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# IRANIAN WOMEN:
# FOUR DECADES OF INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL ACTIVISM

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*Image from the archive of the annual meeting of educated women with the Supreme Leader of Iran at Imam Khomeini(RA) Husseiniyeh*

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**Art Director & Graphic Designer:**
Marzieh Anbori

**Advertising Office:**
Al-Hoda International Cultural, Artistic and Publishing Institute
Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran

**Tel:** +98 21 88934302
**Fax**: +98 21 88902725
**Website:** alhodapub.com
**Email:** alhodapub@gmail.com

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Editorial

# Achievements of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the field of Women and Family

Dr. Maryam Sajjadi

On the eve of the 47th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran, a glance at the achievements in the field of women and family is a narrative of the path that Iran has traversed with regard to cultural genuineness and social progress. Bahman 22 (February 11) is not only a reminder of the change of a political system, but also a symbol of a profound transformation in the role and status of half of the population of this land. This transformation has its roots in the lofty thoughts and guidelines of the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini (RA), who, from the very first days of the movement, outlined a new horizon for women.

With a profound and transformative understanding, Imam Khomeini (RA) brought women from the margins to the historical context of the Revolution. He not only referred to women - with a revolutionary perspective - as the axis of the family, but also considered them the 'vanguard of the movement' and the 'heroes of the fields of struggle' (against tyranny). The widespread and decisive presence of women in revolutionary demonstrations, the protection of values during the era of Sacred Defense (against imposed war), and their active participation in social arenas after the victory were all practical manifestations of this vision. By rejecting the Western model of a consumer and objectified woman, as well as criticizing the fossilized and restrictive traditions, the late Imam (RA) presented an Islamic-Iranian model in which 'woman is the symbol of human evolution' and can have an active and influential presence in all scientific, social, and political fields while preserving her sanctity, dignity and authentic Islamic-Iranian values. This fundamental view became the cornerstone of all subsequent policies and achievements for Iranian women.

Based on this way of thinking, the Islamic Revolution began a path in which women's progress found meaning; not in opposition, but in interaction with family roles and indigenous values. The achievements of this path, which are the outcomes of the late Imam's vision, are worth pondering upon:

Educational Progress: Today, the female literacy rate has risen from about %36 before the Revolution to over %98. Tens of thousands of girls' schools have been established across the country, and women's admission to university courses has increased from %31 to over %50, and Iranian women are front-runners in many scientific and technical fields.

Health and Well-being: Women's life expectancy has increased from 57 to more than 78 years. Maternal mortality during childbirth has decreased by %90, and access to health services are provided to women even in the most remote areas of the country.

Social and Political Participation: The number of women representatives in the parliament has increased from 4 before the Revolution to dozens. The presence of women in the managerial, judicial, scientific, and cultural fields has grown significantly, which is the practical manifestation of women's participation in 'their own political and social destiny'.

Legislative and Legal Protections of Women and Family: Adopting a family-oriented approach, the Islamic Republic of Iran has established a broad legal framework to protect women and the institution of the family. Emphasizing the dignity of women, the strength of the family, and social justice, the laws of the country are continuously being reviewed and evolved in the following areas, and in response to the changing needs of society.

## 1 Laws related to supporting the family institution

- Family Law (2012): Emphasizing the strength of the family, determining dowry at a daily rate,

explaining the mutual rights of spouses
- Family Protection Law (1980) with subsequent amendments: Including regulations on marriage, divorce, custody, and alimony
- Establishing specialized family courts: To handle family disputes in a specialized manner

## 2 Economic ]and financial support

- Women's financial rights in marriage: dowry, alimony, remuneration, and the right to swear in the event of polygamy
- Housewives' Insurance Law (1400): Providing insurance coverage to housewives
- Tax exemptions for female heads of households
- Credit and employment facilities for women without guardians or with bad guardians

## 3 Employment and educational support

- Labor law: prohibition of women's employment in hard and harmful jobs, maternity leave (9 months)
- Increasing university quotas for women in some fields and regions
- Laws prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace

## 4 Health and well-being support

- Free access to reproductive and maternal health services
- Family planning programs and genetic consultation
- Insurance coverage for the treatment of infertility

## 5 Providing support to women in special circumstances

- Law on the Protection of Children and Adolescents (2012): Special attention to girls at risk
- By-laws on the protection of women without guardians or with bad guardians
- Laws against domestic violence
- 6. Facilities for promoting balance in family work
- Childcare leave for parents
- Floating working hours rules for parents
- Policy-making and Executive Institutions
- National Women and Family Headquarters: Inter-agency coordination in the field of women
- Center for Women and Family Affairs in the Presidential Office
- Women and Family Commission of the Islamic Parliament of Iran
- Office of Women's Affairs in the Governor's Office of Provinces
- All of which have resulted in:
- Reduction in maternal mortality rates
- Increasing in the literacy rate and higher education among women
- Elevation in social and political participation of women

Progress in Sports: Women's sports in Iran have gone through a challenging but growing path. Before the Islamic Revolution, not only were women's sports deprived of the necessary support, but also women had no presence in many disciplines, nor was there the possibility of competition for them. However, after the victory of the Islamic Revolution, despite all the obstacles that the enemies claim, Iranian women walked the path of progress in sports step by step and were able to find their place in Asian and world competitions.

But what is more important than statistics and numbers is the qualitative transformation in attitude and identity. The model of the Iranian woman today is a woman who can be a prominent scientist, a specialist physician, or a successful manager, and she can also, simultaneously, play the role of mother and wife with authority and dignity in the family circle. This multidimensional model is a response to the reductionism of both extremes and shows that one can take a step towards excellence by relying on one's own culture.

Even though there exist certain challenges, the path forward is clear and mapped out. Inspired by its founder and the leadership ideas of Grand Ayatollah Khamenei, the Islamic Republic has shown that it is possible to provide a space for women's all-round growth and advancement while preserving their religious values and inherent dignity. On Bahman 22 (February 11), Iranian women not only honor their Revolution and the great man who opened a new horizon for them, but also manifest the living and thriving embodiment of its achievements. The women who, while maintaining their originality, have a decisive contribution to building a strong, independent, and progressive Iran.

This Iranian experience of Iranian women can be inspiring for many developing societies: i.e., it is possible to progress without sacrificing cultural and family identity.

# Women in Iran

Humaira Ahad

Tehran is a city of contrasts and surprises, where bustling markets sit alongside quiet gardens, modern art galleries share streets with centuries-old mosques, cafes hum with conversation, street vendors call out their wares, and the aroma of saffron and fresh bread drifts through the air. Here, life is fast, tangible, and full of stories. For me, it is a wonderful home away from home, a place of real belonging.

I arrived in this enchanting city four years ago to pursue my higher education, deepen my understanding of religion and spirituality, and study the history and politics for which it is widely known.

This place gave me fresh perspectives, enriched my life, and taught me the art of living. It transformed me as a person and a researcher, and more importantly, as a progressive woman, and there is still much more to explore and unravel.

Iran, the place I call home, is always in the news, mostly for the wrong reasons—showdown with the West, crippling US sanctions, nuclear program, Israeli regime sabotage, etc.

For the past month, the issue of human rights in Iran has suddenly caught the imagination of the world.

The self-proclaimed human rights champions in the West, who turn a blind eye to gross human rights abuses in the US and Europe, are accusing Iranian authorities of killing thousands of their citizens, even though all evidence scoffs at those claims.

More than 3,000 people were killed by the US-Israel–backed terrorists who swept through cities and towns in early January.

With so many outside voices shaping the narrative, it becomes important to speak about what I have actually seen here. Let me share my experience as a foreigner and as a woman in Iran.

To be honest, I came to this country with high hopes, and despite the negative reports and rampant misinformation about the country in the Western-backed media, I haven't seen any of those false claims so far.

