the years immediately following gave further encouragement to public education and reinforced the people's efforts government responded to the social trends. In drawing up the constitution of 1907, the delegates to the first Majlis made certain board provisions for education (Menashri. 1992). In the eighteenth principle of the Constitutional Amendment (1907), education has been considered free for the public without emphasis on gender. After this Amendment establishing the girls' school was possible. In the first years of Constitutional Revolution, the number of new schools increased and until the late of Qajar era was established an American school and one French school (Jandark School) for girls. The number of student in these was less than 200. 25 years after the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1907) the population of Iran was 8 million and there were just 1803 students in every 100,000 people. 26 percent of these students were girls. In 1908, bill of student detaching to other countries was passed. According to this law, the government must send 30 persons to other countries for studying; every year (Arasteh 1969). The Administrative Law of 1910 made the Department of Elementary Education an integral part of the Ministry of Education and emphasized the extension of elementary education. In 1911 the Majlis passed certain fundamental laws of education specifying the functions of private and public schools. In 1910, just a few years after the revolution, there were 10,531 children enrolled in 113 elementary schools, about a third of them girls' schools (Al-Qawasmi 2006 :356).

World War 1 slowed down the advancement of education in Iran. Despite of it, education for girls increased and the public clamored for more schools. To take care of some of these demands, the government in 1918 doubled the annual budget of Ministry of Education from 1,340,000 Rials to 2,600,000 rials. (Al-Qawasmi 2006: 356). In 1914 Fotuh al-Mulk endowed a boarding school for boys in Maraghe. The northern province of Gilan had by 1925 a total 37 private and public elementary schools. Nine of the schools was for girls. In Isfahan in 1923 the philanthropist Mokhtari set up two elementary schools, one for boy, and the other for girls. In 1925 Majid ud-din established a girl' school Esmatieye in Najafabad (a district of Isfahan. The city of Shiraz actively supported elementary education by both private and public means. In 1914 one of the most prominent private schools, Madresseh Shoaeye, boasted an enrollment of 150 students (Arasteh 1969). By the early twentieth century there were several schools teaching foreign languages and sciences, including a few for girls. These schools were run by foreign missionaries, private Iranians, and the government. Their function was to educate the children of the elite. During the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1907), a number of reform-minded individuals proposed the establishment of a nationwide, public, primary school system. Progress in opening new schools was steady but slow, and by the end of the Qajar dynasty (1925) there were approximately 3,300 government schools with a total enrollment of about 110,000 students (Arasteh 1969).

Education in the Reza Shah Period (1925-1941)

The Pahlavi Shahs were the rulers of Iran between 1925 and 1979 and they introduced many reforms concerning women's rights. Levels of literacy were also improved and in the highly centralized government elementary education became a state function. The Office of Public Education presented in final form its first elementary educational program for girls in 1925 and a revised plan for boys in 1928 (Zajda 2009: 54).

Table (1): A comparison of the Growth of Elementary School Education in 1925 and 1940

Year	Number of schools	Enrollments	Graduates		Total	Teachers
			Boys	Girls		
1924-25	3,285	108959	1,496	380	1,876	6,089
1939-40	8,281	57,237	10,442	3,367	13,809	13,078
Approximate increase	2.50 times	4 times	7 times	9 times	8 times	2 times

Source: Ministry of Education, *Statistical yearbook*, (Tehran 1940).

A comparison of the educational budget during the 1924-1925 and 1938-39 shows that educational budget in 1938-1939 has had an increase of almost eleven fold, with about 20 percent destined for public education. The steady rise in the educational budget reflected Reza Shah's desire to make education a cornerstone in his new nationalist program. Yet in spite of these efforts, the country did not achieve the goal of compulsory education. The total number of children attending school never exceeded 15 percent of the actual school-age children. However, in quantitative terms alone, the number of children who attended school in 1939-1940 was four times the number enrolled in 1924-1925 (table 1). Since the Reza Shah period (1922-1941), the number of dispatched students increased. During 6 months, 600 students were sent to other countries. 75 percent of them were sent to the France. In 1934, women higher education was confirmed by the government. In this year the Tehran University was established and in 1937, the first group of women in the medicine discipline in the Tehran University was accepted. Despite of these progresses, the illiteracy of women was much extended so that in the census of 1956, 92 percent of Iranian women were illiterate (Zajda 2009: 54).

