



## Political Developments of Iranian Women from the 7<sup>th</sup> Century to the Pahlawi Era's End

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### Abstract

As an ephemeral society, contemporary Iranian society is characterized by the upheaval of business, ideas, and the general ceremonial of it. In addition to cultural, social, and economic structures, political structures are a component of society and range from conventional authority to logical power. Although Iranian women's status has changed qualitatively in the meantime, they have not attained a respectable role in political developments when compared to women in the West. The old-fashioned cultural, social, and political structures and attitudes of the previous century are to blame for women's isolation from political advancements and the limited role they can play in them. Thus, the

purpose of this study is to examine the topic of women as one of the most significant human and social phenomena in the shape of a certain cultural system and during particular and unique societal eras. This historical study will discuss the role of women in political trends and developments from the seventh century to the Pahlawi era utilizing historical texts and surviving data.

**Keywords:** Women, Political Developments, Seventh Century, Pahlawi Era.

### \* Introduction

One of the most significant outcomes of modernity and advancement is the introduction of women into politics, not just in Iran but globally. However, the historical exclusion of women from politics persists in the political sphere.

Women's participation in politics in the modern era, as well as the shift in social and political conduct and behavior and their place within the social structure, are seen as remarkable. Iranian women have undoubtedly participated in this process but their level and nature of political and social engagement differs from that of women in developed nations.

Studying how women's lives have changed and evolved is essential to understanding this problem. Examining Iran's past and researching historical topics and events from an Islamic perspective will help us better understand today's difficulties. Iran is geographically situated in an area of the world that is frequently threatened and attacked by various ethnic groups, including Turks, Arabs, and Tatars. Iran's history attests to this, which has resulted in political instability and the breakdown of the political system as well as the social, legal, and economic structures. The same has happened to political engagement, which is the objective component of social participation. The deserving standing of women in the realm of political involvement has been established during this inquiry.

The political involvement of women throughout a certain era of

Iranian history (the 7<sup>th</sup> century to the Pahlawi era) is taken into consideration in this sociological research because of the period's unique significance; in other words, the era was studied. This method of study provides a fuller image of women's political activity throughout that period while also shedding light on the less well-known aspects of their political lives. The past can serve as a guide to the present and the future.

#### **\* The Problem of the Study**

The investigation and analysis of women's social life and how they entered the political sphere is considered a vital topic in historical studies. Yet, due to the historical silence and historical aspects of this topic, it takes up a significant portion of the nation's history despite women's political activities being obscured and concealed behind a veil of mystery and prejudice. This means that they were not documented in history books. Understanding history is essential to modern progress so society can only comprehend this issue by following the steep historical path and getting to know the men and women who were instrumental in their lives to write history with all passion. Therefore, clarifying the role of women in political participation in this study and acknowledging it is the

main motivation for this investigation.

**First.** Because the historical era covered in this study, particularly certain aspects of it, like the Conditional Revolution, which is seen as a political movement, has national and popular dimensions and influences the social lives of all socioeconomic strata, particularly Iranian women.

**Second.** The historical relevance of the past can help explain why many ideas, customs, the quest for power, limitations, wants, and the image of women that was boldly disregarded by society have persisted.

Thus, the following are the primary questions this study seeks to address: -

1- Did women's involvement in Iranian politics occur during a particular era of the country's history? This implies that the revolution was subject to certain conditions.

2- Are women's political activities independent of the government or are they more shaped in the form of institutions and activities affiliated with the government?

3- How did Iran's social and political movements turn out, and what was the position of women in society?

In light of these inquiries, the following theories will be investigated: -

1- That women played a smaller role in political developments than males did.

2- Women played a bigger role in political advancements during the Conditional Revolution than they did during other eras of Iranian history.

3- Has the validity and role of the women's movement become more independent from the government and the male viewpoint than it was in the past?

