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## The Position of Good Governance in Iran from the Perspective of Human Development Indicators during the Years 2000-2010

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### Abstract

Achieving human development and good governance through appropriate functions between various institutions of society is one of the main criteria for measuring the prosperity and development of countries in recent decades and can meet the needs of citizens in a society. The current research with descriptive-analytical-comparative method and within the framework of the theory of "new institutionalism" and "ideal governance" seeks to answer this main question; that "what is the optimal governance position in Iran in 2000-2010 from the perspective of human development indicators?" Based on the surveys by using reliable sources such as books and researches and reliable websites and by calculating the average indicators of optimal governance from the perspective of human development indicators in the two areas of "efficiency" and "social welfare", which include efficiency and effectiveness, unemployment rate, gross national product, life expectancy, health, education and gender equality in the governments of Khatami and Ahmadinejad. And also, by presenting charts and comparing these indicators with each other, it was concluded that all the indicators of the hypothesis were ranked higher. But the position of both governments is lower than the average of human development at the global level due to various institutional weaknesses.

**Keywords:** Good Governance, Human Development, Social Welfare, Civil Society, Institutionalism

## Introduction

In this article, with a novel look at the category of "optimal governance", we are going to look at the issue of development only through the lens of "optimal governance"; This time, from the point of view of "human indicators", let's discuss the category of "optimal governance". Our target society in this article is Iran's reformist and fundamentalist government between 2000-2010; By comparing them in the theoretical framework of "new institutionalism" over a decade, the researchers seek to answer the question of what is the position of good governance of these two governments in 2000-2010 from the perspective of human development indicators? The research hypothesis is based on the principle that from the point of view of social welfare (educational-health) in good governance and considering the improvement of human development indicators such as health, education and gender equality, both governments are ranked higher. And on the other hand, from the point of view of efficiency in good governance and considering the decline of human development indicators in areas such as unemployment rate, reduction of gross national income and life expectancy, both governments are placed in relatively moderate ranks. Therefore, to answer the main question of the article and to test the hypothesis, indicators such as efficiency and social welfare in the two mentioned governments are examined during the years in question and comparative charts are drawn for each of these indicators.

### **Theoretical framework: from institutionalism and development to good governance**

Institutionalism, whose roots can be found in the 19th century and in the historical schools of Germany and England, can be studied under the two main currents of old and new institutionalism despite the various branches. Early institutionalists appeared as a completely criti-

cal movement against neoclassical economics and its assumptions. While the new institutionalists have accepted the general acceptance of neoclassical economics and have tried to correct and eliminate its shortcomings. (Rizondi et al., 2015, p. 190) The new institutional school advocates a program of social reform in order to distribute wealth and income more equitably; And in addition to accepting the classical ideas that market prices can lead to the optimal allocation of resources and incomes without the intervention of governments, he believes in the role of governments through the application of social costs for the fair distribution of wealth and income. (Sharif Azadeh and others, 2014, p. 4-7).

Paying attention to the relationship between development and institutions has a long history and can be seen even in the works of Adam Smith. Even when Smith wants to point out the causes of differences between countries and their economic status, he pays special attention to institutions and says in this context: China has been one of the richest countries for a long time. In other words, it is one of the most fertile countries where it is cultivated well and it is a highly industrialized and highly populated country. It seems that this country has long reached a desirable level of wealth, which is due to the nature of its laws and institutions. (Ahmadi, 2010, pp. 55-59).

Among the indicators in development, the human development index is extremely important. This index is announced annually by international organizations for various countries in the world and is a well-known criterion for measuring the well-being of a society. It was announced for the first time in 1990 in the first human development report and in its definition, it can be said; Development is a process that is formed from the expansion of people's choices, and these choices can be unlimited. At all levels of development, three main criteria have been