Education in the period of Second Pahlavi (1941-1979)

Under Reza Shah's successor Mohammad Reza Shah many more significant reforms were introduced. The minimum age at which an education for women and their development began mainly as welfare oriented program in the first Five-Year Plan (1951-56). The central Social Welfare Board (CSWB), set up in 1953, undertook a number of welfare measures through the voluntary sector. The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) organized women to act as focal points at the grass root levels for development of women. The Third, Fourth and other Interim Plans (1961-74) accorded high priority to education of women and introduced measures to improve maternal and child health services, including supplementary feeding for children and nursing mothers, etc. The Fifth Plan (1974-78), saw a shift in the approach for women's development from welfare to development to cope up with several problems of the family and the role of women. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-1985) marked a landmark in the history of women's development by including a separate chapter and adopting a multidisciplinary approach with a three pronged thrust on health, education and employment (Arasteh 1969: 86). Similarly, in the field of education, a number of steps were taken up for promoting women's education and equality in line with the National Policy of education, 1986. There is considerable empowerment in female literacy as it came up to the present rate of 39.19 percent from 8.9 percent in 1951. The enrolment rate of girls in primary schools has also improved from 24.8 percent in 1950-51 to 92.6 percent in 1994-1995. The drop-out rates amongst girls at primary level showed a continuous decline from 62.5 percent in 1980-81 to 37.8 percent in 1994-95. However, the higher decadal growth rate of female literacy (66 percent) as compared to male literacy (43 percent) provides some consolation (Usmani 2004: 78). Elementary schooling in the modern sense did not begin in Iran until the late nineteenth century. Thus, it began later than higher education, and unlike the latter it arose primarily in response to efforts of the urban communities to promote literacy and citizenship. The government assumed full responsibility for it but neglected education in the rural and tribal areas. In the Post-World War II period urbanization and a heightened social consciousness have brought about a greater demand for primary education.

Education after the Islamic Republic of Iran

Following the 1979 Islamic Revolution Iran became an Islamic Republic. After the revolution, large numbers of women entered the civil service and higher education, and in 1996 fourteen women were elected to the Islamic Consultative Assembly. As women's participation in education was so strong before 1979 revolution after

establishing many universities throughout Iran during the pre-revolution era, families continued to encourage education for women even after the revolution. As of late 2006 nearly 70 percent of Iran's science and engineering students are women. Furthermore according to UNESCO world survey, Iran has the highest female to male ratio at primary level of enrollment in the world among sovereign nations, with a girl to boy ratio of 1.22: 1.00(Angove 2007). Women make up 27% of the Iranian labor force, and the percentage of all Iranian women who are economically active has more than doubled from 6.1% in 1986 to 13.7% in 2000. (Year book, 2006 census).

A comparison of the literacy during the 1956 and 1966 shows that in the census of 1966, the literate population has become about three times. The population of literate females during the two censuses has increased more than three times while it is a little more than two times for male. The comparison of the rural and urban literates during two censuses 1956-1966 shows that the gap is wide, so that the number of urban literate women is more than nine times of the rural literate women while this is only a little more than two times for men. In two censuses of 1966-1976 gap has been smaller. In the 1976 the number of literate women has been become about 3 times while this is about 2 times for men. In the urban areas, education of women has shown about 3 times while it is a little more than 5 times for the rural areas. The statistics of related to education of men in rural and urban areas shows that, In 1976 the men literacy in the urban areas has been about 2 times and in the rural areas about 3 times. In 1986, the rate of literacy for women has been more than 2 times while it is 1.5 times for men. Comparison of the statistics of literacy of women in the 1986 census, in the urban and rural areas indicates that increasing in the literacy of women in the urban areas is about 2 times and in the rural areas shows about 3 times while this rate is about one time for urban man and about 2 times for rural men. Increasing of the number of literate women in the 1996 census is more than 5 million while this increasing for men is more than 8 million. In the urban areas increasing for women and men is almost same while, in the rural areas, increasing is 2985000 million for women and 2278 million for men. In the last census, the statistics show that the population of literacy women is about 18.5 million and that of literacy men is about 29 million. The rate of literacy in the urban areas is about 18.5 for women and about 21 million for men. It is about 7 million for women and a little more than 8 million for men (table 2).