#### \* **Theoretical Framework of the Study (Social Participation Theories)**

As previously stated, social scientists such as Michael Ross define participation as an individual's engagement in different degrees of political system action, from non-participation to securing an official post. (Sabouri, 1377: 123) Alberkrass, on the other hand, believes that when someone participates in a group setting, it means that they are motivating someone else to support the group's objectives and share in its accountability. (Alberkrass, trans. Boyan, 1376: 282)

Three levels of analysis can be used for political participation: -

**1- Simple level:** At this level, the partial forces and motivations of those taking part are described. Individuals' social and economic

standing, as well as their psychological and personal traits, can be displayed in this area. Individuals' status is influenced by some factors. The resources available to people determine their level of participation. These resources may include material resources, psychological and privacy incentives for women, and scientific and awareness resources (Piran, 371: 1747)

**2- The intermediate level:** This level connects the micro and macro levels and consists of the institutions, groups, and places that give society its structure. It connects experience and wisdom (Piran, 1371: 48) At this stage, participants, leaders, and institution officials engage in discussion and debate as well as the ultimate division and analysis of the nature of political institutions and resources and how they are allocated among activists (Musafa, 1375: 29)

**3- The general level:** Regional activities are positioned at this level, which also examines the participating environmental structure and its date of birth and beyond (Piran, 1371: 49)

**\* Factors Influencing Women's Involvement in Society**

**1- The partial factor:** Women's involvement is crucial to their "power," but this term is now used to suggest selfishness because power has always been associated with men.

As a result, they focused on the significance of the word "capable" and its relationship to political engagement. In fact, political engagement has improved women's understanding of social life and their ability to contribute to society. While it is true that granting women the right to vote is not crucial and could result in legal equality or the exclusion of women from regional elections, women's participation in social life provides them with fresh perspectives and opportunities. "Compared to other women, women who work and engage in politics possess more power and ability" (Musafa, 1375:64)

According to this collection of beliefs, several variables influence women's political participation, including early socialization in children's lives, which holds that men should handle political labor and women should take care of the children's needs, such as feeding and protecting them. The other factor is social and economic status; women have lower levels of education and training than men do, and since political participation and education and training are positively correlated, the gap between the two can have an impact on political participation because it is based on social awareness and analysis, and for

women, awareness is a form of participation. Women's employment is another significant aspect that contributes to their increased participation (Sabel, 1976)

**2- The overall factor:** One of the roles of the system of political involvement in society is to facilitate women's political participation. Women's involvement is also a topic of discussion at the general level and specifically between women's political engagement and the political system in a society where men are not allowed to engage in political work. It is also possible to argue that structural issues may be the cause of micro-level elements about work and job possibilities, civic education, and education. Since employment reduces women's opportunities, the political system's distribution in the age of education and training serves to use it as a structural factor. However, in certain systems, the elite's stance on the general level of women's political participation can play a significant role, and their stances can differ. If the elite of governmental and economic institutions—the two centers of power in society—agree on the existence of women and their involvement in life and political developments, then the disagreements over the exclusion of

women from political affairs will have both positive and negative effects.

**3- The legal system** is the final component since political participation may vary as a result of the disparity in legal opportunities. Some rules that differentiate between men's and women's political participation are significant. Ultimately, it may be concluded that a combination of partial-level human characteristics and a set of structural elements of the political system contribute to the disparity in how men and women participate in political activities (Musafa, 1375: 63)

#### **\* Types of Women's Political and Social Participation**

Even at the level of formal government institutions, women's participation is restricted due to their historical lack of involvement in politics. It is possible to study women's political engagement at the level of the people and their elites because of the disparities among women in terms of illiteracy, knowledge, awareness, etc.

**1- "Participation at the grassroots level"** At the grassroots level, women can participate in politics in the following ways: -

A- One way that women can participate at the grassroots level is

by using their right to vote and participating in elections.

B. Taking part in political parties and groups.

C- Taking part in social activities such as humanitarian, environmental, and war movements.