I began my journey to Iran in the holy city of Mashhad, where I enrolled in a Persian language course at Ferdowsi University. It was there that I discovered a deeper sense of my own womanhood. Sitting for hours in the Imam Reza shrine, I would speak with women from all walks of life about everything, spiritual questions, daily struggles, and the realities of our worlds.

Although I come from a "progressive" society, I was brought up in a very protective environment with the notion that a girl needs to be cautious in protecting herself and travelling alone to a different city, or spending evenings or late nights outside the confines of the home, was always out of the question.

I had all these reservations in my mind when I came to Iran, but each passing day proved them wrong. I could venture out alone without fear, even after moonlight covers everything in its balmy embrace. Seeing women roaming around with full liberty was a pleasant surprise, and it made me happy.

I gradually came to realize that there was hardly any authoritarian eye watching or any rough hand interfering while women of all age groups and backgrounds breathed in an open and free space.

I haven't travelled the world, but have read about it. I have interacted with people from different countries, and we have often discussed cultures,

**The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has been quoted as saying that if someone tries to - based on supposedly Islamic views - deprive women of their economic, political, and social rights stops them from engaging in scientific work, they have acted against the divine decree.**

freedoms, and way of life. I have compared their lives with the lives of women in my homeland and also with the lives of women here in Iran.

I found that the status of women in Iran is much higher, on the evolutionary scale and in many different ways, than their counterparts in the Western world.

Curious to understand the Iranian family as a social unit, I lived with local families to experience their culture and hospitality firsthand.

With the advantage of having lived across three different cultures, I saw women here enjoying far more freedom than I had expected.

In a traditional Iranian home, a woman holds a higher status. She is accorded rights, she is heard, and she is not treated as a commodity, unlike many other countries, including in the Muslim world.

I have seen women here actively involved in different walks of life, on par with men. We know how women in some Muslim countries continue to fight for a place in their own homes, not to mention society at large. However, the story is different in this country.

Women can be seen selling goods in marketplaces, working in offices, busy in workshops with handicrafts and artworks, and studying and teaching in universities.

Contrary to what you hear in the Western media, many Iranian women hold key positions in the field of politics and policy-making.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, which I have seen and known, promotes equality, freedom, and social justice between peoples, social classes, and genders. Contrary to distorted media reports in the West, there is no clash between Islam and women's rights. Islam does not imprison women but empowers them.

Historically, however, women in Iran lacked adequate political and social rights before the Islamic Revolution. Socially and politically, they were confined to a passive space. The Westernised school system of the Pahlavi era limited educational opportunities for females, discouraging many from pursuing higher education, particularly in environments opposed to the hijab.

In his book, 'A Dying Colonialism', the French political philosopher, Franz Fanon, mentions that in Algeria, destroying the covering (Hijab) of Muslim women was an important part of the colonial battle.

Western attempts to export so-called freedom, women's rights, and democracy have proved disastrous, as can be seen in places such as Afghanistan and Iraq, where Western invasions have only wreaked havoc.

One of the stated objectives was to "liberate" women in those countries. The pseudo-liberation of women after the devastating wars is there for everyone to see.

The idea that the hijab inherently oppresses women and that they must be "freed" from it, is far from the truth. In her seminal book Politics of Piety, US-based anthropologist Saba Mahmood explores how the piety movement in Egypt embraced the hijab as a means of asserting religious and cultural values, resisting the Westernisation of Egyptian society.

The false narrative that Muslim women are helpless and vulnerable has helped Western powers justify their imperialistic ambitions. Women have been made an important excuse for wars in which the psyche of people is manipulated for the vested interests of warmongers.

Yet the story of Iranian women is different from Western stereotypes. In the years following the Islamic Revolution, opportunities for women in education and public life grew significantly.

Today, universities in Iran are flooded with confident, happy, and self-assured women, and the literacy rate of women is among the highest in the world.

Various studies have credited it to the founder of the Islamic Revolution, Imam Khomeini, who called for the active participation of women, not only in politics but also in higher education and the public sector.

After the Islamic Revolution in 1979, women were given equal rights to shape their futures. The revolution provided them a chance to build their distinct political identity, and they have been tremendously successful in doing that.

Iranian women are today far more politically aware and enlightened than their counterparts in other Muslim societies.

As numbers speak for themselves, let's take a look at statistics comparing women's condition in the Islamic Republic before and after the Islamic Revolution.

According to available data, only 17 per cent of the female population in rural areas were literate

in the year in 1977. The figure grew to 73 per cent in 2017, showing a substantial change brought about by the Revolution.

As per the 2020 statistics, the overall literacy rate of women in the country was 85.5 per cent, more than that of men at 80.8 per cent. Surprisingly, this female literacy rate happens to be higher than the global average.

As a strong social value for Iranian women, education is seen as real freedom. Almost 60 per cent of all university students are female today. The percentage of women in higher education has increased nearly 21 times since the Islamic Revolution.

This remarkable improvement in the education sector has had a considerable impact on Iran's job market as well, with women taking more jobs in both the public and private sectors.

According to a World Bank report, the number of female board members in various organisations has seen a threefold increase, growing from 11 per cent in 1970 to 30 per cent in 2016.

This strong presence of women from all walks of life is playing a significant role in shaping Iran's future, which appears to be bright.

Contrary to Western propaganda, the Islamic Revolution has played a significant role in prioritising the freedom of women. I have seen the Islamic Republic of Iran emphasising the importance of strong women and strong mothers.

The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, has been quoted as saying that if someone tries to - based on supposedly Islamic views - deprive women of their economic, political, and social rights stops them from engaging in scientific work, they have acted against the divine decree.

This has encouraged women to grow and develop in both individual and social capacities. The progress made by women in the scientific and academic fields has led to the betterment of social and scientific sectors in post-revolution Iran.

Today, Iranian women are active in every filed; restaurants, craft centres, and marketing, and various businesses. There women who drive trucks, fly aeroplanes, and participate fully in public and professional life.

Isn't this a remarkable transformation, achieved despite the crippling sanctions imposed on Iran by Western hegemonic powers?

Reasonable and discerning people around the world recognise the strengths of Iran's Islamic system, viewing it as a role model for nations resisting neo-imperialist pressures.

The notion that progress and freedom can only be measured by Western standards has long been used to destabilise families and societies in Muslim countries.

Gender politics and selective interpretations of feminism have served as tools in this effort for generations. While women in Muslim societies face certain challenges, these can be addressed with wisdom and prudence, without allowing outsiders to hijack the narrative.

The idea that the West should be treated as the ultimate role model must be critically examined, and the freedom that Iranian women enjoy must be protected against the machinations of imperialist powers.

# Tahoora

## Specialized Infertility Clinic

**By: Zahra Khalili**

In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent, the Most Merciful

Tahoora Medical Clinic is located in the religious region of Jamkaran, in Qom Province. This medical center, which is equipped with advanced medical devices on several floors, offers a variety of medical services in different departments, which is unique in Iran and the Southwest Asia region. However, the focus and priority of this medical complex is the treatment of infertility in couples.

In today›s societies, infertility, which has a variety of causes, has become a common problem in families. Common causes of infertility include problems related to ovulation, hormonal disorders, pelvic inflammatory disease, and some structural problems such as varicocele. Therefore, at the Tahoora Medical Clinic, couples are treated with modern medical methods such as hormonal tests, ultrasound, and semen analysis.

One of the notable points about infertility is that, in some cases, women with this problem undergo treatment simply by attending psychological counseling sessions, and are treated and cured without taking any medication. Counseling sessions include reviewing the couple's medical history; conducting necessary medical tests during the treatment process, and providing specialized advice.