Table (2): The literacy population of Iran (Censuses of 1956-2006)

Description	Female	Male	Both sexes
Total Country			
1956 Census	457,000	1,454,000	1,911,000
1966 Census	1,628,000	3,928,000	5,556,000
1976 Census	4,679,000	8,198,000	12,877,000
1986 Census	9,835,000	14,078,000	23,913,000
1996 Census	19,118,000	22,465,000	41,582,000
2006 Census	25,247,000	28,835,000	54,082,000
Urban Areas			
1956 Census	414,000	982,000	1,396,000
1966 Census	1,390,000	2,442,000	3,832,000
1976 Census	3,483,000	5,145,000	8,628,000
1986 Census	6,742,000	8,765,000	15,507,000
1996 Census	12,996,000	14,861,000	27,857,000
2006 Census	18,471,000	20,625,000	39,096,000
Rural Areas			
1956 Census	43,000	471,000	514,000
1966 Censes	238,000	1,485,000	17,23,000
1976 Census	1,196,000	3,053,000	4,249,000
1986 Census	3,084,000	5,287,000	8,371,000
1996 Census	6,069,000	7,565,000	13,661,000
2006 Census	6,756,000	8,183,000	14,939,000

Source: Statistical Center of Iran (censuses 1956 -2006).

Quality of the women education

It is not enough to make education more widely available; the quality of the education also needs to be improved. The indices of the rate of admitted female students in universities and high education centers and female students, kind of university (governmental or private) and courses was used for explanation of the quality of education of admitted women in the Universities and High Education Centers. As the statistics of the tables 3, 4 and 5 shows in the educational year of 1991-1992, the admitted women in the Universities and High Education Centers formed only 29 percent and the share of the Azad University is 41.07 percent (average: 35.03%), in the educational year

of 1996-1997 this rate was 42.67 percent for the governmental universities and centers and 44.30 percent for the Azad University (average: 43.48%).

In the educational year of 2001-2002, admitted women formed a little more than half of the whole of the both sexes in the both parts (average: 51%), this rate reached to 53.94 percent for the governmental universities and centers and 51.01 percent for the Azad University (average: 52.47%), in the educational year of 2003-2004. The rate of admitted women shows a 0.29-percent decrease in the governmental universities and centers and 2.86-percent in the Azad University in the educational year of 2004-2005 and one percent increase in the governmental universities and centers and 6.80 percent in the Azad University, in the educational year 2005-2006. In the educational year 2006-2007, the rate of admitted women with a 5.10-percent decrease, reaches to 49.50 percent and in the educational year 2007-2008 still shows a descending trend and this rate fall to 42.93 percent in the whole of the Iranian universities(tables 3,4, 5).

Table (3): Admitted persons in the Universities and High Education Centers by Sex

Education Year	Female	Male	Both Sexes
1991-1992	20668 (28.9%)	50765(71.1%)	71433(100%)
1996-1997	67456 (42.67%)	90600(57.33%)	158056(100%)
2001-2002	106437 (51.91%)	98589(48.09%)	205026(100%)
2003-2004	141002 (53.94%)	120399(46.06%)	261401(100%)
2004-2005	142967(53.65%)	123503(46.35%)	266470(100%)
2005-2006	185857(54.60%)	154699(45.40%)	340526(100%)
2006-2007	117483(49.50%)	119840 (50.50%)	237323(100%)
2007-2008	276517(42.30%)	379280(57.70%)	655797(100%)

Source: Ministry of sciences research and technology. Research and Planning Association of High Education

Table (4): Admitted persons in the Islamic Azad University by Sex

Education Year	Female	Male	Both Sexes
1991-1992	30673(41.07%)	44009(58.13%)	74682(100%)
1996-1997	65900(44.30%)	82845(55.70%)	148745(100%)
2001-2002	86569(50.09%)	86241(49.91%)	172810(100%)
2002-2003	94845(52.11%)	87164(47.89%)	182009(100%)
2003-2004	131501(51.01%)	126292(50.99%)	257793(100%)
2004-2005	143312(48.15%)	154325(51.85%)	297637(100%)
2005-2006	204449(54.95%)	167575(55.05%)	372024(100%)