**2- "Elite Participation"** Women with a high degree of education, specialized knowledge, and social interest and commitment typically exhibit this level of political activity.

One of the most significant aspects of this degree of participation is the existence of this societal decision-making status, which is as follows: -

A- Group of the People's Assembly's female representatives.

B- Take part in the four tiers of national administrative services: "Minister, Deputy Minister, Director General, and Heads of Departments" as well as the political executive power.

C: "Ministry employees" who take part in governmental and administrative services.

D- The aforementioned forms of women's political activity, such as participation in international services and special international exhibitions (Mustafa,1375: 66-67)

The status of women and their contribution to the political events in Iran during that period will be discussed in three distinct sections

based on these introductions and the study topic: The status of women during the Timurid, Turkish, "Aq Qoyunluha," Safavid, and Zand eras is briefly discussed in the first section. The Qajar and Pahlavi eras are covered in the second and third sections, respectively.

### **Section One**

#### **\* The Status of Women and Their Contribution to Timurid-Era Political Developments**

During the Timurid era, women, especially non-Muslim women, enjoyed the rights and privileges of soldiers, as they fought alongside men. In contrast, Timurid women did not behave in the same way as Muslim women, and their customs and behaviors were more like those of Mongol women in terms of their high status and pride in themselves. The women of the Timurid harem did not interfere in the affairs of the country, and if they did occasionally succeed in intervening, King Timur would punish them.

Regarding women in the Turkish era of "Aq Qoyunluha," while during the Timurid era, they were not allowed to appear in public or even attend royal meetings or other gatherings with men, during the Iranian era of "Aq Qoyunluha," women once again assumed the role of hiding from men; in fact, their

public presence was restricted to extremely private matters (Radandi, 1371:368)

As for women in the Safavid era: they used to wear the veil and put the veil on their heads and faces, despite the presence of some women who rode horses, and were skilled at archery and fencing, but the life of the majority was limited to the usual, which is eating, sleeping and giving birth, and this was not limited to ordinary women only, but even the women of “King Abbas” had to follow this general rule during the Safavid era, perhaps “King Abbas II” was a bit more open and did not act with such cruelty, so some of the wives of ministers and nobles were seen leaving their homes, which they rarely left, and some women from other classes of society were also seen.

Regarding women in the Zand era, it became evident that they were heading in the opposite direction of their inherent and natural rights. Like women in the other three eras, the Zand lady was subject to numerous constraints in addition to participating in issues. Ultimately, women reached that perilous point where they were denied all of their rights, except certain women who served as ministers, kings, or other

government officials (Philosophical, 1367: 231- 232)

## **Section Two**

### **\* The Position of Women During the Qajar Era**

The end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, or the middle of the 12<sup>th</sup> century AH, saw the fall of the Zand dynasty and the founding of the Qajar Sultanate by King Muhammad Khan, marking the beginning of the Qajar era. During the Qajar era, women started to break limitations and progress toward personal and social freedom. Unlike during the Safavid era, there was no cruelty or fanaticism because Europeans and Iranians were allowed to travel abroad, and the progressive Iranian people could have been inspired by women's freedom. Although the old prejudices and restrictions were lessened, women still had a long way to go to prove their existence as independent human beings in society. This is because, according to the history of the Qajar dynasty, the kitchen and the corner of the house were the best places for women to be, and women were still strictly required to wear the veil and enter and exit the street. It was considered a grave mistake to not wear the veil during this time (Rawandi, 1371: 713- 715)

Like many customs and traits of earlier times, Qajar society's living

conditions were passed down, and women, who made up half of the population, were still not given access to adequate education and training. Since women play a crucial role in establishing the family institution, which is the foundation of society and the primary factor that determines its rise or fall, their ignorance and lack of involvement in social and political activities had a detrimental impact on society (Moatadhed, 1379: 155-156) Reciting the Qur'an and taking part in the month of Muharram mourning ceremonies were the most active forms of women's social presence throughout the Qajar dynasty.

