



# WOMEN of IRAN

Vice Presidency  
of Women and  
Family Affairs



## Iranian Women: The Untold Stories

Throughout Iran's rich and glorious history, Iranian women have played a pivotal role in the nation's growth and progress, demonstrating remarkable dedication, creativity, and resilience. With active participation across diverse fields—including science, culture, economy, sports, politics, and social affairs—they have not only shaped the course of society but also maintained their indispensable role within the family. Their contributions have paved new pathways toward sustainable development and societal advancement.

Yet, despite their significant achievements and influential presence, their stories remain largely untold, leaving behind many narratives that deserve to be shared and celebrated.

As the leading governmental body for women's affairs, the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran has consistently worked to formulate policies, implement diverse empowerment initiatives, and create opportunities that elevate the status of women. Beyond this, it strives to highlight and promote the capabilities and accomplishments of Iranian women both nationally and on the global stage.

This brief account seeks to offer a glimpse into the remarkable achievements of Iranian women, sharing a part of their journey, perseverance, and impact—stories that deserve recognition and a broader audience.



## Policy Support and Strategic Educational Reforms

According to the progressive principles of the Constitution, Iran's educational system guarantees free education up to secondary school and access to higher education for all. Additionally, policy frameworks such as the Charter on Women's Rights and Responsibilities and innovative laws related to women's education have paved the way for reducing the gender gap and creating equal learning opportunities. Leveraging these achievements, Iran has taken firm strides toward educational justice and women's empowerment, presenting a successful model in this domain.

### Remarkable Achievements in Girls' Education

The increasing participation of girls in education is one of Iran's most notable educational advancements. The 115% rise in primary school enrollment and the 84% increase in high school participation highlight special attention to girls' education and equal opportunities.



*Achieved third place globally in the 2024 International Olympiad competitions, winning 10 gold, 10 silver, and 2 bronze medals, ranking behind China and the United States.*

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Additionally, the 48% growth rate in female students compared to males reflects a positive societal shift in attitudes toward girls' education and its crucial role in sustainable development. These improvements have not only elevated the country's scientific status but also enabled women's active participation in social, economic, and cultural spheres.

#### Supporting Talented Female Students & Global Achievements

The National Elites Foundation was established to provide special support for gifted students, offering unique facilities to enhance their capabilities. Of the 62,500 students supported, 15,772 (25%) are girls.



On the international stage, Iran achieved remarkable success in the 2024 International Olympiads, securing third place worldwide across five major competitions with participation from 53 to 110 countries. Iranian students attained:

- 1st place in the International Astronomy and Astrophysics Olympiad,
- 4th place in Biology and Physics,
- 8th place in Chemistry,
- 9th place in Computer Science,
- 18th place in Mathematics.

### Women's Role in Education & Future Prospects

Women constitute about 60% of the country's teaching workforce, underscoring their irreplaceable role in educating future generations. These achievements stem from strategic policies and targeted planning aimed at empowering women and increasing their participation in the academic and educational landscape.

*115% growth in primary school enrollment among girls.  
84% increase in high school enrollment for female students.*

*48% higher growth rate in female student enrollment compared to male students.  
Gender gap in education has been eliminated at both primary and secondary levels.*

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*25% of talented female students are among those supported by the National Elites Foundation.*

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*97% literacy rate among individuals aged 10 to 49, significantly improving women's access to education and eradicating illiteracy.*

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*Women comprise approximately 60% of the country's teaching community, playing a crucial role in shaping the future generations.*



# Women's Role in Public Life and Decision-Making

Women's participation in public life and decision-making is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development and social progress in any country. As enshrined in the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran, political participation and access to leadership positions are recognized as a right for women. In recent years, significant strides have been made to enhance women's presence in key governmental and managerial roles based purely on merit and justice, leading to an increase in the percentage of female managers in government agencies from 12% to 30%.

According to the National Administrative Statistics Yearbook, by the end of 2022, the total number of official, contractual, and temporary employees in executive organizations reached 2,246,397 people, of whom 1,247,559 (56%) were men and 998,838 (44%) were women. By the end of 2024, this ratio is projected to shift to 45%



*Over 190 women appointed to high-level managerial positions since the establishment of the National Unity Government.*





women and 55% men, demonstrating a clear commitment to gender equity in employment within Iran's administrative system.

Further analysis of employment distribution by government branches in 2023 shows that:

45.9% of employed women work in the executive branch.

22.98% in the judiciary.

13.31% in the legislature.

17.81% in institutions outside the three branches of government.