The proximity of Tahoora Medical Clinic to the Jame' Mosque of Jamkaran has provided a vibrant spiritual opportunity and atmosphere for families, and in many cases, this proximity and the presence of couples there have facilitated the treatment

process for women seeking embryos. The reason is that in many cases, the main cause of infertility in women is a mental and psychological issue, and this spiritual connection has had its effects and solved the problem.

Another treatment method used in this clinic is IVF (In vitro fertilization). In this method, fertilization is manually inserted into the uterus, and ovulation is performed. It should also be noted that in cases where women are deprived of ovule and ovulation, they are placed on the list of donations for receiving an ovule, and after receiving it, the process of ovulation begins. In cases when the root cause of infertility is in men, and the man is facing the problem of azoospermia, embryos must be purchased. It should be noted that all measures during the treatment, from ovulation to embryo purchase, etc., are carried out according to the fatwas of Shiite scholars.

What is very important is that with modern medical equipment in Tahoora, eugenics, too, can be carried out. In other words, if there is a defective gene or even a genetic disease in a generation, by applying eugenics, the defective gene will no longer be transmitted to the fetus and the newborn. Presently, more than 6,000 embryos with an identification code have been frozen at a temperature of minus 196 degrees Celsius, which can be preserved for up to thirty years. More than 400 women are also being treated and cared for at the Tahoora Clinic, all of whom are pregnant with one to quadruplets.

Tahoora Clinic also has two branches outside Iran. One in Al-Amara, Iraq, which has also been launched, and the best surgeons, urologists, etc., are continuously sent from Iran, and the applicant Iraqi families receive treatment. The next branch is in the city of Salalah, Oman, which will be completed and opened shortly.

**It should be noted that all measures during the treatment, from ovulation to embryo purchase, etc., are carried out according to the fatwas of Shiite scholars.**

# Women

## of the Islamic Revolution and the Revival of Dignity under the Leadership of

# Imam Khomeini (RA)

Led by Imam Khomeini (RA), the Islamic Revolution of Iran not only changed the old political system but also redefined the humane and civilization-building identity of the Iranian Muslim woman in the deepest layers of society. As an Islamic faqih (jurist) and thinker, by relying on divinely revealed and rational knowledge and its correct understanding, Imam Khomeini (RA) emphasized the truth that 'women are the axis of balance in family and progress of society'. By rejecting the two extreme models of the exploited Western working woman and the traditional isolated woman, he founded a third model, i.e., the Muslim revolutionary woman; free, aware, responsible, and effective.

The axes of Imam Khomeini's (RA) identity-building for the women of the Islamic Revolution:

## 1 Revival of rationality and historical will

By referring to women as 'rational and determined beings' and not as emotional and decorative elements, Imam Khomeini shifted their role from the margins to the center of Iranian history. His emphasis that 'women are the teachers of society' and 'men attain salvation by being brought up by pure women' was in fact a move to restore women's 'inherent dignity' and 'the power of their social influence'. This view reflected the 'human capacity' of women, which had been neglected throughout history, and called them to the field of historical responsibility.

## 2 Delineating new areas of responsibility

The late Imam (RA) outlined the following two areas of responsibility for women:

Responsibility towards the family: Imam Khomeini called on women to transform the core of the family into 'a base for upbringing faithful, revolutionary, and learned people'. This refers to the 'creativity in the role of motherhood' that elevates the family from a purely biological institution to a 'school of exaltation'.

Responsibility towards the Islamic system: Which means 'obeying legal processes and official structures'. Imam Khomeini (RA) considered the involvement of women in social, political, scientific, and economic spheres, within the framework of Islamic values and the laws of the system, not only permissible but also necessary. He emphasized the presence of women in universities, parliament, courts, and scientific fields; although this presence should be alongside 'preserving chastity and Islamic identity'.

## 3 Promoting the role of women as elements of resistance and progress

Referring to such personalities as Hazrat Fatima Zahra (SA) and Hazrat Zaynab (SA), Imam Khomeini (RA) made the 'resistant and aware woman' a practical role model for the revolutionary woman with the following three prominent features:

Rationality and political insight: Women should be 'duty-conscious' and aware of the existing situation.

Courage and perseverance: Women should be 'guardians of values' in difficult fields.

Learning and influence: Women should be 'armed with up-to-date knowledge' and at the same time 'guardians of moral values'.

Social presence: As half of society, women are present in the field of defense when faced with military threats, if needed.

A statement of the late Imam (RA) clearly illustrates this point: "This propaganda that if Islam is established, women should go and sit in their houses and lock the doors so that they cannot go out is a false statement attributed to Islam. In the beginning of Islam, women were in the armies and went to the battlefields."[1]

1. Sahifa Noor, Volume 4, P. 59

## 4 Responding to a historical need

The Islamic Revolution of Iran took place at a time when Iranian society was struggling to find a 'third alternative' between fossilized tradition and imported modernity. Imam Khomeini (RA) wisely introduced the 'woman of the Islamic Revolution' as the symbol in this regard. This symbol is: "a woman who chooses the hijab, but is a pioneer in science; a woman who is a kind mother at home and a firm manager in society; a woman who both protects the family and seeks to participate in building the future of the country".

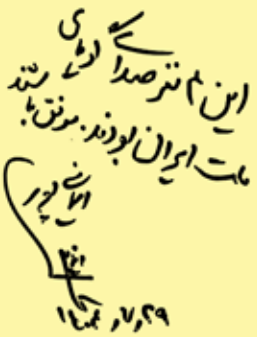
### Concluding remarks

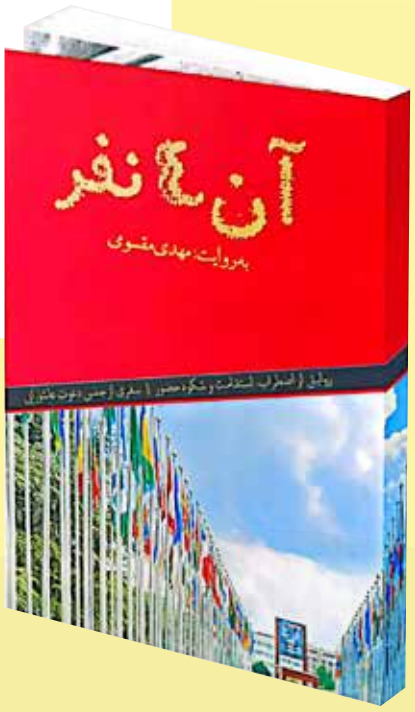
By reviving 'religious rationality' and 'historical will' in women, Imam Khomeini (RA) created a new identity for Iranian women. This identity is a 'balanced and transcendent combination' of family and social responsibility, scientific orientation, religious commitment, resistance to azrrogance, and progress in new areas. Today, the achievements of Iranian women in the scientific, cultural, social, and political fields are living proof of the actualization of this identity model, which is rooted in the profound vision of the founder of the Islamic Republic. The woman of the Islamic Revolution is what the Imam defined as 'the builder of Iran's future'.

By: Fatemeh Bahram Abadanian

# An Introduction to the Book "THOSE FOUR PEOPLE"

The book "Those Four People" is the story of faith, humanity, and perseverance on a global stage; a journey from the heart of war and suffering to the heart of global diplomacy, where four Iranian envoys conveyed their nation's story to the world with a soft yet firm voice at the United Nations.






Being based on real notes and experiences, this work presents a humane picture of the active presence of Iranian civil organizations in the meetings of the UN Human Rights Council; a presence that is not merely diplomatic, but also spiritual and moral. Throughout the narrative, the author, with a philosophical and theological perspective, refers to the presence of these envoys at the United Nations not as a political mission, but as an Ashura-type expedition, where statements were written in the language of faith and words conveyed the mission.

"Those Four People" is the documented experience of intercultural dialogue and a narrative of resistance against unjust media trends, insistence on truth against power, and the presentation of a humanitarian face of contemporary Iran in the global arena.