When examining the available sources, the problem of women's active participation solely at these religious events is brought up over and time again. In addition to the customary cover and ethical considerations, women's social engagement at these events contributed to the division of men and women. It's fascinating to learn that some entertainment venues and gardens were exclusively for ladies, and males were not permitted to visit. Women's presence in social scenes can occasionally extend beyond their physical interaction with society; for example, we may encounter women who have influenced their husbands

and children, contributed to political and social trends of their era, or even joined political organizations (Nahid, 1360: 171)

Women did not play a major role in the social structure of that time, and as previously stated, even the city's wealthy women avoided employment and social events, unless they were demonstrating their strength at councils and religious festivals where women were permitted to attend. Generally speaking, it can be claimed that Iranian women of the Qajar era, including those from the wealthy classes, lacked an independent legal and social personality and lived in a society characterized by ignorance, illiteracy, cultural backwardness, social isolation, and intellectual and sexual investment (Natak, 1356: 158)

An examination of women's participation in significant Qajar-era movements: -

Women's writing and participation in politics and society have been impacted by the emergence of numerous movements in recent years.

#### **\* The first movement**

Women's Roles and Babism, several social and intellectual groups calling for freedom and reform arose in the first half of the nineteenth century as a result of economic and

social upheaval. The concern for rights was arguably one of the most significant markers of these movements. The Shaiykhi and Babi faiths contributed to women's advancement in society.

Sheikh Ahmad Al-Isa'i, one of the Karbala intellectuals, established the Shaiykhi sect, which combined Shiite religion with Greek philosophy. Many individuals, particularly women, were drawn to this movement because the group that rebelled against the Qajar monarchy sought to elevate the social standing of the populace and end discrimination against women. This movement campaigned for changes to the hijab, women's involvement in social activities, and the abolition of gender discrimination since it was a part of the push to improve the appalling social and economic situation. Women with less social rights joined this movement more than previously, even after the leaders died until they heroically rebelled against the government and were slain (Mustafa: 1375, 48)

The fatwa banning tobacco was the second movement. In certain periods of Iran's history, women were involved in politics behind the scenes. The fatwa banning tobacco is a good illustration of the part they played. According to historians, in

1267 AH, an English corporation named "Talbot" was given a monopoly on the production and sale of tobacco. The populace protested, and ultimately "Ayatollah Mirza Hassan Shirazi" issued a fatwa banning the practice. This served as an overview of the nation's political and social changes and advancements. When women broke the "narghileh" in King Nasser Al-Din's palace to enforce the fatwa banning tobacco, this number rose. Women wrote the most exquisite heroic stands during this demonstration. The Constitutional Revolution in 1284 AH began with this protest, in which ladies wrote the most exquisite heroic stances. Participants in the campaign to outlaw tobacco in Tehran were not limited to women. Instead, women started to labor and rebel in significant numbers. All of these factors suggest that the women of the Qajar era were unwilling to take part in the events of that time rather than being illiterate and careless.

The role and position of women's freedom of action, particularly in the social sphere, may be seen by examining the two primary movements of the Qajar era. Indeed, several intellectual movements emerged during the end of the Qajar dynasty, and their shared

interest in women's rights and gender equality was one of their commonalities. The women's movement persisted despite all the social, traditional, and customary constraints, regardless of the personal penalties meted out to certain women (Timuri, 1358: 105, 154)