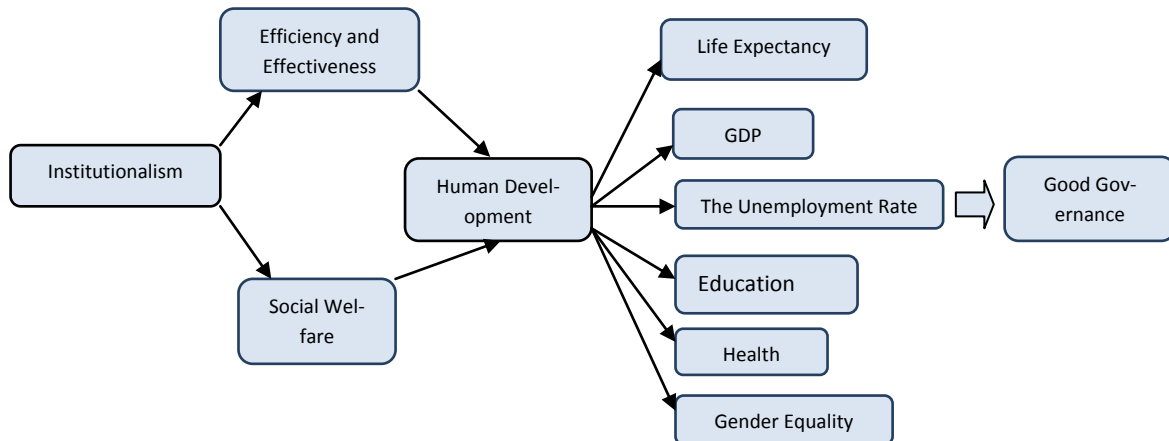
proposed, including 1- the possibility of enjoying a long life with health, 2- acquiring science and knowledge, 3- free access to the resources needed to achieve a decent level of life. (Kolman, Rodriguez and Choi, 2011, p. 4). And if these three things are not provided, the other things will be meaningless.

The concept of governance is not a new concept and its history is as long as human civilization. Regarding the concept of governance, it can be said that governance in its essence is cooperation and interaction between civil society and the political system or cooperation between the government and citizens. Governance refers to the campaigns or decision-making processes in society, how power is exercised, and how individuals and groups relate. In other words, governance finds meaning and meaning in connection with how power is used, interaction and accountability (Saei & et al., 2010, p. 65). In fact, governance means the institutionalization process of development during which decisions are implemented. And this governance has focused on how governments and other social institutions interact with each other, how to communicate with citizens and how to make decisions in a complex world.

In general, good governance has principles and components that governments can take

effective steps in the increasing process of development in various dimensions by following these principles. These components are: 1- rule of law 2- justice 3- transparency 4- fight against corruption 5- responsibility 6- accountability 7- consensus building 8- participation 9- efficiency and effectiveness.

In this article, to answer the main question and to measure and compare the position of optimal governance from the perspective of human development indicators in Iran in 2000-2010; It is necessary to examine two indicators of efficiency and social welfare based on the following analytical model in order to compare the state of good governance in the two governments from the perspective of institutionalism. In fact, from the perspective of this analytical model, the government institution with the help of other institutions such as the private sector and civil society in a situation with open access order can provide a suitable platform for regulating the economic relations of citizens; And as a big contributor to economic institutions, cause economic growth and development. Therefore, institutions through cooperation with each other can fix each other's shortcomings and provide development in various dimensions, including human development, and as a result, good governance.



**Fig 1: Analytical model**

### **Efficiency and effectiveness**

The target period (2000-2010) corresponds to the second year of the first reform government until the end of the first period of fundamentalist government. The reformist government, which was established after the end of the war and the construction period, was based on non-idealistic needs more than any other issue. Therefore, the attitude of the government at the very beginning has been a development-oriented attitude in the political and cultural fields. Relying on political development at home and applying concepts such as de-escalation and dialogue of civilizations abroad, Khatami government presented a new political face of Iran to the international public opinion and was trying to walk in this direction.

After eight years of emphasizing and focusing on economic development during the construction period, Khatami's government was placed in the center of the politics and government of the Islamic Republic during this period of political and of course cultural development. Seyyed Mohammad Khatami, the president at the time, who himself had personality and cultural interests, in response to the political demands of the society, put political and cultural development at the top of his government's priorities. The centrality of political reforms based on religious democracy, freedom and civil society in domestic politics led to the adoption of a political-cultural developmentalist foreign policy. (Irvani, 2001, p. 45). From the perspective of the president, the origin of conflicts and conflicts in the international and global arena is political and economic factors, in addition to mental and psychological factors. There is a big gap between the rich and the poor between the societies, which if it is not adjusted, it cannot naively and optimistically demand peace, dialogue and understanding. In

fact, by raising the issue of dialogue between civilizations, he was looking for a world in which peace would be the foundation of dialogue and dialogue would ensure the continuation of peace. Justice and peace become the foundations of international behavior and democracy is realized in the international arena. Humans and their rights should be respected, freedom, and immunity, a civil society based on human rights should be formed in all countries and in the whole world, and the sovereignty of man over his destiny should be recognized. (Tohidfam, 2017, p. 97).