This book is a reminder of the fact that even in the case of the most serious international meetings, if one's presence is accompanied by belief, honesty, and love for one's homeland, it can leave a deep and lasting impression on the minds of the world.

"Those Four People" is the story of faith in the era of politics, a voice of peace in the midst of crisis, a symbol of dialogue between East and West, and a narrative that shows that truth, although small in size, is always pervasive.

# The Status of Education among Iranian Girls after the Islamic Revolution

By: Dr. Maryam Sajjadi[1]

Like other aspects of ancient Iranian civilization, education, too, has had a glorious and long history in Iran. Among the manifestations of this civilization, reference could be made to the moral teachings of Zoroaster, the lessons taught in Jundishapur University, the quantitative and qualitative development of Islamic teachings after the advent of Islam in Iran, and the growth of religious sciences in seminaries, mosques, Nezamiyeh schools of higher learning, and scientific centers in large cities.

What I intend to discuss in this article is the approach to educating girls in Islamic Iran and the establishment of new schools in a country with an ancient civilization and a long history in Islamic culture; both before and after the Islamic Revolution.

The educational system of Iran had, in the so-called modern times, been a scene of confrontation between Islamic-Iranian teachings and Western modernity, and the indigenous culture being forcibly influenced by Western culture. In fact, the policies of the kings who came to power one after another and were inevitably influenced by Western policies in order to be known in the world arena, especially in certain European countries, created the first sparks of this trend. Sending Iranian university students abroad was one of these measures; students who either stayed in those countries or, after returning, simply spoke about the progress of the West and the backwardness of Iran, instead of participating in the transformation and scientific advancement of their country.

These trends paved the path for the intervention of foreigners in the cultural and educational affairs of Iran and intensified with the arrival of foreign missionaries in Iran during the late Qajar era. During this period, Iranian education in general and girls' education in particular entered a new phase, the trend of westernization and so-called modernism became more evident, and the values of Western culture were spread rapidly among the general public. It was projected as if only with their

1. Ph.D. in Philosophy of Education

seductive and Westernized appearance, women could be the symbols of the progress of Iranian society.

The translation movement, the establishment of the Dar al-Fonun - which marked the beginning a break in Iran's system of education with its culturally rich past and its joining the flow of Western civilization - extremist nationalism that projected patriotism against religiosity in the name of reformism (religious reformism), as well as the penetration of Freemasons in the country's structure were all trends that, through the so-called advocates of women's freedom and rights, impacted education in Islamic Iran.

This cultural transformation reached its turning point during the Pahlavi era. During this period, despite state-run, free schools and making education compulsory for children, the secular education system provided education only to a select few from the affluent, Westernized class. The law 'Kashf-e hijab' (unveiling and banning all forms of Islamic veils), which was enforced in a mandatory manner and with widespread resistance, transformed the physical atmosphere of schools. Girls were forced to attend school without a veil, and the content of textbooks was compulsorily changed to include non-religious subjects.

Many foreign-educated teachers - such as those who had studied in the United States and supported such policies - became key players in the new educational structure, with the slogan of creating a "new woman" in line with the Western model. Being incompatible with the will, beliefs, and faith of the Iranian people, this policy prevented many a large number of girls from undergoing education. The 1979 Islamic Revolution of Iran once again transformed the goals, content, and appearance of girls' education, some aspects of which are discussed hereunder:

Islamization of the Educational System: The most important post-Islamic Revolution change in the educational system was a complete overhaul of the content of textbooks. The false material related to the monarchy, archaic nationalism, and Western modernity was removed and replaced with Islamic teachings, revolutionary values, and strengthening Islamic identity, and subjects such as 'religious education' and 'Qur'anic studies' were given a central position.

Gender Segregation: Schools were completely segregated (in terms of gender), and all teachers and principals of girls' schools had to be women. Hijab requirement: Islamic hijab, like chador, maqna'eh (a kind of headdress), and manteau, became mandatory in school environments for all students and staff.

Emphasis on Traditional Role Side-by-Side Education: Although girls' education was strongly encouraged and expanded, the dominant official discourse emphasized the importance of combining academic learning with piety, maintaining family values, and fulfilling the role of motherhood, and some courses, subjects, and programs reinforced this view.

Spectacular Quantitative and Qualitative Growth: Despite all the challenges, the number of female students grew exponentially after the Islamic Revolution. Access to education was facilitated even in the most remote rural areas. Girls found an active presence in various fields of higher education (even technical and medical sciences) and surpassed many countries in the region. Although this increase in presence took place within a new framework of value system, it automatically created a profound social transformation. One of the most important of these measures was the literacy movement for women, which was established by a decree issued by the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Imam Khomeini (RA), and as a result, 98 percent of Iranians are literate, of which 46 percent are women.

**The law 'Kashf-e hijab' (unveiling and banning all forms of Islamic veils), which was enforced in a mandatory manner and with widespread resistance, transformed the physical atmosphere of schools. Girls were forced to attend school without a veil, and the content of textbooks was compulsorily changed to include non-religious subjects.**

# The Girls of Iran Land

**By: Elahe Torkaman**

The Girls of Iran Land Association is an active non-governmental organization working in the fields of empowerment, social activism, and participatory engagement for adolescent and young girls. With an asset-based approach, it began its activities in various cities across the country in 2019. The association aims to identify, activate, and strengthen the individual and collective capacities of girls, striving to transform them into aware, responsible, and impactful actors in addressing social, cultural, and urban issues.

*Conversation between Iranian and Tanzanian girls*

Focusing on problem-based education, facilitation, networking, and field experiences, the Girls of Iran Land Association provides a platform for the development of girls' personal, social, and leadership skills. Through organizing events, workshops, webinars, and participatory programs, it strengthens the role of girls in society. The association currently has active networks of girls, facilitators, and volunteer groups in 30 cities across the country, supporting their activities through educational, content-related, and executive assistance to ensure sustainability.

Alongside its national activities, the Girls of Iran Land Association has an international structure designed to promote cultural dialogue, exchange of experiences, strengthening of people-to-people diplomacy, and the empowerment of girls at regional and global levels. The international goals and programs of the association focus on creating a network of active girls, teaching problem-solving processes, understanding shared sustainable development concerns, and implementing joint cultural and social projects.

In line with this, the Girls of Iran Land Association has so far held a series of intimate cultural dialogue sessions between girls from Iran and girls from Tanzania, Iraq, and Brazil. These sessions, centered on cultural exchange, sharing lived experiences, mutual empowerment of girls, and strengthening human connections, are planned to continue regularly on a monthly basis, leading to the development of girl-centered international collaborations.

*Conversation between Iranian and Brazilian girls*

*Conversation between Iranian and Iraqi girls*

# INTERVIEW WITH MS. ATEFEH SARLAK, A LADY FIREFIGHTER

By: Ms. Fereshteh Sadat Rahimi

**With warm greetings, I am very pleased to be meeting you. Could you please introduce yourself and tell us about your experience in the 12-day imposed war?**

My name is Atefeh Sarlak, and I am here on behalf of the women firefighters of Tehran. On the morning of June 13, 2015, the bell rang at Station No. 138 of Tehran's Fire Department, the members of which are exclusively women. The headquarters initially notified us of a house fire, but when I arrived at the scene, we encountered more than just a house fire. There, we encountered rubble, trapped people, and crowds worried about their loved ones who were trapped under the rubble. Such was the case, and my colleagues and I were trying to serve the people and protect their lives and property.

