

# Gender Apartheid in Iran and Its Effect on Science

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**International Day of Women and Girls in Science**

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# Outline

- Introduction
- What is Gender Apartheid?
- Why It Matters in Science
- How can we act?



# Introduction



Population: 89 Million

# Gender Apartheid in Iran

- **Gender in Iran: female/male**
- **Gender Apartheid:** A **systematic** segregation and oppression based on gender. **Legal** and Social Discrimination
  - **Gender Inequality Index (2021) Rank: 115th out of 191**
  - **Global Gender Gap Index (2022) Rank: 143rd out of 146**
- It starts at age 6.
- Women make up **over 60%** of university students (?) but are disproportionately underrepresented in STEM fields.
- Women banned from studying specific fields in universities.
- Female **unemployment** rate among university graduates exceeds **50%**.
- **Legal** barriers to work in male-dominated STEM sectors. How?
- **Mandatory hijab laws** limiting freedom and participation.

# Women in Iran Before Revolution 1979



Tehran University, 1934

یک چهارم گروه

دانشمندان اتمی

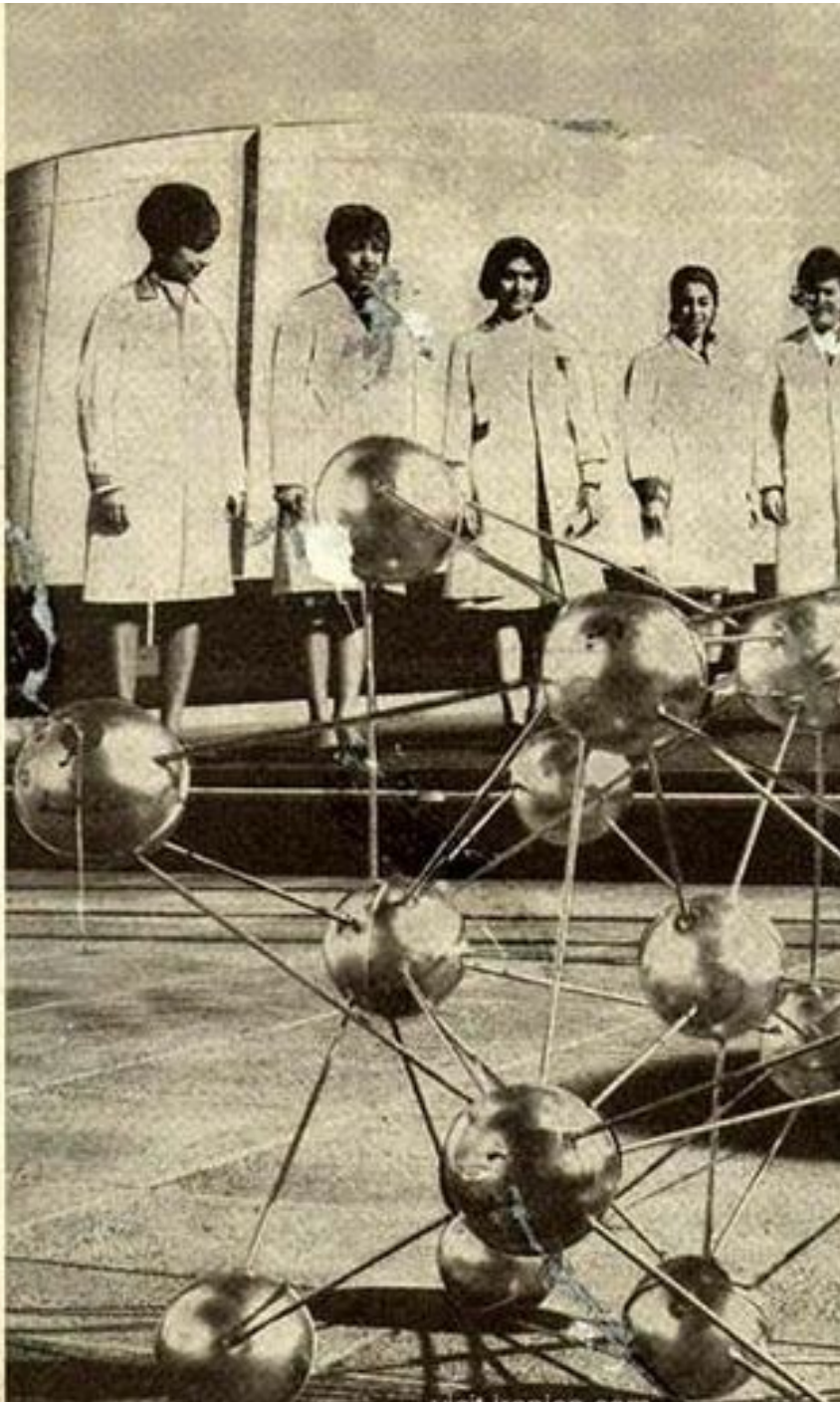
ایران خانمها

هستند!

