

## **FUTURE RESEARCH ON WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IN THE SERVICES SECTOR OF SMALL AND MEDIUM CITIES; CASE STUDY: ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Human resources are the mainstay of nations' wealth. What is certain is that a country that can not develop the skills, knowledge and perception of the people and use it effectively in the national economy, will not be able to develop (Sepehri and Rusta Azad, 2011, 41). The study of women's employment is one of the issues of the modern age. The shrinking of the family, the increase of the level of knowledge, the improvement of the health situation and the expansion of the issues related to the freedom and promotion of women's rights have been the background of this matter. Paying attention to the employment situation of women and guiding them to the labor market can provide the ground for better use of this potential force in society and achieve development.

Usually, in the course of development, the share of the population working in the agricultural sector gradually decreases and is first added to the share of the population in the industrial sector. Since the industrial sector has reached saturation and the country is self-sufficient in terms of industry, the percentage of employees in the industrial sector has not increased, and instead the service sector has been falsely inflated. This trend has led to false employment in the country. (Kazemipour, 2006) According to studies by the Statistics Center of Iran in 2005, the share of employment in the service sector was 44.9 percent, for industry 30.3 percent and for the agricultural sector 24.7 percent, which This trend has continued in 2012 with a slight fluctuation and has reached 47.4, 34.3 and 18.3 percent, respectively. Also, this share for women in the service sector has been much higher than men, so that the share of employment in this sector for women has been 51.6% and men 46.6%. It has reached 19.8 percent, while for the same period the rate for men has dropped from 10 to 8.6 percent.

Women's employment as one of the components of economic development is always evaluated and measured and is a form of far-sighted programs of countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran aims to achieve the highest peak of development goals in 1404 and naturally the growth of women's employment in proportion. It is considered to other countries in the region.

This article examines the future status of women's employment in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

**Key Words:** *Women, Employment, Iran, Horizon 2025*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In recent decades, the world has faced a global phenomenon called women's employment in jobs outside the home. Economic and social development, the expansion of education, urbanization and in general the changes that have taken place in today's societies, the transformation of women's work And their role in society has led and women have been employed in many industrial and administrative affairs of the country and have engaged in economic and social activities. So much so that in the issues of development, women's participation and how to play their role in the economic structure is one of Indicators of modernization and economic development are considered and are mentioned as socio-economic requirements for the development of societies (Kazemipour, 2006)

The first tangible effect of women's education is their employment, although women's employment in the labor market does not lead to a change in traditional roles, and they will continue to carry the burden of housework (1985, 271 Gerson).

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The issue of employment and participation along with a strong cultural infrastructure is one of the important issues that are a sign of growth and development in any society (Yazdkhasti, 1993). In general, it can be said that one of the indicators of development of a country is the level of participation and role that women have in that country. Existing statistics show that today Iranian women are in a dual position and status in terms of health and educational indicators, Iranian women are in a much better position than most countries in the region, but in terms of labor market presence and income share, They have a very low ranking among developing countries. According to the age-sex structure of the country's population in the past census, it is observed that nearly half of the country's population are women, but due to cultural and social reasons, their role in wage-earning activities has not expanded.

The removal of women from the social scene is the removal of half of human society, the result of which can have detrimental socio-economic effects on the country. Therefore, it is necessary in proportion to the talents of women, their employment and participation in economic fields. The presence of women in the labor market depends on various factors according to the economic, social, cultural and political conditions of each country. The most important cultural factors include the following: Among the cultural factors can be the differences and discrimination in the process of socialization of men and women, the prevalence of patriarchal thinking in society and among the social barriers can be gender segregation of education, laws governing The family pointed to discrimination in the structure of employment, restrictive policies in the choice of field of study and occupation for girls, labor laws, and the gender division of male and female occupations (Nouri *et al.*, 2011).

Women's employment as a social phenomenon and as a dependent variable is seriously influenced by cultural factors. Accordingly, questions such as whether women's employment will be culturally appropriate for our society and the reasons for women's desire to work in the service sector, come to mind. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the cultural factors involved in women's employment and its relevance to society and also to find the reasons for women's desire to work in the service sector.

In Iran, due to the lack or poor performance of thought-provoking institutions in the right direction from the transition from tradition to modernity, the type of confrontation with the waves of modernism and how the Iranian identity interacts with Islamic law, society faces many tensions and challenges. Women can be analyzed in the challenges that are rooted in the history and culture of this society and have gradually increased (Pishgamifard and Ghodsi, 2010).