**We are thankful to you for your efforts to help people in critical situations. The title of our conference today is "Women, Intelligence, and Global Justice". What is your opinion on the role of women in actualizing global peace and justice?**

For firefighters, intelligence is not limited to technical knowledge. Intelligence for us also means making the right decision in critical moments and controlling our stress and emotions in order to save the lives of others. Intelligence means combining reason, experience, and courage. Iranian female firefighters are a living example of intelligence, and this is not merely a slogan. We have proven this many times in critical situations, and an example of this is the Twelve-Day Imposed War, when Iranian female firefighters stood side by side with male firefighters and tried to help and serve the people. As regards justice and global peace, I must say that, in my opinion, justice will be actualized when opportunities are equal, and women are perceived as equals (to men) in the conditions and fields in which they are present and active. Justice has nothing to do with gender, and it is the competence, merit, and courage of the person that actualizes justice. I hope that this conference will be a platform for the voices of women - who work side by side with men to serve the people - be heard.

**Most foreigners usually think that Iranian women are deprived of such rights as being active in society, having higher education, and doing challenging and difficult jobs like firefighting. But when they travel to Iran, their whole perception changes. As an active Iranian woman, what is your message to other people in the world, especially women? To what extent were you given the opportunity to pursue your interests and demonstrate your talents?**

The number of female firefighters is very small, not only in Iran but also in the world. There is a perception that there are no opportunities for women in Iran, but this is not the case at all. It is also to be noted that this is not merely specific to Tehran; rather, in other cities of our country, there is a platform for women to be present in numerous jobs, especially relief jobs. However, since the position of mother in Iran is a lofty one, the maternal feeling and trait in Iranian women make them more successful in relief jobs. To this day, I have never seen in our organization that they want to deprive anyone of opportunities because of their gender. Everything is based on the abilities and characteristics of the individual, and the issue has nothing to do with gender. I hope that the views of people who live outside the Iranian borders about Iranian women will change and be in line with reality and truth.

# Vast Horizons Are Open Before

**Narges Gholizadeh's conversation with Pejman Arab**

I picked the SpaceOMID company from the university's internship list. I had to complete a two-month undergraduate internship somewhere, and the name of this satellite company was irresistible to someone like me studying aerospace engineering. Back then, the company was on Jamalzadeh Street in Tehran. On my first day, I could hardly believe that fewer than ten people were actually building satellites in such a small place.

Three years later, I could feel the same disbelief in many others. Exactly when my colleagues and I were sitting behind the monitoring screens of the Kosar and Hodhod satellites, which were now blinking back at us from 500 kilometers above, there were people hundreds of kilometers away - or sometimes right next door - who posted pictures of our satellites on their stories and insisted it was just a model, and that Iranians could not possibly build such satellites. But I had lived every step of that belief.

## The steering wheel that brought me to SpaceOMID

My name is Narges Gholizadeh, and I was born in Tehran on December 24, 1998. My father works at a bank, and my mother is a teacher. I attended NODET (the National Organization for Development of Exceptional Talents) during middle and high school. I also have a younger sister. My father was strict about our studies and always encouraged us to work hard. His encouragement usually came in the form of really great gifts - like a new laptop or a new bicycle - or promises like, "If your grades are good, I'll let you do what you love." And what I loved was driving. I was thirteen or fourteen, and all I wanted was to drive without having a license. My father promised that if I got a perfect GPA - 20 out of 20 – he would let me do it. It might not be the best example to follow, but he really did let me sit behind the wheel at that age and learn. I was a mischievous kid; everything I loved involved adventure: driving,

*Engineer Narges Gholizadeh, expert in the design and construction of measurement and telecommunications satellites*

paintball, biking, even shooting classes. My interests were unusual for a girl of my age, and my father allowed them on one condition: keeping my study grades high. So, my world pretty much revolved around studying and these hobbies. I also read books, but mostly on psychology and self-help. In high school, almost everything I read was for my studies. I also participated in the Chemistry Olympiad once, but eventually I decided to focus on the university entrance exam instead. I loved civil and mechanical engineering and listed similar majors on my application. I was accepted into aerospace engineering at Khajeh Nasir University of Technology. My father always told me to choose whatever truly interested me. I entered university in 2017, and in the summer of 2021, I went to SpaceOMID for my internship.

## Becoming the mechanical designer for the Hodhod satellite

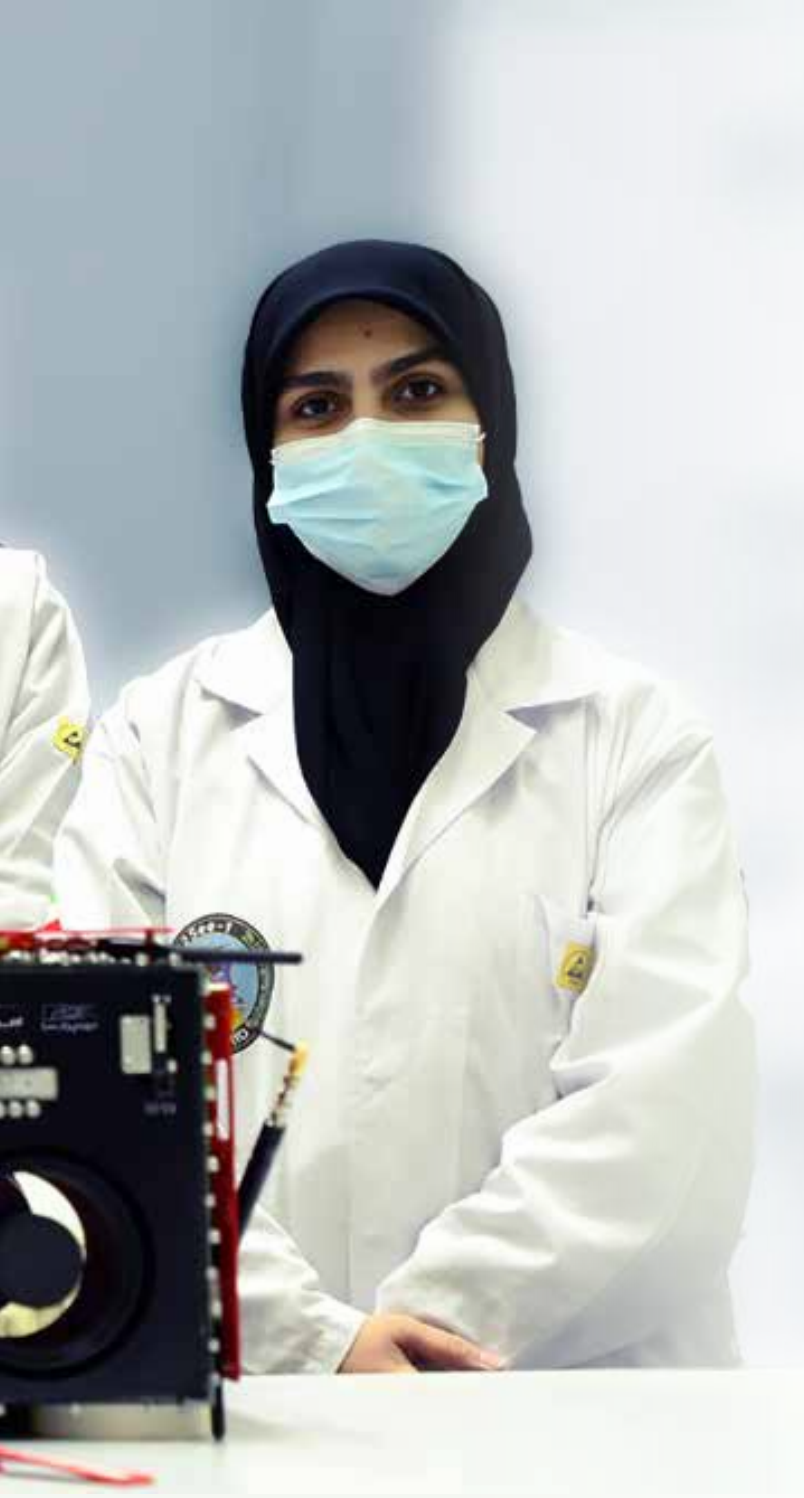
At Khajeh Nasir University, the academic environment was very serious, and students engaged in scientific work. Even as an undergrad, I helped build a wind turbine, a heat exchanger, and a glider, and conducted wind-tunnel tests. I also took several extra courses, like multirotor design and fabrication. I thought I should build my future around multirotor drones and their applications. But when I began my internship at SpaceOMID, all those assumptions changed. I started working on antenna structures and mechanical design—totally new territory for me. Since my GPA was high, I was eligible for direct admission to a master's program, and I was supposed to begin my aerospace engineering master's at Sharif University that fall. Still, I loved my work at SpaceOMID so much that when they offered me a full-time position, I accepted and stayed on. I simultaneously continued with my master's studies.

