

PREFACE

In the course of teaching sociology to North Americans, I discovered that reports on the Iranian family and gender roles were received with great interest by my students. Eventually it occurred to me that I should prepare something in book form, and an anthology appeared to be the first step. This collection, therefore, is intended only as a modest vehicle for familiarizing those interested in the situation of women and the family in Iran. The intention is not to provide data in support of a specific theoretical approach, although some of the papers contain theoretical frameworks.

Since, in most cultures, women's activities are primarily confined to their roles as wives and mothers, an examination of family interaction is necessary for an understanding of the situation of women, and vice versa. This consideration has affected the selection of papers.

It should be noted that in spite of the assignment of the papers to specific parts in this volume, most of them are also relevant to other parts of the book. For instance, some of the papers which appear in the historical section use sociological perspectives, while papers in the cultural section also have historical import.

As for the transliteration of Persian and Arabic words, because of the diverse backgrounds of the contributors and other difficulties, it was decided to let each author choose his or her own style.

There is also a certain amount of repetition of background information among the papers. These repetitions have not been eliminated because the passages contain analyses which, in their different contexts, are necessary for the flow of the discussion.

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