#### Growth in Women's Leadership Positions

The appointment of women to leadership and decision-making roles has seen significant growth. Between 2020 and 2023, the number of women in managerial positions more than doubled, rising from 19,597 in 2020 to 42,396 in 2023.

Since taking office in summer 2024, the National Unity Government has prioritized women's participation in high-level policymaking.





More than 190 women have been appointed to senior managerial positions, marking historic firsts in the Islamic Republic of Iran's governance. Key appointments include:

- Four women in the 14th Cabinet.

- 14 women leading national institutions under direct presidential orders.

- 13 female deputy ministers.

- 17 women as advisors and assistants to ministers.

- 110 female directors-general.

- 17 female governors and 16 female district governors.

This approach emphasizes inclusivity, ensuring representation from diverse ethnic and social backgrounds. Additionally, with the President's directive to increase women's presence in senior provincial leadership (e.g., governors, district governors), the government aims to appoint 1,885 women to managerial roles across ministries, affiliated organizations, and local administrations by the end of 2024.





*Four women in the 14th Cabinet (15% of cabinet members), including the first-ever female spokesperson of the Iranian government and the Minister of Roads and Urban Development.*

*14 women appointed to lead key institutions under direct orders from the President.*

*13 female deputy ministers, 17 advisors and assistants to ministers, 110 directors-general, 17 governors, and 16 district governors.*

*49% female participation in the presidential elections.*

*A 45:55 female-to-male ratio in government employment.*



*14 women serving as members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly.*

*1,006 female judges and 13 women appointed as deputy prosecutors.*

*Increase in female managers in government agencies from 12% to 30%.*





# The Role of Rural and Nomadic Women in Iran

With an estimated population of 11 million, rural and nomadic women are among the most essential contributors to Iran's traditional workforce. Throughout history, they have played a pivotal role in local and national economies, standing alongside their families as pillars of agricultural households and key providers of food security. In addition to their agricultural roles, they are also recognized as local healers due to their traditional knowledge of medicinal plants.

However, climate change, water scarcity, global warming, and consecutive droughts have brought new challenges to their livelihoods. The decline of livestock farming, agriculture, and horticulture, coupled with migration and shifting cultural and economic patterns, has directly impacted their employment opportunities, income, and way of life. In response, the Islamic Republic of Iran has prioritized investment in education, awareness-building, empowerment, and support programs tailored to rural and nomadic women.



*300,000 rural and nomadic women trained annually through entrepreneurship promotion and sustainable business development programs, with a focus on STEM education.*



### Government Initiatives for Rural and Nomadic Women

Each year, independent financial resources are allocated to improve the conditions of rural and nomadic women and girls. Some of the key national initiatives include:

The National Women's Empowerment and Employment Development Plan, which aims to enhance professional skills in the agriculture sector, enabling rural and nomadic women and girls to play a more active role in rural and agricultural development through capacity-building, institutionalization, entrepreneurship promotion, and sustainable business development.

The National Program for Reintegrating Girls Left Out of Education, which provides free education to ensure rural and nomadic girls return to school.

Special programs to improve access to healthcare, medical services, insurance, and social support for nomadic communities.

The National Program for Women's Social Resilience, implemented





through trained local NGOs, which provides education and resilience training for women in marginalized, vulnerable, and disaster-prone communities in collaboration with the Offices of Women and Family Affairs in provincial governments.

Additionally, the Iranian government has established 4,200 microcredit funds to facilitate access to financial resources for rural and nomadic women, ensuring the sustainability of their businesses under the LNSIE model. Recognizing the need for greater empowerment, the government has prioritized the promotion of STEM education, with 300,000 women receiving training annually.

Iran has also engaged in international collaborations to further support rural women:

Joint initiatives with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to provide rapid response programs during the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure food security and nutrition for rural women and their families.

Implementation of the Human Security Project for Rural Women, in cooperation with bilateral and international partners.



*4,200 microcredit funds established for rural and nomadic women to support the structured development of rural micro-businesses based on the NSIE model.*

*Implementation of the National Program for Social Resilience in response to climate change.*

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The Sustainable Agriculture Development and Food Security Project, co-financed by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

These comprehensive efforts highlight Iran's commitment to empowering rural and nomadic women, ensuring their economic independence, resilience to climate change, and access to vital resources for a sustainable future.