Usually, in the course of development, the share of the population working in the agricultural sector gradually decreases and is first added to the share of the population in the industrial sector. Since the industrial sector has reached saturation and the country is self-sufficient in terms of industry, the percentage of employees in the industrial sector has not increased, and instead the service sector has been falsely inflated. This trend has led to false employment in the country (Kazemipour, 2006). According to studies by the Statistics Center of Iran in 2005, the share of employment in the service sector was 44.9 percent, for industry 30.3 percent and for the agricultural sector 24.7 percent; this trend has continued with a slight fluctuation and has reached 47.4, 34.3 and 18.3 percent, respectively. Also, this share for women in the service sector has been much higher than men, so that the share of employment in this sector for women has been 51.6% and men 46.6%. It has reached 19.8 percent, while for the same period the rate for men has dropped from 10 to 8.6 percent.

Women's employment as one of the components of economic development is always evaluated and measured and is a form of far-sighted programs of countries. The Islamic Republic of Iran aims to achieve the highest peak of development goals in the horizon of 2025 and naturally the growth of women's employment. It is considered to other countries in the region.

In different societies, social structures, work environment and family have affected women's access to job opportunities and caused job discrimination between men and women and limited women in accessing economic activities equal to men. However, today many developed countries have benefited from the role of women in the dynamism of society because the goal of these societies is to maximize social welfare,

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social welfare is also a function of factors such as social and economic, cultural and political participation of men and women (Pishgahifard and Polab, 2008). The data available in the country show that women are more concentrated in the public sector in the field of education and health, the number of jobs they can choose in the rural community is six job groups and in the whole country there are about two job groups, while men more than there are 36 occupational groups.

Structural comparison of women's employment in Iran and Germany in 2006 shows that in many industrialized countries, the share of women in economic activities is more than 60 percent, while the share of women working in developing countries has not exceeded 30 percent. , This rate in our country this year is about 13.9%. The share of women's employment in the service sector has increased to about 36.6 percent, and the lowest share of women's employment is in the construction, transportation, warehousing and communications sectors, which are considered to be a kind of male occupation.

By comparing the share of men and women in the share of employment in the whole country, we see an increase in this share in women, as if in activities such as agriculture, this share is superior to men. In a developed European country like Germany, not only girls have overtaken boys in education, but in recent years they have even surpassed them. The share of young women in university admissions is about 54%, and women in this country are increasingly turning to working life.

### **Literature Review**

Today, in issues related to development, the role and importance of human resources, especially women's employment, has attracted the attention of researchers and development experts. So that today one of the most important criteria for measuring the degree of development of a country is women's employment and this is always evaluated and measured as one of the main components of economic development (Pishgahifard and Polab, 2009, 89-89, 90). Increasing women's employment is directly related to increasing human capital. Also, this factor is one of the factors affecting economic growth (Harandi and Jamshidi, 2008, 204).

In underdeveloped countries, women are the first hope for the advancement of families and the growth and development of their society. The success of women in these societies not only brings economic benefits to the country but also creates social and cultural benefits (Seymour, 2001).

### **History**

An examination of women's work history reveals a complex relationship between working at home and working in the market. Or they worked close to it. There was no gender separation between productive and unproductive work, although some were specific to men and some to women, but all were in the service of the survival of the family. But with the industrial revolutions of the nineteenth century, wage labor was removed from the home and factories, offices, and the like were moved. Men and women and even children (at least in the working class) went out to work. Production was separated from consumption. Productive work distanced itself from unproductive (domestic) work, and gradually men became associated with the former and women with the latter. Women were excluded from employment, it was natural that a woman, or at least a married woman, should stay at home and take care of her children (most nineteenth-century feminists accepted this, and the debate was only about choice between work and marriage). What caused concern in the nineteenth century was not the need for women's employment but the emergence of wage-earning women in the public sphere (women's work in the domestic sphere was not considered at all).

This presence was met with very hostile opinions, and working women, especially married women and mothers, were considered abnormal and immoral, and negligent parents, and were also accused of taking work away from men.

The basis of these considerations was the growing ideology of domestic life, which was formed among the middle class between 1780 and 1830 and gradually spread to all classes, both male and female. This ideology divided the world into two separate realms. He also divided: home and public. Men must earn a living and support their families in public and politics, and women must be housewives, reach out to their husbands and children, and rely on their husbands' financial support.