The reform government also took steps to make policies in the field of political independence. The premise was based on this fact that political reforms and the creation of civil parties and institutions can insure the country against major crises. If the distribution of power in the society is proportionate and there is transparency and accountability, the country will achieve independence. Independence, people's self-confidence, order to civil society and political participation are required. Also, the view of human-centered development was emphasized by this government. The point of view that considers development as the process of expanding real freedoms, the expression and essence of the development process is useful relationships, the use of social security networks, and political freedoms. During the first and second term of Khatami's presidency, the reformist party believed in the necessity of political development and socio-political reforms; And they believed that based on the experience of May 23, the socio-political atmosphere of the country and the process of aggregating people's demands should be organized and institutionalized in a new and sustainable format like civil society and parties. (Komeijani, 2003, p. 153). Political participa-

tion through voting and participation in elections is one of the examples of political freedoms and one of the important elements of strengthening and efficiency of political systems, which helps to continue and maintain its legitimacy in the eyes of the governed.

One of the most important aspects of political participation in this period, which contributed to the efficiency of the political system as much as possible and was a step towards political development, was the holding of city and village council elections. (Lashkari, 2006, p. 264) A series of events of this period that caused the efficiency and effectiveness of the political system are:

- 1- Islamic Council elections
- 3- Elections of the city and village Islamic councils
- 4- Forming the house of parties
- 5- Creating an open space in the field of journalism and information
- 6- Setting the third development plan with a clear tendency towards privatization and reducing government tenure.

After the reform government, in the period of fundamentalism, the issue of justice was considered above all. because two basic problems were formed in the society; 1- Intensification of the feeling of injustice and discrimination, which was rooted in economic issues. 2- The question of resistance to political independence in the field of foreign policy was also taken into consideration during this period of returning to the principles and values of the revolution in the early years of the Islamic Republic. In general, in the field of efficiency and effectiveness in this period, it can be said that the economic policies of the principled government and Ahmadinejad's series of speeches on economic issues show some main values that govern his thinking on these issues. The president at that

time believed that the people are entitled to receive economic benefits from the government's oil, and such a thing can only be done if part of the oil money is paid to them in cash; Or be spent on goods and services that have tangible short-term benefits for people. And he believed that in previous periods, they paid disproportionate attention to long-term construction and infrastructure projects. He related Iran's "unfair" economic conditions to corruption and economic reform policies of former governments, such as privatization and regulations, which benefited a small group of capitalists and politicians. From this point of view, he criticized large public and private companies for their inefficiency and abuse of monopoly power. (Gholipour, 2013, p. 250).

Regarding people's participation, it can be said that it was favorable in this period. By examining each of the elections held in this time frame, we can see the level of participation in this period. The political participation of the people in this period compared to the previous period, which was also after the revolution, had the highest participation rate in most elections (Moghtadaei, 2014, p. 252). Of course, voting is the least form of political participation because it requires the least commitment and may end as soon as the vote is cast. (North, 2006, p. 129) Other examples of political participation can be seen in the form of newspapers and political parties. But during this period, as soon as a newspaper or publication published an article that challenged the government's plans, it was suspended or banned. Also, sometimes we saw that they sought to control them through the judiciary. Therefore, in this period, the press activity is small and the political participation is insignificant.

Also, in this period, we witness the decline of the activities of parties and groups because the principled government considers

the existence of parties to be a requirement of non-interference in politics. As long as the parties cannot participate in the administration of society and compete with each other to gain power, political development will not happen and the political system will lose its efficiency and effectiveness. In fact, in this period, we see that the government called the logic of mediating and representation of parties as a substitute for the nation as a distasteful project and emphasized the elimination of intermediaries, meaning the parties, in the relations between the government and the nation and determining the destiny of the nation. (Narayan, 2016, p. 17).