*Over 60,000 rural and nomadic women are members of 2,000 rural and nomadic cooperatives. Social security coverage for self-employed rural and nomadic women.*

*Social security coverage for stay-at-home rural women with three children.*



## Advancing Women's Leadership in Environmental and Crisis Management

Recognizing the significance of this issue, the Islamic Republic of Iran has undertaken numerous initiatives to increase women's participation and leadership in key environmental and crisis management sectors. These efforts include developing educational programs, signing cooperation agreements, and creating job and leadership opportunities for women in both governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Empowering women in decision-making and policy-setting roles has been a priority, demonstrated by their appointment to five consecutive terms as Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment, a position with national authority over environmental policies. Additionally, women have led the National Meteorological Organization, held one-fourth of senior management positions in environmental agencies, and spearheaded regional environmental initiatives in Asia. Iran has also worked





*Held the position of Vice President and Head of the Department of Environment for five consecutive terms.*

*Led the National Meteorological Organization as a senior female executive.*

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toward securing a regional representative seat (Asia) in the World Meteorological Organization's Special Task Force for reviewing regional environmental strategies. Moreover, an Iranian woman has been appointed as the Special Advisor on Hydrology Coordination and Deputy Chair of the Regional Services Working Group (Asia) of the World Meteorological Organization.

#### Educational and Youth Engagement in Environmental Protection

In addition to leadership initiatives, Iran has introduced new educational programs in high schools and technical institutes, such as ranger training courses, to raise awareness among young people about environmental conservation. By incorporating environmental studies into the education system, Iran is fostering a generation of environmentally responsible and conscious individuals who will play a vital role in the country's sustainable future.

#### Women's Role in Crisis Management and Climate Action

Iran has also prioritized women's needs in disaster response efforts, particularly during natural disasters and crises. Key actions include:

- Providing hygiene and medical supplies tailored for women in affected areas.

- Offering low-interest loans to female-led households to support recovery efforts.

- Establishing safe shelters for women in disaster-stricken regions.

These measures highlight the essential role of women in crisis



*Women occupy one-fourth of senior management positions in the country's environmental sector.*

*40% of deputy positions within the Environmental Protection Organization are held by women.*

*Iranian women lead the Regional Concept Team in Asia.*

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management and their empowerment in addressing environmental and social challenges.

The establishment of the “Women and Climate Change” working group, chaired by the Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs, is one of Iran’s most recent initiatives. This group, composed of representatives from various government bodies, aims to leverage women’s potential, empower families, and enhance women’s active participation in climate change mitigation and crisis prevention. Women are recognized as key drivers of sustainable development, playing a critical role in shaping climate resilience strategies and environmental policies.





# Empowering Women in Sports

In recent years, the Islamic Republic of Iran has taken significant steps to enhance women's participation in sports, recognizing their crucial role in this field. One of the most notable achievements has been winning over 3,950 medals in global competitions, showcasing the exceptional talent and resilience of Iranian female athletes. These accomplishments not only bring pride to the nation but also inspire future generations to engage more actively in sports. Additionally, the participation of over 935,000 professional female athletes across the country highlights the growing culture of sports and the increasing involvement of women in athletic activities.

## Women in Sports Leadership

Iranian women have also made remarkable strides in sports leadership and management:

85 Iranian women are engaged in international sports organizations,



*Over 3,950 medals won by female athletes in global competitions.*

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contributing to decision-making at the global level.

Over 100 leadership positions in international sports federations are held by Iranian women, reinforcing their influence in shaping global sports policies.

51 women serve as presidents and vice presidents of national sports federations, while approximately 70 women lead provincial sports committees, marking a major step forward in sports governance and leadership.

#### Women in Coaching, Refereeing, and Sports Education

Iranian women have also excelled in sports education and coaching, playing a crucial role in developing future athletes:

Over 9,000 female sports instructors actively contribute to training programs.

More than 150,000 female sports coaches mentor and guide athletes across various disciplines.

*Iran's National Paralympic Committee received the 2025 International Women's Day Award for achieving a 62% increase in female participation in the Paralympics.*

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*Approximately 85 Iranian women actively engaged in international sports organizations. Over 100 international leadership positions held by Iranian women in global sports federations.*

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Over 97,000 female referees officiate at national and international sporting events.

Approximately 16,111 women-only sports clubs provide dedicated spaces for female athletes to train and compete.

#### Women in Paralympic Sports

Iranian women have achieved outstanding success in Paralympic sports, with a 62% increase in female participation leading to global recognition:

Iran's National Paralympic Committee was honored with the 2025 International Women's Day Award for its efforts in empowering female athletes with disabilities.

This achievement underscores Iran's commitment to inclusivity and equal opportunities in sports, ensuring that women with disabilities have the support and resources needed to excel on the global stage.

#### Conclusion

These achievements collectively demonstrate Iran's dedication to fostering women's participation in sports at all levels—athletic, managerial, and educational. By supporting female athletes, expanding leadership roles, and creating inclusive opportunities, Iran continues to pave the way for women to attain top positions in national and international sports arenas.