Source: Islamic Azad University. Administration of Information and Communication Technology

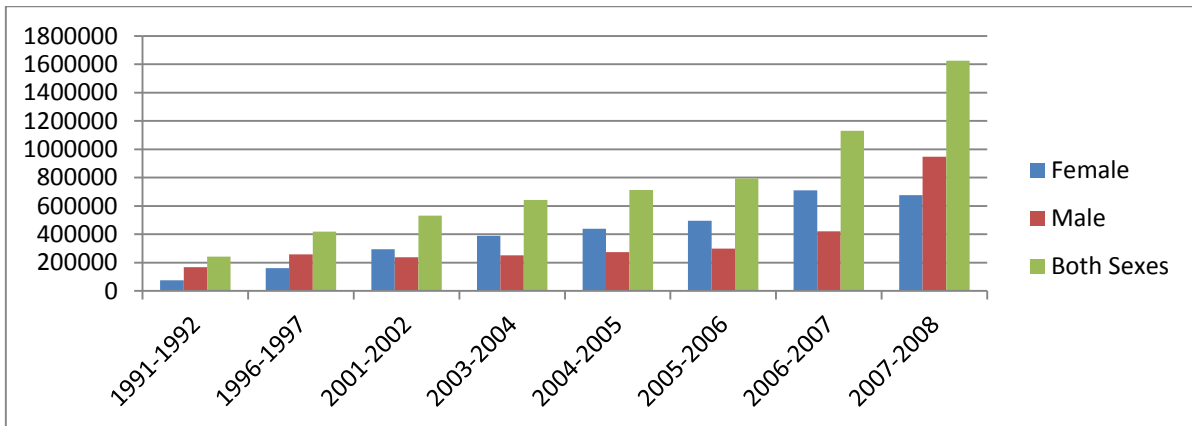
Table (5): Students by kind of university (2007-2008)

University	Female	Male	Both Sexes
Governmental	888176(42.50%)	1201107(57.50%)	2089283(100%)
Islamic Azad	567950(43.60%)	734619(56.40%)	1302569(100%)
Total	1456126(42.93%)	1935726(57.04%)	3391852(100%)

Source: Islamic Azad University. Administration of Information and Communication Technology & Ministry of sciences research and technology, Research and Planning Association of High Education

Distribution of statistics of undergraduates in governmental universities on the figure of 1 demonstrate that the rate of females of undergraduate has shown the rising trend between years of 1991-2006 and the descending trend since 2006 to 2008. Since 2001 to 2007 the rate of female undergraduates is much more than that of male undergraduates but in the educational year of 2007-2008 again the trend is descending (figure 1).

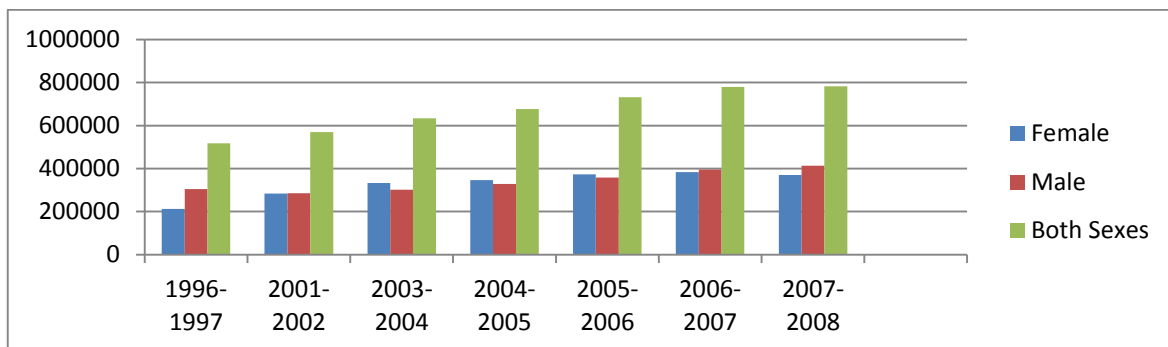
Figure (1): Undergraduates in governmental universities by Sex



Source: Ministry of sciences research and technology. Research and Planning Association of High Education

In the Azad University the situation is different. Although in this university, the rate of the male is more than that of female between 1996-2002 but the different of the gap is small. Since 2003 to 2006 the rate of females is more than that of male and still the gap is very small. Like the governmental universities, in the Azad University a decrease in the rate of female is observed. Comparison of the rates in two groups of universities indicates that in the governmental universities the gender gap has been become big since 2005 while this gap in the Azad University is much small (figure of 2).