My first work involved the mechanical design of SAR (Synthetic Aperture Radar) antennas. SAR antennas are mesh reflectors made from special woven materials, which during launch, stay folded in a compact form, and after deployment—on a satellite or even a UAV—they expand to diameters of three to four meters from an initial 45 or 90 centimeters. If we wanted to buy them ready-made from abroad, the cost would've been enormous, and we would never have gained the expertise or the ability to customize them the way we needed. So, the company decided to develop them domestically. During my four years at SpaceOMID, a significant part of my work was designing antenna mechanisms that would be deployed correctly once the satellite is in orbit. The antennas that are now installed on the Hodhod and Kosar satellites were designed by me. I also designed the primary mechanical structure of the Hodhod satellite; its layout, wiring paths, structural analyses, and dynamic modeling.

Advanced engineering projects are team efforts: each person does part of the work and hands the next stage to another. As a member of the mechanical team, I also contributed to components of the Kosar satellite, a project that had started before I joined. The first prototype we built for Kosar, i.e., the U16, was smaller than the current model, which completely failed its test in 2022. It was incredibly difficult and discouraging, but that failure became our launchpad. Only then did we truly understand our mistakes, and all our designs grew by several levels. I gained invaluable experience through that process.

## A university that chooses a different path

When I joined the company, I also started my master's degree at Sharif University. Dr. Shahrabi had created an advantage for us: if we chose a thesis topic related to our work at the company, we could advance both our academic and professional paths simultaneously. But unfortunately, the university prioritized publishing papers above everything else. They would say, "Your project doesn't have academic value because similar papers have already been published", without considering



that none of those results had been achieved in Iran, and that indigenization of the technology is itself a major accomplishment. What's the point of being ten steps ahead theoretically when we can't even take the first step in the real world? Why should we spend time on theories that no one has ever used and, too, may never use? This gap between academic expectations and the realities of industry made me lose motivation for my master's. I had excellent grades during my undergrad, but in my postgraduate program, my scores dropped. The reason was simple: I felt the coursework was disconnected from what I actually needed to know. In the real world, I was learning far more.

## We reached space with almost nothing

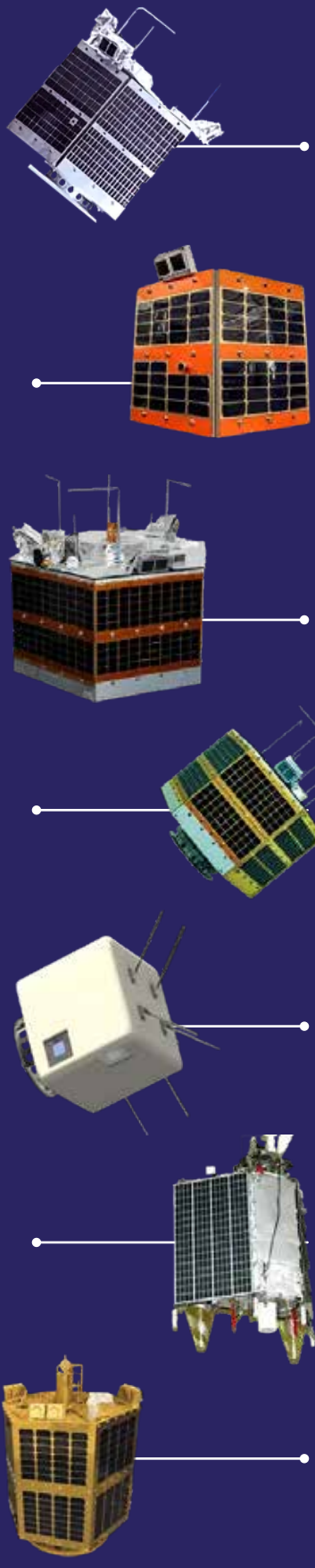
SpaceOMID was founded in 2018 with just two or three people, and then it grew to five. From what I have heard, the team literally started working in a café, where they would gather and work together for hours. Later, they moved into the university library. It wasn't until about a year later that they managed to pool enough money to rent that tiny office on Jamalzadeh Street. They spread out a simple carpet, bought a few old desks and chairs, and kept going. They didn't even have the money for basic furniture.

When I, along with two other interns, joined the company, the whole team just comprised ten people. The office was extremely small, but later on, I realized that at the time when I was looking around in disbelief at the cramped space, the worn-out desks, and the small team... that was actually the better phase. Everything had begun from far smaller, with resources well below zero. At one point, things were so tight that people literally worked sitting on the stairs, as there was simply no room left for both people and satellite hardware. Early on, especially before launch, there were stretches of six to nine months when we didn't receive any salary at all. But we loved the work, and the company meant so much to us that everyone stayed, pushing through those tough times. Thankfully, our later successes changed things. We moved to a larger space, and our salaries improved. Now, when new employees complain about how crowded things feel, we laugh and say, "You should have seen the days when eight of us crammed into a nine-square-meter room working on the hardest parts of the satellite". Maybe without all those hardships, we wouldn't be sitting here today, speaking with this much strength and hope.

## A clear vision makes you stay

Despite all the shortages, what made me stay at SpaceOMID was the company's clear vision for the future. They knew where they were going, and they were confident about getting there, and this confidence had an impact on all of us. For example, long before the Kosar imaging satellite

reached its final stages, we had already begun planning how its images would be used. Kosar is an Earth-observation satellite, and its images can serve farmers, government agencies, and private organizations. So even while the satellite was still being built—before it even reached integration and testing—we designed and launched the SpaceOMID platform to make non-polished satellite images accessible to more people. Later, we developed the Fazayesh system, which allows users, especially farmers, to request analyses and receive vegetation-index data derived from images taken in space. Then came the Hodhod project, a narrowband communications satellite. To make its short messages accessible to everyday people, we developed a mobile application so they could experience the feeling of communicating directly with a satellite. We even approached various industries, explaining that they could use our satellites for monitoring and imaging. In other words, we had a vision and were actively preparing for it, and that vision gave us energy.



### We see the company's success as our own

In the beginning, everyone's work schedule was flexible; some days we hadto work from eight in the morning until late at night, and other days less. Later, once it was time to deliver subsystems and complete the satellite, there were days when we stayed at the office until midnight to meet deadlines. Project work has its own nature, and at times it requires far more effort. Dr. Shahrabi always emphasized that the company belonged to us as much as to him, and we truly considered its success as our own. We felt responsible for every component, every task. Of course, not everyone could handle the pressure. Some people left, but those who stayed on began to feel a deep sense of ownership and worked with real devotion.

Working in a knowledge-based startup is no easy feat. In the early years, companies like ours must pour enormous energy into research and development. It takes time before it gains an organizational structure and produces tangible results. During that phase - until the company becomes more defined - job roles may shift, expectations may change, salaries might not be consistent, and the future can feel uncertain. As a result, we saw many people leave, and new ones arrive. And honestly, you can't blame anyone, because most people can't cope with that instability, especially if they came in with fixed expectations.