Women's participation in the political movement "Al-Dustour": One of the most turbulent times in contemporary history is thought to have been the first few decades of the twentieth century. King Modhaffar Al-Din concluded the fourth year of his rule at the start of this decade, and he contributed to the improvement of Iran's circumstances by giving Russia and England several privileges. It contributed to the end of the absolute monarchy and the beginning of the constitutional monarchy era despite numerous objections, in addition to some of the previously mentioned problems, such as the actions of the Tehran ruler in barring certain businessmen from conducting business in Tehran, which were detailed in history books. Women played a crucial role in the aforementioned movement because, even though the aforementioned crises were not exclusively a female issue, they gave their all to the cause and worked with men to establish a constitutional government and an

elected council of representatives. The issue was resolved when King Mudhaffar Al-Din surrendered on May 14, 1285 AH. After the constitutional law was ratified and the council was established, women took an unusual role in founding the National Bank, also known as "Bank Melli." To raise further funds, ladies displayed their gold jewelry (Yusufian, 1377: 11)

The Council also released the Women's Request the same year, requesting official backing for women's social engagement and education. The Council retorted that women only needed a minimal education to manage the home, carry children, and bear children and that men had the right to participate in political activities (Yusufian, 1377: 15-16).

Unfortunately, women's lives were unaffected by the Constitutional Success Movement's realization that they are half of society and may play a significant role in the advancement and salvation of the nation. They were denied the right to vote by the women's election law, which acknowledged them as criminals and deranged. However, the law's conceptual foundation was people's political engagement, and it was impossible to deny women the ability to influence national affairs and

defend their exclusion from politics using this justification. However, it was declared that women would not be allowed to represent the people in parliament after the law denying them the ability to vote was passed. Iranians were shocked by this edict, particularly ladies, and their demands were turned down (Nahid, 1360: 78)

The impact of the Constitutional Revolution on Iranian women's society was announced less than four years after the ruling decrees. Women's publications were published, national schools for girls were established, and the activities of women's political and social organizations were no longer secret, but rather appeared in the open. Women of this era walked side by side with men in a path that was later known as the "social movement", and was classified by sociologists as "the first spark of the women's movement" in Iran. News and reports about women's activities were made with the help of some newspapers and publications such as (Habel Matin, Yaran No, Nedaye Vatan, and Musavat).

Just four years after the decree was passed, women took over the media and started using print media to educate both men and women. Mrs. "Kahal Hamedani" was in charge of the first women's magazine

in history, "Danish." Political and economic pressures caused "Danish" magazine to cease publication after just one year, and its thirty-first issue was canceled. Despite this, women's associations continued to operate, hold weekly meetings, broadcast statements, and send critical letters to parliament, and the women's movement continued to function despite the lack of a dedicated women's magazine. The second magazine to support women's organizations, particularly the "National Drugs" organization, which at the time had very successful women's activities on political and economic issues like banning foreign goods, forming the National Bank, monitoring the People's Assembly, and drafting the constitution, was "Shokoufeh" magazine, which was founded two years after "Danish" magazine was suspended. Not only is women's culture growing.

By 1289 AH, the number of girls' schools had grown to 50 thanks to the efforts of the press and female journalists (Nahid, 1360: 81). The second Iranian women's magazine to publish information on the state of girls' schools, "Shokoufeh" urged intellectuals to assist women and girls in educating themselves on all matters. "Maryam Amid Sanayi" This woman was among the National

Assembly's first row of critics, and Maryam followed up on issues like the Ministry of Health and girls' education. Her writings urged adherence to religious laws, particularly those about women's hijabs. The six-year-old "Shokoufeh" magazine ceased operations due to the passing of its responsible director, but the activists persisted in calling for changes to the nation's constitution...

The conservatives opposed to this scenario started to take action at this point. However, it became challenging to silence and overthrow women's institutions after 14 months of the political revolution. The Women's Union took action to make it apparent to the Council that the male representatives were not acting seriously or practically, which ran counter to the fundamental objectives of the Constitution. In addition, they called for the resignation of the representatives and the handover of the nation's affairs to women for 40 days. During that time, they wanted to elect new ministers and representatives, create a new national agenda, and reform the nation by instituting social welfare, providing food for the hungry, and eradicating selfishness. The women offered remedies to demonstrate the validity of their critique, including focusing

on the law's formulation, organizing police duties, and attempting to select governors from among the capable ministers (Namazi Khawah, 1383: 49)

Women were writing to the council and criticizing it, and the women's fight against the government became so real that one of the council's representatives purchased a ticket to the "Ittihadiya Ghaybi Zanaan" concert. This group was obscured because of its audacity in advocating for a coup through feminist political proposals! Some participants questioned whether the establishment of such societies is by Islamic law, and the council's general session started with objections to the women's association's extension of its operations.