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By the end of the nineteenth century, occupational discrimination had limited women to a small range of low-paying jobs. The low wages of women can be justified to the extent that because many women quit their jobs after marriage, working women were younger than men. Men often saw working women, especially married women, as a threat to their job and reputation as breadwinners, saying that the number of wage jobs was limited and that some families would be left without income if women were to work as well. It was also thought that women generally had lower wages because they could work for less than men. They concluded, then, that women should be excluded from wage labor or limited to the low-paying, female-dominated occupations. Of course, women did not remain silent and passive and fought at all levels to achieve equal employment rights or men, including their struggle for the right to university education and obtaining a medical license. Women also formed trade unions and fought against poor working conditions. Overall, however, men, trade unions, and the government succeeded in creating a segregated labor market, and by the end of the nineteenth century, the season of domestic life was gaining popularity among men and women of all social classes. Although many women worked during the years of World War I, they accepted that men should be given priority at the end of the war. Many employers, including banks and the government, enforced marriage prohibitions, meaning that women had to resign if they got married, which was the case with teachers until the 1944 Education Act was passed. Since World War II, the number of working women, especially among married people, has been increasing. However, in spite of the law, equal wages and equal opportunities, the segregated labor market remains in place and the ideology of home life prevails.

Today, World Bank reports show that the world has come to the conclusion that economic development alone is not the answer to the whole concept of development, but that national capital consists of three main sources: human resources and physical resources. And natural resources despite the necessity of women's social and economic presence, by emphasizing employment, some laws and regulations or the custom of societies cause restrictions for women. In Iran, the study of laws and regulations shows the extent to which women are present and successful in the field of employment, and in what sectors they are limited and appropriate solutions and methods should be found for them (Gramizadegan, 2013)

### **Previous Research**

Bicakova (2012) in her research, in addition to pointing out the gap in the labor market of men and women with regard to the unemployment rate, has also examined the reasons for this gap. In this study, the gender gap in the unemployment rate is attributed to the effects of childbirth on women's labor force participation. The study also shows that in Eastern European countries, employers are less inclined to hire married women, and this is a factor in creating a gender gap in the labor market.

Barbara Ibrahim (1989) in her article entitled Policies Affecting Women's Employment in the Formal Sector: Strategies for Change states that women's participation as a formal labor force is increasing in many developed countries. But working conditions, wages, job security are declining. Various approaches to government policies from the perspective of women's employment. Growth-oriented economic policies have opened up new employment opportunities in the formal sector since the 1980s, but the rewards, status, and security of these jobs for the growing women's sector are declining. Unemployment and unproductive work are also higher for women than men in developing countries. These conditions place a great deal of responsibility in fundraising communities in collaboration with feminist researchers and activists seeking effective ways to increase job opportunities for women. Improving working conditions and job creation will require more attention to private sector investment patterns and public spending on employment, as well as labor laws and enforcement.

According to the results of a study conducted by Qureshi (2000), Society limits gender attitudes because the gender division of labor employs women's skills in certain occupations. The results of this study show that among those employed in the economic sector, half of them receive a salary, of which 9.4% are women employed in the public sector and 19.3% in the private sector. The results also show that women are concentrated in specific occupations. 46% are engaged in teaching, of which 86.7% are engaged in

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primary and secondary education. There is a similar situation in health professions, only 15.9% of physicians are women, while 93.4% of nurses (and other low-level medical professions) are women.

### **Research method**

In this research, we tried to identify experts and experts active in the field of employment, women's affairs and services who are familiar with the concepts and literature of the research. Also, specialists in three groups of managers and experts in women's affairs, experts and managers of labor, cooperation and social welfare, and professors and researchers active in the field of women's employment in the service sector based on experience and experience, as well as active in theoretical and Academically classified. In selecting professors and researchers, an attempt was made to invite a number of professors who have been involved in multidisciplinary activities. This selection led to a more holistic view of the whole issue.

Since experts and experts do not have equal social effects and organizations in different fields related to research do not have the same level of activity, therefore they do not have the same chance (probability) to be selected, so the sampling method selected in this study Sampling is unlikely. In this study, the snowball method was selected as the unlikely sampling method. At first, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the Director General of Women Affairs of the Governorate, the Head of the Department of Labor and Cooperation and Social Welfare and the university professors. Introduce themselves and the university based on the definition of the statistical community. In the second round, department managers were introduced and in the third round, experts and activists familiar with the research topic were identified.

A total of 35 people were identified and 20 people participated in the study. 9 people did not participate in the research due to unwillingness, 2 people due to not being at work, 4 people did not participate in the research due to busy work.

In total, 7 experts from the governorate's women's affairs, 8 from the labor and social affairs department, and 5 professors and researchers participated in this study.