But in my case, hearing my parents' stories about their own lives taught me that the beginning of anything worthwhile is supposed to be difficult. I didn't expect everything to be smooth. And I felt I was learning a lot in the company; the knowledge I couldn't get anywhere else. That was deeply rewarding. Therefore, I decided to push through the hard times. Looking back, I'm grateful because enduring those years allowed me to experience the sweetness of the success we're enjoying now.

## From denial to belief in "We Can"

I met my husband at SpaceOMID; we worked together and later got married. Having gone through the toughest early years, he would tell me interesting stories about those days. He said whenever they presented their startup project and said that they wanted to build a satellite, and asked for financial support, people would laugh at them. Sometimes they wouldn't even agree to have a meeting, or they'd say, "Build it first, then come to us". The company was underestimated everywhere. But now that the satellites have been launched, those same people are eager to work with us.

I remember when we were in the monitoring room tracking data from our satellites, a foreign-based Persian news outlet posted a photo of the Hodhod satellite and wrote, "This is just a model, assembled with replica-making materials". They claimed Iran didn't even have the technology to build CubeSats, that it was fake, that it looked wooden, and so on and so forth. Now, when I look back, I realize that if I hadn't been a part of the team myself and if I hadn't seen every struggle and every breakthrough, I might have believed those claims too. I might have said, "They're right; we can't." Part of the problem is related to the constant stream of anti-Iranian narratives and propaganda trying to undermine the capabilities of Iranian engineers. But if we see ourselves more realistically, we won't accept such dismissive and false claims so easily.

## Many people are surprised that we're women and young

One of our biggest challenges after the successful launches came from people who had earlier experienced working on making satellites. Well, we were young, and sometimes they treated us as though we knew nothing and as though we had just somehow slipped into the middle of the team. Another layer of surprise came from the fact that many of us were women.

More often than not, in order to conduct tests or gather satellite data, we had to visit facilities that required coordination. Many times, officials there would ask Dr. Shahrabi to replace the female team members with male engineers. He always refused, saying, "Each of these women is the lead for her task and, therefore, no one can replace her".

At times, many people assume young female engineers must be technicians or assistants, never imagining that we played crucial roles or led key parts of the satellite project. Perhaps this is because in most companies, women are given fewer technical responsibilities. But Dr. Shahrabi trusted us deeply. He never said, "The team lead must be a man, and the women should work under him." That equal opportunity was real. When it came time to send a specialized team to Russia for the Kosar satellite's delivery and launch preparations, the team included two women and two men. Equal opportunity also meant equal responsibility. During the toughest phase before launch, when the whole team was working around the clock, we didn't say, "We're women; we should leave early." There were days when we didn't sleep for 24 hours, literally spending the whole night at the office so the team wouldn't fall behind.

## Here, there are things that young people love

If I could go back, I would choose SpaceOMID all over again, because I love its growth trajectory. I love that both the company and I are constantly evolving, gaining new experiences, and always reaching toward a higher horizon. Of course, that doesn't mean the work is easy. The long nights, the pressure, the stress; they're all real. It's not a routine job, but it's adventurous and meaningful, and that's exactly what we young people crave.

I believe that if we want our work to be impactful and lasting, we shouldn't expect everything to be ready-made or success to come quickly. Work is like a school: we're supposed to grow while we're doing it, expand our abilities, and later help others grow too. Maybe one day I'll be like Dr. Shahrabi and plant another small seed of a knowledge-based startup somewhere beyond SpaceOMID. But first and foremost, I hope SpaceOMID becomes so strong and complete, and our country's space industry grows so much that it can support and empower many more young specialists in the future.

By: Fatemeh Zahra Khosh Akhlagh

# Interview with Asma Hassanpour Moghaddam, the Teenage Chess Player

**Please introduce yourself and explain how and why you got interested in chess.**

My name is Asma Hassanpour Moghaddam. I am ten years old, and I am from Mashhad. I started playing chess at home with my brother. My brother had started playing chess before me, and that is why I became interested in playing it.

**Tell us about the Bangkok tournament and how did you feel about participating in this tournament?**

Well, it was a very pleasant feeling. I was very happy to have been able to participate in the Asian Chess Championship in Bangkok and to have won third place in the standard section, second place in the rapid section, and first place in the blitz. In the rapid section, I had hoped to win first place, but, unfortunately, I could not do it and stood in second place. That did not, however,

discourage me, and I continued my efforts. In the case of the blitz section, I would have won first place, even if I would lose the last game. All of this made me feel very happy and gave me a sense of satisfaction.

**What do you think is the reason behind your success? What lessons has playing chess taught you?**

The most important reason behind my success is a lot of practice. I never stopped my efforts. Chess has taught me not to give up in life and to fight until the last moment. There have been many times when I have almost lost the game until the last moment, but I did not lose hope, and with my efforts, I turned the game around and won the match. The opposite has also happened. Sometimes I was a winner until the last moment, but my early joy caused me to lose the game. Chess has also helped me in strengthening my memory and memorizing my study materials.

**What does a typical day in your life look like? How do you manage doing both your studies and personal tasks, and practicing chess?**

Well, I study and do my homework, tidy my room, eat with my family, go to my taekwondo class, and also practice chess. I solve chess books and watch chess movies. Whenever I have extra time, I practice chess again.

**Who are your role models in chess and in life?**

My role models in chess and life are Judith Polgar and Hazrat Zahra (SA), respectively.

**What is your message for girls of your age?**

Since chess players are not well-known, they may not know me, but I want to tell all the

girls of my age that no matter what field you are in, work hard and do not give up. Working hard is the best way to attain success.

**Has hijab, and especially chador, ever been an obstacle for you in achieving this great honor?**

Not at all. Rather, it gives me greater motivation to play chess and win. I think that hijab, especially chador, is to preserve the beauty of a woman, and that is the reason I want to have a complete hijab and always observe it.

**How has the support of your family, coach, and fellow countrymen influenced your path? If you were to present this medal to the people of your country, what message would you write on it?**

I am really very grateful to my family. They have supported me a lot. I would also like to thank all those who are active in the chess team of our province. I did not have a coach for about a year, and during this time, my brother was always by my side like a coach, and his support has had a great impact on my success. I would write on the medal, "May my body not be there, if there is no Iran."

# INTERVIEW WITH MS. ROBERTA RIVOLTA OF ITALY

**With warm greetings, we appreciate your presence to this interview. Could you please introduce yourself and tell us about your background, international activities, affiliations, etc.**

My name is Roberta Rivolta and I come from Italy. I work as a translator so my job has nothing to do with my political stances and activities. Even though I had some earlier experiences when I was much younger, I started feeling involved in the political world in about 2011 when I began translating news about the Palestinian issues - mainly through social media - and especially the ones that did not appear in the Western media. I then went to Palestine, the West Bank and then to Syrian war. I was not obviously involved in the war but the interested in observing things about the Palestinian issue that

**By: Fereshteh Sadat Rahimi**

were really badly represented in our country. So, I went to Syria five times. Now I am the representative of the Italian branch of the global movement for supporting the resistance and that is the reason I am here now.

**Perfect, and we are so honored to have you here today, as you know we are holding the very first international conference on "Women, Social Intelligence, and Global Justice" and I want to know your opinion - as an international activist - about the role of women in establishing global justice and peace.**

This is a very good question because based on what our part of the world narrates we can see that in the Western world there are many women having certain positions, there are many women politicians, and there are many journalists, but if you look at their activities and the way they behave, almost all of them are following the leadership of men. Thus, it is not real emancipation, and, therefore, in the end their role is nothing and it is not relevant to fight for global justice. This is a problem because our countries present themselves as those women enjoy their rights, there is equality and there is no discrimination. However, it is all a facade because the values that women could represent as women and as different and specific part of humanity, are not represented in the way it should be. I think women should be the flagbearers of peace and now we can say that international system has been demolished and we are back to relations based on strength which is the favorite field of action of men. I also think, as women, our goal should be to get rid of all the prejudices that have been fed by our media to unite and really foster women's value, irrespective of the issue of gender. However, we are much divided and the power establishment is really working to divide Western women from women of other countries.