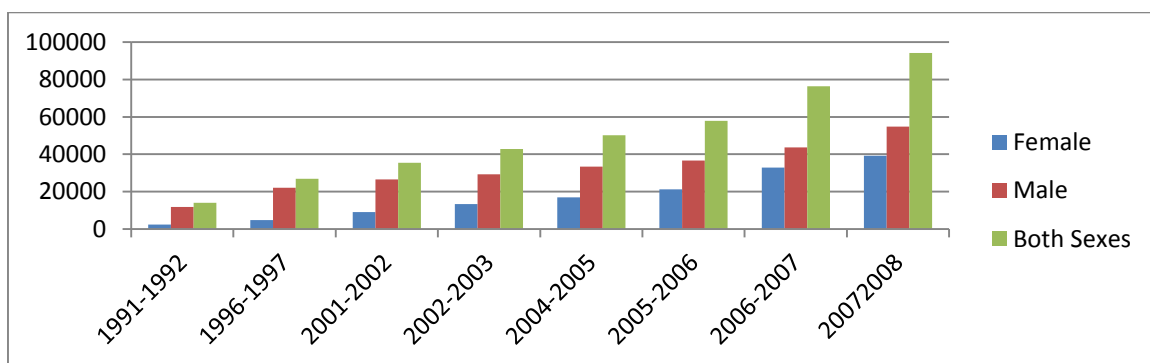
Figure (2): undergraduates in Azad University by Sex



Source: Islamic Azad University. Administration of Information and Communication Technology

The data of master course in the governmental universities shows that although since 1991 to 2008 the trend is rising for both sexes but from 1991 to 2005 the rate of female is less than half of that of males. In 2006-2007 the gender gap has been become a little small but in 2007-2008 again becomes wide (figure 3).

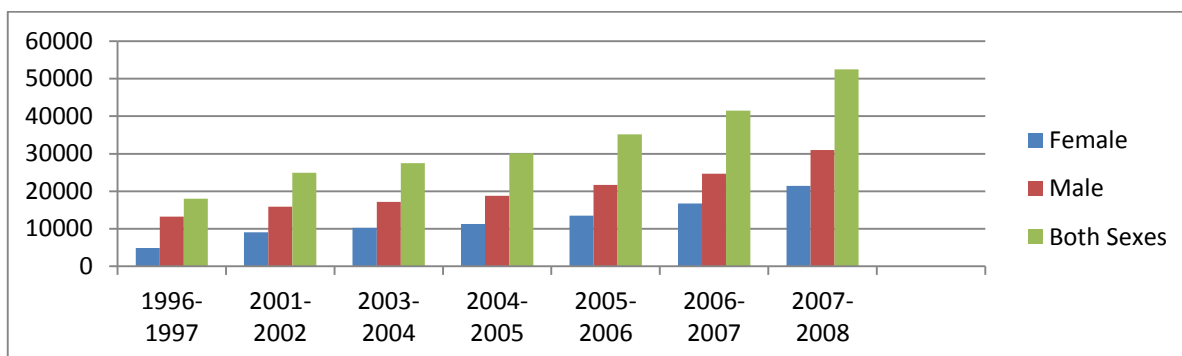
Figure (3): Master Course Students in governmental universities by Sex



Source: Ministry of sciences research and technology. Research and Planning Association of High Education

In the Azad University, the change trend is like the governmental universities too. In this university, except in 1996-1997, the gender gap is same for all the years and in the benefit of the males (figure 4).