Reformist Majlis representative "Taqeezadeh" was the only one to defend women's political activity, stating that there is no religious ban or prohibition on the activities of women's clubs and parties.

"It is time to end the Majlis' discussions about women, according to the Sharia women can form such organizations," the Tehran Friday prayer leader said in his sermon after the deputies' debate about women's associations reached a breaking point. He also urged the deputies to

stop talking in this manner. Women's association movements persisted in their criticism of the parliament and the administration (Namazi Khawah, 1383: 50)

### **\* Women's Roles Throughout the Second Political Era**

The status of female press activists was more active during the second phase. Women's publications flooded in, and women's political struggle in the cities became public to the extent that the magazine "Habel Al-Mateen" wrote a report on the armed protest of women in the cities of Rasht and Tabriz demanding the rewriting of the state constitution "the parliament system" on page 24 of issue 16. This allowed them to make their demands louder through the written media: "right," "law," "what women want," and "women's freedom," which before the revolution were only published in Persian-language publications outside of Iran. According to the article, 22 Tabriz women's bodies were found in men's clothes and were recognized as belonging to the males who were martyred during the washing (Hajj, 1380: 58)

In addition, Isfahan women started publishing "Zan," the first magazine in Iranian journalism history. "Zan" magazine claimed that it was the first publication in history

to be written by a woman writer and thinker. Thanks to the efforts of the thinker "Sedigheh Dowlat Abadi," this magazine was released three years after the second one, "Shokoufeh," ceased publication. The Women's Freedom Association was one of Sedigheh's memberships. Sedigheh Abadi was compelled to travel to Tehran to publish and preserve the language of women due to the frequent threats against her and her family, the harassment and pressures from the males of Isfahan, and other factors. Historians viewed "Zan" magazine as controversial after issue 75 was published in Tehran because it vehemently opposed the British invasion of Iran and played a significant role in revealing the 1919 Anglo-Iranian Treaty, which placed some of the nation's affairs, particularly its military affairs—under the control of the British advisor.

Women's Message, Women's World, Women of Iran, Iranian Elderly Women's Association, Women of the East, Women's Guide, Women's Happiness, Daughters of Iran, and numerous other publications carrying women's names became widely available after this (Namazi Khah, 1383: 52)

The most significant of these women's organizations and

associations are "Makhdarat-e Vatan, Azadi, Women of Vatan Khah, Enghelab-e Zanan and..." in addition to the publications of political organizations that operated from the start of the political revolution to the conclusion of the Pahlavi era. These associations and organizations' primary concerns were the political climate in the nation, the need to increase Iranian women's literacy, and the necessity to secure their rights through parliamentary legislation (Sadr Hashemi, 1364: 275-280)

Therefore, women's political and social lives were significantly impacted by the parliamentary political revolutionary movement. Women enjoyed a new life in this historical era, moving beyond the confines of internal Iranian life. The development and consciousness of women in this movement were greatly influenced by the associations, organizations, schools, magazines, and publications that women founded to accomplish their political and social objectives.