**Yes, exactly. We know that there is a lot of propaganda against Iranian women in Western media. I want to know your personal experience about the difference in what you actually saw about the reality of Iranian women and what the Western media project. Because our women have been presented as deprived and oppressed, and that they don't have the right to participate in social and political activities.**

The image that has been built for us is mainly based on clothes, which is something that is infuriating for me as a woman, because women are reduced to the level of their desire to dress in a certain way. The are assumptions that Iranian women have no voice and they must merely be obedient to men. The other problem is in our culture all the non-western countries are considered to be at the same level and, therefore, we do not see the differences between one country and another. But when I came here, I saw that women are quite independent. They go outside and they move around the city with the same independence and self-confidence that the western women have in the streets. You can see them in public places and I have met a lot of women that have a high education, which is very unexpected for our imagination. So, that's why I am really happy to have been invited here. And also, the speeches I listen to here are very interesting. Thus, the idea that women are the flagbearers of the culture is true. They are the ones who transmit the culture for one generation to the other and one of the main goals of the imperialist project is to destroy the cultures because resistance comes from culture.

**Thank you very much. As you said there are many educated Iranian women and as you saw we even have female firefighters.**

Yes, and we don't have female firefighters.

**Do you mean there are no female firefighters in Italy?**

No. None.

**Oh, I didn't know that.**

At least I am not aware but I think we have no

women firefighters. I have made notes on this issue and let's see what they will say.

**As you know today is the anniversary of martyrdom of General Soleimani. What's your opinion about his role in establishing global justice and peace, especially for women.**

I really admire him, because I think he was one of those personalities who live once in a century. He had this combination of political skills and military skills and he had the courage create strong ties between different countries and nations in the West Asia who are fighting for the same cause that you are fighting but from different places in the world and with different perspective. This means he also had the intelligence and awareness that the cause of struggle is the same and each country has a specific point of view which can be respected and it doesn't necessarily mean to create division. I think he is one of the greatest men of history like Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, Che Guevara. I think he is one of those very few people who left very precious legacy to the world and it is really a pity that he is not known in our country because he was so skillful, so bright, and so important that the West feared him. One of the means that the West uses against the people they portray as enemies is to be silent about them so that a lot of people do not know them and this is a pity because we know everything about Gandhi, about Mandela, about Che Guevara and I think we are missing another great man that should be known to everybody.

**Yes, that is true. You know, he was one of the greatest fighters for the Palestinian cause, for defending innocent Palestinian people especially women and children and now that he is not among us anymore and there is a kind of global awakening toward the Palestinian cause, his role has been revealed to people much more than before and it is time for people to know him. What do you think about it?**

Actually, he is not known in my part of the world. As I told you earlier, one of the means that the West uses against the people they portray as enemies is to remain silent about them so that a lot of people do not know them.

**Yes, and they labeled him as a "terrorist". When Trump ordered the assassination of General Soleimani he said that we eliminated one of the greatest terrorists on earth. What do you think about it?**

Yes, that's their way of creating popular support for their crimes. This is an old trick; one they use repeatedly. They label someone as the "bad guy," much like Hollywood movies have established that archetype. In fact, that narrative pattern was likely created precisely to be exploited for political goals. The formula is always the same: designate someone as evil, and then - just as a Hollywood plot teaches - it seems everything is permitted against them because they are "bad." This justifies any action, which is a complete negation of human rights and international law. Yet it works every time, because the Western population has been educated and are being taught since childhood to believe that outside the West, there are only bad guys.

**Yes, this has deep roots in Orientalism and the philosophy and the history of the world. Anyway, thank you very much for joining us. It was a pleasure to meet you and I hope to see in the future events.**

Thank you, too, for giving me this opportunity to express my views.

# Kimia-ye Sahar

## Fashion and Clothing Collection

Having received her diploma from the Technical College of Design and Sewing, Sahar Talghani decided to focus her love of fashion and design in the field of modern clothing for women, in a specialized way. In 2014, Ms. Talghani was able to have the first specialized center for women's fashion and clothing registered as 'Kimia-ye Sahar' in order to pursue her interest in combining modern design and rich Iranian and Islamic culture in a more serious manner. Kimia-ye Sahar has not been and is not just a simple business for her. It has provided her with the conditions to start and carry out what she considers her duty, i.e., to carry out an important cultural and social mission.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in business administration, Ms. Talghani expanded her career to become a successful entrepreneur. But this goal was not just to make a name for herself. She rather had a higher goal in mind; one that was in line with empowering other Iranian women. Creating jobs for women (especially those with no guardians or bad guardians), collaborating with the judiciary to create jobs for women released from prison, collaborating with other Iranian fashion brands, and expanding her work internationally are examples of the steps taken by this successful Iranian woman.

Sahar Talghani's career began with her participation in the international section of the Fajr Fashion and Clothing Festival, which was held for the first time in 2011. Participating in this festival made her works seen and remarkably welcomed. This made her more determined to continue her path, and in 2014, she established one of the first fashion and clothing institutions in Iran and officially began her activities by designing, producing, and launching her works with the slogan 'Dressing stylishly is the right of veiled ladies'. Later on, she exported her work abroad and participated in several international festivals and exhibitions.

It is noteworthy that although Ms. Talghani had participated in numerous national and international fashion and clothing and entrepreneurship festivals and had been among the top ranks, in December 2023, after participating in the Fajr Fashion and Clothing Festival, she decided to withdraw from national competitions. According to her, the reason behind this decision was to encourage and support young, talented, and hardworking Iranian girls and boys emerge as new talents in the field of fashion and clothing in the national and international arenas.

Kimia-ye Sahar Hijab Company, which has a central office and several agencies, is active in various fields such as designing and producing fabrics and clothing; holding fashion and clothing exhibitions as well as creating a permanent exhibition, a fashion and clothing museum and gallery; and providing consultation, services, and artistic training workshops in the areas of fashion and clothing.

The following unique features have made Kimia-ye Sahar's products quite popular:

1 Art in Design: Efforts are made to combine beauty and dignity in Kimia-ye Sahar's clothing by using authentic Iranian and Islamic designs.

2 The combination of tradition and modernity: Kimia-ye Sahar is a bridge between traditional Iranian arts and contemporary design. In each product, one can witness Iranian genius in a modern and original form.

3 Versatility: A wide range of designs, colors, and styles that prevent repetitive products and limited choices.

One can see various Islamic and Iranian designs in the products designed by Kimia-ye Sahar. For example, pomegranate and pomegranate flowers, Chinese knotting, Bukhara embroidery, calligraphy, etc., some of which will be explained below for having a better understanding of them:

- Symmetry: One of the characteristics of authentic Iranian design. A characteristic that preserves a particular principle, while being different, and gives a special look to Iranian symmetry-making.
- Seven-color tile: The seven-color tile is one of the three notable techniques of the Safavid era. The common colors used in the seven-color tile included black, white, azure, red, and henna yellow.
- Paisley pattern: Also known as 'Bent Cypress' it is an Iranian emblem that symbolizes the tree of life, humility, and glory.
- Geometric patterns: Such as squares, circles, and triangles, which Muslims used to depict orderliness in God's creation and in nature and to express abstract and mental concepts.
- Arabesque motifs: Another design in Islamic art. Repetitive elements and symbols of infinite nature, which is God's creation, and intentionally not representing and imitating nature in detail, as a sign of the artist's humility towards God. This is because the creation of perfection is considered to belong to God only.

Perhaps when these living and authentic Iranian and Islamic elements are combined with modern and modest designs, they attract attention and provide an effective choice for women who both want to preserve their hijab and also dress stylishly.

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