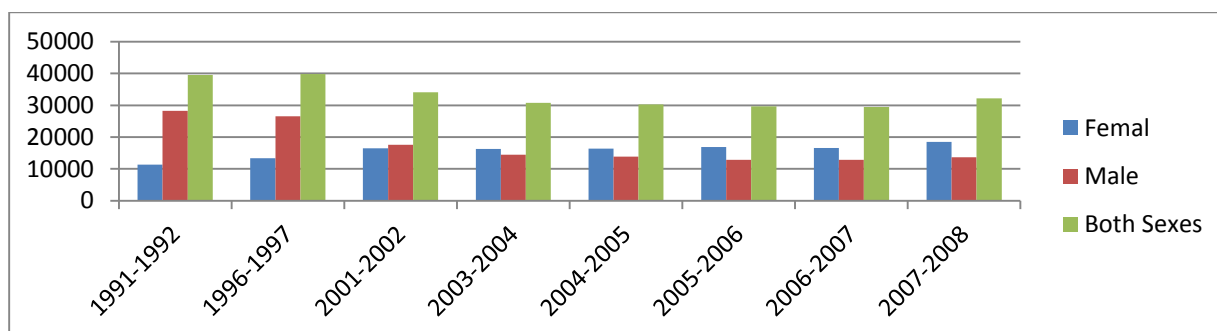
Figure (4): Master Courses Students in Azad University by Sex



Source: Islamic Azad University. Administration of Information and Communication Technology

The figure 5 shows that whole the students in the professional doctoral courses in the governmental universities have decreased since 1991 to 2007 and in 2008 the trend has been rising. Between the years of 1991 and 1996 the rate of females in the professional doctoral courses is less than half of that of males. Although in 2001-2002 the rate of females is less than the rate of males but the gender gap is much small. Since 2003 to now the rate of females in the professional doctoral courses has outdistanced and gender gap has shown a rising trend in the benefit of females (figure 5).

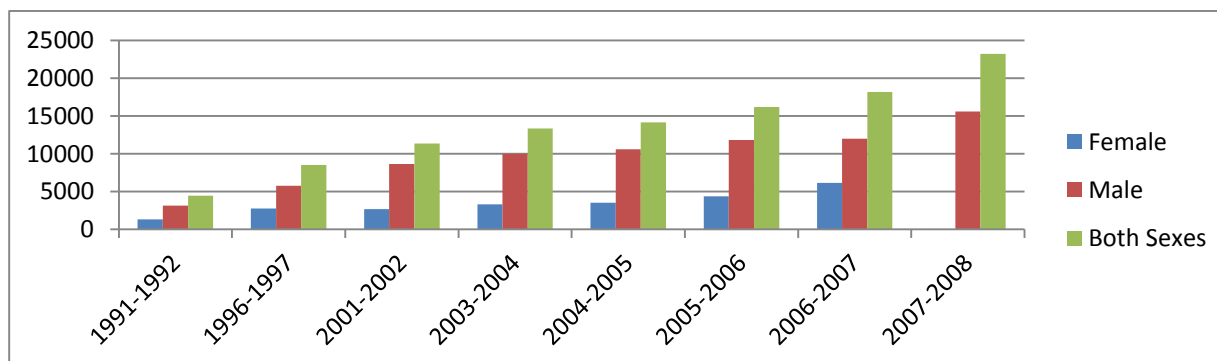
Figure (5): Professional Doctoral Students in governmental universities by Sex



Source: Ministry of sciences research and technology. Research and Planning Association of High Education

As the figure 6 demonstrates, the rate of female in the PhD courses of the governmental universities is less than half of the rate of male since 1991 to 2007 and in the 2008 has severely decreased and reaches to less than 100 people.

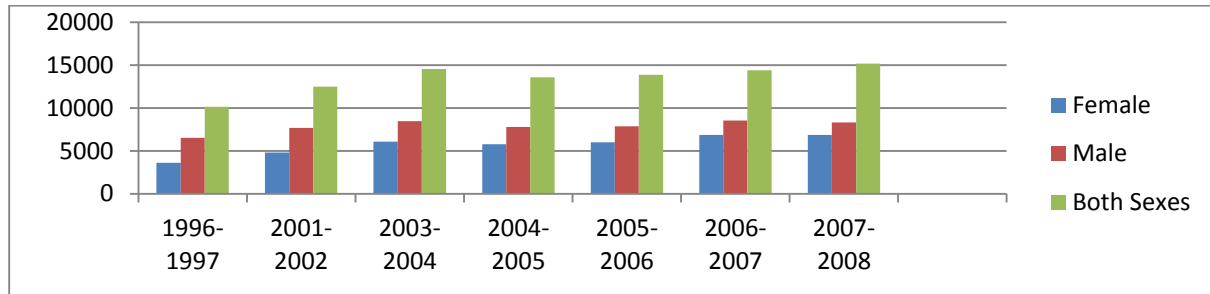
Figure (6): PhD Students in governmental universities by Sex



Source: Ministry of sciences research and technology. Research and Planning Association of High Education

The statistics of the figure 7 shows the rate of females and males in the PhD and Professional Doctoral courses in the Azad University (1996-2008). Since 1996 to 2008 the rate of males is more than females and the females form more than half of males. Between 1996 and 2004 this rate has shown rising trend but in the 2005-2005 the trend has been descending. Again it has a rising trend to 2007 and then it is decreasing.