### **Section Three**

#### **\* Women's Position in the Pahlawi Era**

Iran's political events during the women's movement had a significant impact. The topic of women's education, training, and status reform was on the agendas of

numerous political parties. The popular movement that opposed these demands did not end there; rather, it grew more fervent and published scathing essays in international periodicals and newspapers both inside and outside of Iran that defended women's rights and condemned the oppressive conditions that governed them. Those who believed that the best way to advance was to give up traditional culture and embrace Western civilization took on delicate roles in crucial positions within the nation after King Reza Khan came to power. Senior officials were continuously considering the new policy in administrative, social, economic, and cultural contexts. As a result of this circumstance, the army was revitalized based on national values and the Western educational system replaced the traditional one (Esnad-e Melli Iran, 1371:10)

Higher education also started this process at the start of this time, as there was a growing desire to create elementary and secondary schools for girls in all of the nation's cities and to implement modern policies. Many girls traveled to Europe in 1309 AH to pursue further education. Additionally, the nation saw the opening of one university after another, and female students started

enrolling in various disciplines (Ansaf Pour, 1346: 43)

According to some historians, Reza Khan's 10 years in power did not significantly alter the lives of Iranian women. Reza Shah did not advance, and Iranian women continued to live in the same conditions as during the previous Qajar era! Reza Shah's autocratic style of governance did not allow for the presence of women. Up until 1309 AH, it repressed opponents and worked to increase the number of social classes. Like the Nazi German administration, he led and governed the nation (Tuloo, 1377: 207)

Iran saw several changes under Reza Shah's rule, including the creation of a new judiciary thanks to the work of Akbar Davar, the Minister of Justice, and the creation of civil laws and other laws based on Islamic jurisprudential foundations and fundamentalist ideas. However, there was no national party, no popular basis, and no women's society to back all of this progress. Instead, women were not as conscious of their social standing and worth as they ought to be, and Reza Shah repressed them through coercion. The law of unveiling was essentially a crystallization of the modernity Reza Shah envisioned! It is safe to say that, in terms of women,

the unveiling was the most significant occasion under Reza Shah's rule. The act of removing the veil is seen as the pinnacle of the persecution and suffering Iranian women endured. It broke down barriers and accepted women as vulnerable, delicate, and sensitive members of society.

Even worse, this occurred at a time when Iranian women were ill-equipped to assume a new role. Contradictions between the new invention and the traditional culture of society were common in the lives of Iranian women throughout the Pahlawi era. Women were compelled to integrate and participate in society at this time when the Western perspective served as the foundation for government initiatives and as part of its primary objectives. They also played a blatantly superficial role in society. Despite being formal, this function increased women's influence over historical issues and events to the point that they occasionally were friends with the Sultan and other times became enemies of the Sultanate and government (Qusrau, 1380: 17-19)

However, the removal of the veil and the increase in women's participation in social and political fields led to more contradictions. A trained and educated female force was qualified in Iran, and they

wanted to make other positive changes in their status because female political activists were unable to freely do what they wanted with their force and ability. They were also unable to shine in the political arena despite entering the labor market and obtaining new jobs that created a new value system alongside the old system. Women were denied political rights under "Reza Shah's" rule, and the election regulations, similar to those in the past, barred them from voting and electing because they were mad and underage. Because the government was afraid that a self-motivated women's movement would successfully organize forces supporting social equality without the government's help, even women who were far removed from the political scene and electoral disputes were unable to start their own independent women's movement (Qusra, 1380: 52)

One could argue that even after the constitution was established, women continued to be marginalized in politics, observing male lawmakers, ministers, leaders, and opponents. (Qar, 1376: 22-25)

But at the end of 1320 AH, or 1942 AD, Reza Shah's rule came to an end, and his son, King Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, took over. Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's government's initial

years were aimed at solidifying both his and his government's standing within Iran's political and social structure. The national oil industry movement, which was not viewed as a significant movement by women during this time of political and social life, was arguably one of the most significant developments during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. In Iran at the time, women's activities were mainly restricted to employment. Among the women involved in artistic and political activities was Mrs. Simin Daneshvar, a journalist whose most significant work was "Monitoring Election Freedom." She eventually joined the "Baqaei" party (Mosafa, 1375: 107-113)