★ چگونه میتوان شوهر  
را با اتم آشتی داد؟  
★ زنان اتم شناس ایران  
خیاطی و آشپزی را  
نیز باندازه کارخوش  
دوست میدارند.

\* استاد «آزاد» بنیانگذار  
راکتور اتمی ایران  
میگوید: زنان دانشمند  
از پایه های دانش اتمی  
در ایران هستند.

از راست بچپ: دکتر مرآت - رقیه  
باقرزاده اکبری - دکتر همین دخت  
رحمانی - ثریه سعیدی - ماهرو اکبر  
نیا - فرزانه محمدی - دکتر الهامیاری -  
دکتر زهره طالبیان آزاده



Female Iranian PhDs in front of Tehran University's reactor, 1968.

"A quarter of Iran's Nuclear Energy scientists are women".

# Women in Iran after Revolution

- Permit of education
- Permit of work
- Permit of travel
- Permit of divorce
- Permit of having your children
- Permit of having passport
- Permit of doing surgery

# Schools





# Chemical Attacks On Schoolgirls 2022-2023



# Effects on Science

- Limited Access to Education
- Restriction of opportunities in key scientific fields
- Barriers to Professional Advancement
- Male-dominated academic institutions and workplaces
- Brain Drain



Maryam Mirzakhani

1977 – 2017

First Woman Fields Medalist

# Hijab in Iran

Late 3rd Millennium BC  
silver cup, Marvdasht



Mosaics of Iranian women from the Sassanid  
Persian Empire period (224AD - 651AD)



# Before Revolution



# Protests against Compulsory Hijab 1979



# Protests: 1999



Tehran University  
July 1999  
7 Killed students  
300 arrested



Fereshteh Alizadeh  
Alzahra University

# Green Movement: 2009



Neda Agha Soltan (1983 - 2009)

Dec. 27, 2017



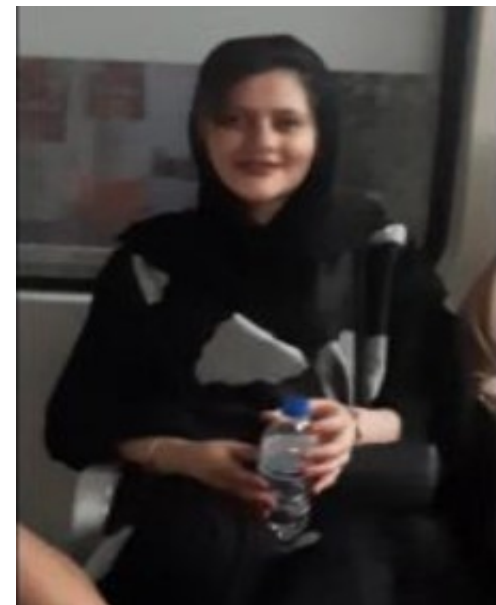
Vida Movahed (1985)



2022



16 Sep. 2022 death of Mahsa (Zhina) Amini  
2 Oct. bloody day (Sharif Uni.)



Nov. 2, 2024



Ahou Daryayi

# History

- 20 Apr. 1980 – 1984 Cultural Revolution
- ~ 30 killed students
- > 7000 fired faculty members
- > 20000 students expelled
- 2,300,000 students
- 86,000 faculty member

Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution

Abdolhossein Khosropanah  
17 Jan. 2023



# Disciplinary Committee of universities

Members:

- President of the University
- Vice President of Student Affairs
- Agent of supreme leader
- Security guard (IRGC)

Two kind of evaluation

- scientific
- ideological and political

# Oppression

- Failure to provide university services to students with bad hijab
- morality police in universities
- Permission to register to new semester under the condition of commitment to hijab
- Gender segregation of lessons
- Sexual harassment by security guards in universities

# Suggested Actions

- Statements to support Iranian scholars
- Advocate for gender equality and academic freedom in Iran
- Advocacy for Iranian Women in Science
- Funding and programs for displaced female scholars
- Promote awareness through global platforms
- Mentorship initiatives and opportunities for collaboration.

# International Community of Iranian Academics (ICOIA)

Stablished in October 2022  
To be voice of academics in Iran

<https://icoia.org/>



## Conclusion

- Gender apartheid in Iran is a major obstacle to scientific progress.
- Addressing these challenges is critical for a just and equitable future in science.
- The international community has a role to play in combating these injustices.

**The power of science lies in its universality.**

**When we exclude, we lose.**

**When we include, we grow.**



**Thank you**



# Killed Students



Negin Abdolmaleki

21 year-old

Medical Engeneering



Ghazal Amiri

22 year-old

Dental



Aylar Haghi  
23 year-old  
Medicine



Donya Farhadi  
22 year-old  
Architecture



Behnaz Afshari

# Special Cases

Melika Qaragozlu  
22 year-old  
Journalism  
Allameh Tabatabaee Uni.  
3 yrs & 8 months prison sentence  
(compulsory hijab)  
hospitalized in a Psychiatric hospital



Leila Hossein Zadeh  
Tehran Uni.  
20 Aug. 2022 - 9 Jan. 2023