### **Research stages**

The future research of women's employment in the service sector was conducted with the collective participation of various experts and experts in the form of four stages, which will be explained in detail below.

#### **1-1-4 First stage:**

At the beginning of the research, the required skills were identified, then the relevant organizations (including the Governor's Women's Affairs and the Labor and Social Affairs Organization) were identified. The sites and authors of related articles were reviewed to study the literature and research concepts.

Key variables and influential factors were extracted from the literature and future studies of women's employment in the service sector. Then, the most important areas and variables were completed and corrected by semi-structured interviews with experts.

In the interviews, six areas of political, economic, social, cultural, technology, and environment were considered, but according to the summary of experts' opinions, the field of environment was eliminated.

Also, the following new factors and variables were added to the factors identified from the literature review, which include:

- a. The evolution of computers
- b. Global trade

Finally, 40 variables affecting the future of women's employment in the service sector were extracted. At this stage, the number of social variables was 15 cases, economic variables 10 cases, for the cultural field 6 cases, technology field 4 cases and for the political field 5 cases.

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### *4-1-2 Second stage:*

In the second round of futures research, women's employment in the service sector was dedicated to prioritizing issues and variables. All the issues raised in the first round were summarized and presented to the experts for prioritization and identification of the most important ones.

The Interaction Questionnaire was developed after achieving the importance of the identified key factors (questioned) on the future employment of women in the service sector. Respondents identified the importance of each of the 40 items through scoring to finally prioritize issues. Respondents gave each item a score from 0 to 10. The number 0 meant that the item was insignificant to the subject of the research, and the range of numbers 1 to 10 indicated the degree of importance from very low to very high. Similarly, another questionnaire was distributed about the uncertainty of each of the variables in the study area, in which the number zero meant the certainty of the situation and its specific task for the future employment of women in the service sector, and numbers from 1 to 10 They determined certainty from too little to too much.

### *4-1-3 Step 3:*

Using the preliminary phase questionnaires, the most important and most uncertain variables were identified and then the effects of each factor on other factors were examined and the relationships between the factors were quantified using the opinions of experts. In this regard, a 20 20 matrix was prepared to identify the interactions of the variables. For each pair of variables I and J, questions were asked: "Is there a direct relationship between variables I and J or not?"

Simply put, for each of the elements in column one to 20 of the matrix, the question was asked 19 times whether the variable in row I had a direct effect on the variable in column J. Thus, the asymmetric interaction matrix was completed with 361 expert questions. This stage was done using in-depth interviews and the formation of a panel of experts in which only 5 experts were willing to participate.

### *4-1-4 Step 4:*

This step includes statistical and software analysis of the interaction matrix. After identifying the effects of each factor on other factors and quantifying the relationships, it is time to structurally analyze the system in order to analyze the network of interactions of factors. Structural analysis was performed with the aim of identifying the indirect effects of each of the variables and influencing factors in the whole system. For the future study of women's employment in the service sector, 20 variables were selected for cross-sectional analysis and analysis of their network relationships. As the number of variables increases, interaction analysis becomes more complex and confusing.

In cross-matrix analysis with Mick Mac software, 6 steps are performed as follows. These steps are in order of priority (Nazemi, 2007).

- a . Understand the system and observe the stability or instability of the system
- B. Identify the direct and indirect effects of variables that have a high degree
- c . Identify the main factors and drivers and use them in screenwriting
- d. General understanding of the system and avoidance of partial analysis
- e. Identify system destabilizing factors and avoid partial analysis
- f . Identify system destabilizing factors (factors that need to be managed)
- g. Identify the environment by measuring the impact

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Research Findings**

Among the 20 factors studied in this study, 7 factors have been selected as key factors affecting the future of women's employment in the service sector. In selecting these factors, in addition to direct effects, indirect effects have also been considered, which are compared in Table 4-6.

Based on the outputs of structural analysis and Mick Mac software, the variables: women's political participation, changing labor market approach from goods and production to services, the growing role of women in various fields, laws and facilities on women's employment, changes in General rules, work-life

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balance, and attitudes toward marriage and family are known to be key variables. Key variables are variables that are of strategic importance due to the possibility of affecting them and their great impact on the system. Therefore, emphasizing these variables and the management system's efforts to guide future changes in the system is of fundamental importance. Variables in area 1 (coordinate axis) are among the problems facing the management system in the sectors related to women's employment. Laws and facilities on women's employment are among the most important variables that have been more strategically important than other variables.