Figure (7): PhD and Professional Doctoral Students in the Azad University by Sex



Source: Islamic Azad University. Administration of Information and Communication Technology

Discussion and Conclusion

Everybody has the right to education, which has been recognized since the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) in 1948. The right to free and compulsory primary education, without discrimination and of good quality, has been reaffirmed in all major international human rights conventions. The right of girls to education is one of the most critical of all rights – because education plays an important role in enabling girls and women to secure other rights. Cultural and traditional values stand between girls and their prospects for education. The achievement of girls' right to education can address some of societies' deeply rooted inequalities, which condemn millions of girls to a life without quality education and, therefore, also all too often to a life of missed opportunities. With a review of the trend of progress of the education in Iran can propose. In the Qajar period, mostly Naser A-din Shah period and after the establishment of Dar Al-fonoon School by Amirkabir, the government didn't like to extend the education. Because, the awareness went up by the education, the intellectual classes formed and could be a stimulus of revolutionary thoughts. This suspicion was an obstacle to progress of education and establishment of the new schools. Fanatic clerics had high share in this back warded. For them, the establishment of the school in the new method was opposite of religion and main cause the problem in the society. They attacked to the new school and plundered them. In the case of girls, public culture rejected education of girls. In the public belief, not only education of girls was not necessary but it was a harmful for them, family and society. Under a severely patriarchal culture the female had no rights and the family men made decision for them. For them with a traditional view, an ideal society was one in which women were confined to the home, where they performed the various domestic tasks associated with managing a household and rearing children. Early marriage was very important for families with the average marrying age for girls much low. Young girls were brought up in anticipation of marriage and the wedding became the most important event in their life. For them it was the only opportunity to see another house beyond their four walls. So they were happy about it.

In the Pahlavi regime the cultural and socioeconomic situation was same but the thought of Reza Shah and his son about women was different of the Qajar Shahs. During the Pahlavi era the government was the main promoter of change in traditional attitudes toward sex segregation. It sought to discourage veiling of women at official functions and encouraged mixed participation in a variety of public gatherings. Among the ideas imported into Iran from the West was the notion that women should participate in the public sphere. The Pahlavi government encouraged women to get as much education as possible and to participate in the labor force at all levels. After 1936, when Reza Shah banned the chador, veiling came to be perceived among the minority of elite and secular middle-class women as a symbol of oppression. Before the Islamic Revolution, Iranian society was already polarized between the traditionally minded majority and a minority of involved women who were dedicated to improving the status of women. As early as 1932, Iranian women held a meeting of the Oriental Feminine Congress in Tehran at which they called for the right of women to vote, compulsory education for both boys and girls, equal salaries for men and women, and an end to polygyny. In 1963 women were given the right to vote and to hold public office.

In spite of the efforts of first Pahlavi, the country did not achieve the goal of compulsory education. The traditional social structure was so strong and the power of landlords so great that education remained concentrated in urban areas, especially in the middle class. Geographical factors, the lack of transportation and the economic status of

the country also curtailed rural education. The total number of children attending school never exceeded 15 percent of the actual school-age children. The traditional social structure was so strong and the power of landlords so great that education remained concentrated in urban areas, especially in the middle class. Geographical factors, the lack of transportation and the economic status of the country also curtailed rural education. Patriarchal culture still governed and considered the females in home and in service of the husband and the children. With this approach the literacy of women was very slow. In the second Pahlavi women's education was one of the major issues for the government. It was because of the fact the educated women played a very significant role in overall development and progress of country. Women held a prominent position in the Iran society as well as over the world. However, women were denied opportunities and had to suffer hegemonic patriarchal culture. In the traditional view, an ideal society was one in which women were confined to the home, where they performed the various domestic tasks associated with managing a household and rearing children. Men worked in the public sphere, that is, in the fields, factories, bazaars, and offices. Deviations from this ideal, especially in the case of women, tended to reflect adversely upon the reputation of the family. The strength of these traditional attitudes was reflected in the public education system, which maintained separate schools for boys and girls from the elementary through the secondary levels. The religious parents believed that once girls reach puberty they should not interact with non-relative males and should be prepared for an obedient married life. Often these parents decided not to send their daughters to secondary schools, specifically in the areas lacking sufficient number of separate education schools.