#### **\* Women's Organizations and Parties During Muhammad Reza Pahlavi's Time**

Unlike the early years of the constitutional political revolution, no efforts were made to elevate the status of women during the early years of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's administration. Even though there were numerous organizations in which women participated before the king created the Ministry of Oil, including 1- Kanun Banvan, 2- Jangal Social Party, 3- Democracy Party of Iran, and 4- Shura-e Ali Zanan, women did not take a new step

towards the independence of their social and political identity (Sheikh-e Islami, 1375: 79-80)

Women were given the right to vote in 1341 AH, and several of them were elected to the People's Assembly as representatives. A number of these women went on to hold high positions, including the ministry, but the majority of the jobs were only available to the upper class, and there was never any genuine popular participation between the modern and traditional popular women. An educated and cultured middle class emerged; this new generation was utterly political and anti-Western, and they saw modernization and globalization as the epitome of imperialism (Musafa, 1375: 107-113)

Even though women have been in Iran's parliament since 1343, these representatives were not chosen by the country's entire population. They were also denied the opportunity to experience democracy because of the lack of civil society, which prevented them from interacting with the public and receiving the support of women from a variety of political backgrounds. Additionally, because they represent a group of Iranian women, they are sometimes referred to as having a formal presence but lack the necessary interaction with

society. The question of women's involvement in significant and delicate political matters was brought up at the time, regardless of the preceding era, and it progressively gained traction among intellectuals during the period when the only means for women to participate in national politics was the right to vote and representation in parliament.

The development of a civil society that supports women is what gives their political rights significance. According to this perspective, the existence of women in legislative councils during the 1341–1357 AH period was fictitious since the "Mohammad Reza Pahlavi" era was not founded on democratic elections and the reality of Iranian class society at the time prohibited their participation outside of formal and phony means.

#### **\* Conclusion**

The study of women's status in different historical issues reveals that their social circumstances have always had an impact on their political behavior. Because of this, women's contributions to political advancements varied depending on the civilization. Social circumstances in Iran changed often, and women's status was erratic. According to a study of women's political roles from the seventh century AH to the start of

the Qajar dynasty, women were only allowed to eat, sleep, and give birth during this time and engaged in no political or social action. This issue affected not just regular women but also ladies in privileged society and the royal court. Regarding the start of the Qajar era, we observe women's organization and activity at the national level and on a broad scale during several historical periods, including the Constitutional Revolution, the Babi movement, and the fatwa banning tobacco. Stated differently, it can be argued that women's awakening started at the start of the Qajar era and progressed until the Constitutional Revolution's conclusion.

The social and political climate that was in place at the time was blamed for this. For the first time, a diverse group of women were incorporated into the constitutional parliamentary movement, and their participation was organized and reinforced. Women's participation in this revolution was generally motivated by a variety of political objectives rather than just party or personal concerns. Only at this time did women start organizing their political parties and associations. However, the lack of laws specifically addressing women's participation in elections made it

much more difficult for this revolution to produce results in the area of legislation and legal demands about women. The lack of a civil society and the strength of conventions, traditions, and beliefs are the primary causes of this problem, followed by the male-dominated nature of Iranian culture. Women's freedom was the main emphasis of policy throughout the Pahlavi era, and they were central to the propaganda efforts of the dictatorship. Although they had certain rights, such as the ability to vote and represent parliament, they were marginalized and kept out of decision-making processes.

During this time, women's quantitative presence was noticeable but their qualitative presence was not. The various classes of society did not benefit from the essential role of women, and even if they did, it was imposed from the top of the pyramid of power. This is because of the structural defects and problems in society, the lack of independent political parties and groups, and the lack of laws that protect women's rights and encourage participation. In light of this and response to the study's hypotheses, it may be concluded that women's contributions to political changes were neither more nor less significant

than those of men, except for the coup and the parliamentary constitutional revolution. Instead, it might be argued that they did not play a part at the level of the people and that they did not engage in autonomous political activity.

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