**Table 1: Summarizes the types of structural analysis of interactions**

Indirect interactions	Direct interactions	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laws and facilities on women's employment</li> <li>2. Changes in general rules</li> <li>3. Women's political participation</li> <li>4. The growing role of women in various fields</li> <li>5. Changing attitudes towards marriage and family</li> <li>6. Increasing the ability of society to face cultural differences</li> <li>7. Balance between work and life</li> <li>8. Changing the approach of the labor market from goods and production to services</li> <li>9. Attitudes towards women's employment</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Laws and facilities on women's employment</li> <li>2. Changes in general rules</li> <li>3. Women's political participation</li> <li>4. The growing role of women in various fields</li> <li>5. Changing attitudes towards marriage and family</li> <li>6. Replacing technology with human resources</li> <li>7. Balance between work and life</li> <li>8. Changing the approach of the labor market from goods and production to services</li> </ol>	<p>Top-right area variables</p> <p>High effectiveness</p> <p>High effectiveness</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Return on investment in services</li> <li>2. Replacing technology with manpower</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Return on investment in services</li> <li>1. Increasing the ability of society to face cultural differences</li> </ol>	<p>Top-left area variables</p> <p>High effectiveness</p> <p>Low impact</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women hold key jobs</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Women hold key jobs</li> <li>2. Views on women's employment</li> </ol>	<p>Bottom-right area variables</p> <p>Low impact</p> <p>High effectiveness</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing inequality and growing the economic gap</li> <li>2. Convergence of the four technologies of nanotechnology, biology, cognition, information and communication</li> <li>3. Further divergence of political thoughts and interests in the country</li> <li>4. Cultural influence of other countries and cultures in Iran</li> <li>5. The growth of e-commerce</li> <li>6. Dominance of technology in social and economic fields</li> <li>7. The evolution of computers</li> <li>8. Increasing urbanization and growth of metropolises</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increasing inequality and growing the economic gap</li> <li>2. Convergence of the four technologies of nanotechnology, biology, cognition, information and communication</li> <li>3. Further divergence of political thoughts and interests in the country</li> <li>4. Cultural influence of other countries and cultures in Iran</li> <li>5. The growth of e-commerce</li> <li>6. Dominance of technology in social and economic fields</li> <li>7. The evolution of computers</li> <li>8. Increasing urbanization and growth of metropolises</li> </ol>	<p>Bottom-left area variables</p> <p>Low impact</p> <p>Low impact</p>

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In recent years, the futuristic approach has entered the planning and the method of cross-impact analysis is one of its methods that tries to deal with cause and effect relationships between indicators affecting the position, while identifying the main trends that shape the future. Identify possible scenarios. This study tried to provide a model for identifying key effective factors, to prepare the ground for possible and probable scenarios in the coming years of women's employment in the service sector. The data of this study included 40 factors that using the study literature and then semi-structured interviews and questionnaires through experts active in the service and employment of the Labor and Social Welfare Cooperative Organization of Provinces and Women's Affairs of different governorates Collected, corrected and completed. Finally, using the interaction questionnaire, 20 variables that had the highest uncertainty with a high degree of importance from the point of view of experts were selected and analyzed with Mick Mac software. Finally, women's political participation, changing the approach of the labor market from goods and production to services, the growing role of women in various fields, laws and facilities on women's employment, changes in general laws, changing attitudes towards marriage and the family as Key variables are known.

### **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

Unemployment in the Iranian labor market has been one of the biggest challenges in the country in the last two decades. On the other hand, women are less likely than men to enter the labor market. What has exacerbated women's unemployment and seen this problem is the increase in the number of university-educated women ready to work.

Therefore, the issue of employment, especially women's employment in recent decades has become one of the most important and influential issues in the country's decisions and planning. An important point that should not be forgotten is the government's employment development priorities. The entry of our country's labor market has increased in recent years, and on the other hand, the labor market for various reasons, including the mismatch between university education and labor market needs, lack of definition of new jobs, little attention to the issue of idea generation, smuggling of goods And ..... does not have the capacity to accept it. Accordingly, considering that the presumption of employment in Iran is masculine and men are considered the breadwinners of the family, and in reducing the unemployment rate, priority has been given on this basis. This situation will change in the future for two reasons: first, the supply and demand of labor is changing to some extent and moving towards balance, and second, we are witnessing cultural changes in the country that are moving towards changing this equation. Hence, the issue of women's employment moves from a gender perspective to a meritocratic approach. It can also be expected that the social insurance system in the coming years will move from an employment-oriented system with an emphasis on formal and male-oriented employment to a flexible system.

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