In the last decade of second Pahlavi, the traditional attitudes on the segregation of women clashed sharply with the views and customs of the secularized upper and middle classes, especially those in Tehran. Mixed gatherings, both public and private, were the norm. Thus, this unjustifiable oppression had resulted into a movement that fought to achieve the equal status of women all over the world. During the early 1970s, efforts were made to improve the educational system by updating school curriculum, introducing modern textbooks, and training more efficient teachers. Despite attempts of the government for to promote of women education, women and girls received less education than men. As the statistics of three censuses shows, the rate of literacy of women is 23.92%, 29.33% and 36.33%. Thus, the trend of progress is slow. In 1976 census only about one out of three the women was literate. This was due to the set religious and social norms and poverty especially in rural regions. The The difference can be seen in higher education levels more than public education. Women were active participants in the revolution that toppled the shah. Most activists were professional women of the secular middle classes, from among whom political antagonists to the regime had long been recruited. More significant, however, were the large numbers of lower class women in the cities who participated in street demonstrations during the latter half of 1978 and early 1979. Following the revolution, the status of women changed. The main social group to inherit political power valued most highly the traditional role of women in a segregated society. Accordingly, laws were enacted to restrict the role of women in public life; these laws affected primarily women of the secularized middle and upper classes. The 1979 revolution continued the country's emphasis on education. The most important change was the islamization the education system. All students were segregated by sex. In 1980, the Cultural Revolution Committee was formed to oversee of Islamic values in education. The Center for Textbooks produced 3,000 new college-level textbooks reflecting Islamic views by 1983. Teaching materials based on Islam were introduced into the primary grades within six months of the revolution. The country's 16 universities were closed after the 1979 revolution and were then reopened gradually between 1982 and 1983 under Islamic supervision and with Islamic curricula. In spite of legal limitation for accepting of women in some disciplines of universities, the opportunities for women education and their involvement in higher education have grown exponentially after the revolution.

Extension of the number of governmental universities, increase the capacity of the universities , especially with the establishment of Islamic Aazad University with about 200 branches in Iran and other countries from one side and the increase in the rate of unemployment and other factors, on the other hand, increased the demand for higher education by youth people. Women weren't except of this process. High unemployment rate, declining the rate of marriage, need to a higher education for finding a job or better job, trying for achievement to an upper social status and change of the public attitude to women education as a positive point, push the females to the universities. Since 1991, we see an upward growth in the rate of women students in universities but this increase is controversial. As we showed on the before pages by figures, this increase has been only in undergraduate disciplines and master courses in Islamic Azad University. In the doctoral course the number of women students was under 100 people in governmental universities, in 2008. The women students' rate after 2005 has notably declined. Moreover, the growth has happened in disciplines of human sciences. This indicates that the women are vulnerable in higher education and every moment family problems can stop their study.

Women have outnumbered men in the entering classes of universities two to one for the last several years, but when they graduate they are one-third less likely to work as men, and even lower when they marry and have children. In spite of the growth of the rate of educated women, the rate of women employment is still low (13%,

in the last census). One of the problems that the educated women are facing is maladjustment of the academic disciplines and job market needs. In result, education of women doesn't change social structures and to be masculine of job market. The most of family law is in benefit of male. Continuing of study a married woman is legally in the hands of her husband and also to have a job. So, in a country that all the advantages legally belong to men, for a married woman the education can only increase her social and public awareness. The results of this analyze discuss some new questions and the hypothesis that researcher of women have to investigate on them. Some these questions are: what is the main problem in low employment of women in Iran? How can they solve this problem? How can Iranian women achieve the equal rights to men in the all arenas? How can the change their situation?

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