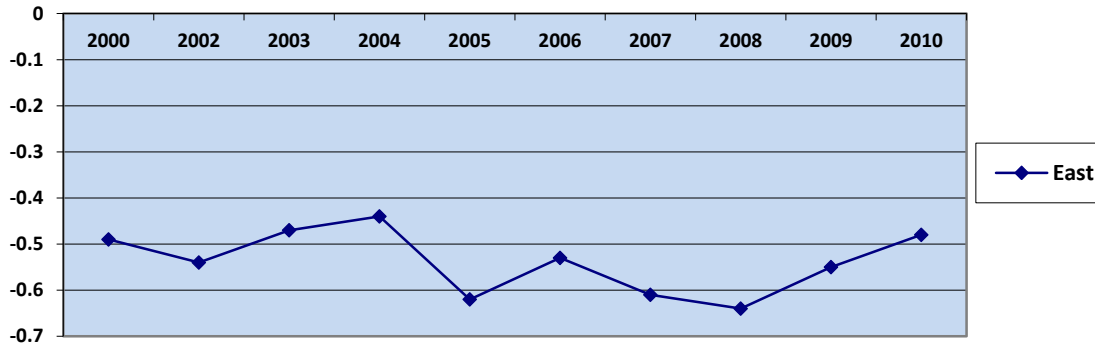
Also, in the economic field, it can be said that the country's revenues from the oil and gas export sector in this period were calculated based on published reports at constant 2010 prices and reported in billions of dollars. At first glance, this statistic seems to be a point worth pondering; The export of oil and gas in an 8-year period has a significant gap with other years. The average income of this sector between 1989 and 2003 is 26.7 billion dollars for each year. The maximum annual income was in 1969, which was estimated at 37 billion dollars. The lowest oil and gas export income was in 1977, which reached 13.6 billion dollars. But in 2005, for the first time, the income of oil and gas exports at the constant price of 2010, conquers the level of 40 billion dollars and reaches 41.57 billion dollars. The most special thing happened in 2005, where the revenues of this sector increased by 50% in one year to 60 billion dollars. This increasing slope will continue in the following years and the level of oil income will be completely different from the level of the previous years (Economic World, 2017, No. 4059), which we will discuss in the next chapter.

Regarding the gross national product, it can also be said that since this index can be used to understand the financial ability of governments to implement projects, it is considered important for obtaining the level of efficiency and effectiveness of governments. Examining this index in this period shows that the government at that time was facing great luck (compared to previous periods); And of course, this issue is more than anything related to the sudden increase in oil prices and the difference in the dollar in the mentioned years. In the first two years of the Ninth government, the gross national product reached 2031 billion dollars, and by the end of 2008, this figure reached 2 million 717 thousand 831.

Another major problem that affected the efficiency and effectiveness of the government in the given period of time is the stagnation in the oil and gas sector. Crude oil production from 2001 to 2005 increased from about 3.5 million barrels in 2001 to more than 4.1 million barrels per day in 2005. The export of oil was also accompanied by many restrictions due to the increase in sanctions. In fact, until the end of the work of the principled government, despite the country's serious needs for energy and the very high priority of exploiting common fields, none of the new gas fields were fully exploited. On the other hand, the financial relations of the National Refining and Distribution Company and the National Gas Company with the Treasury and the Subsidy Targeting Organization were not transparent, and withdrawals from these companies' accounts for the implementation of the subsidy targeting plan have made these companies face obstacles in providing resources. In such a situation, abandoning experienced and expert forces in the oil sector and removing private sector contractors fueled the existing problems; And

the imposition of sanctions has resulted in not receiving a significant part of the income

from the sale of crude oil in the past years and reducing foreign investments.



**Fig 2: Efficiency and effectiveness index in Iran**

Source: (World Bank, 2010)

Based on the above chart, which is extracted from the World Bank reports, it is possible to accurately observe the trend of efficiency and effectiveness index in Iran during a decade. Based on the statistical data, this index has not had a favorable situation and has been negative, and it has not gone through a fixed and specific trend in the same negative range and has always been accompanied by ups and downs. As it can be seen, in 2004, the efficiency and effectiveness index were at its peak in Iran, and suddenly in 2005, it faced a sharp drop and in 2006, with a small growth. It will not take long that during the years of 2007 and 2008, the index of efficiency and effectiveness in Iran faced a downward trend and again in the years of 2009 and 2010, it found an upward trend with a slow trend. But in general, this index has dropped by 2% in 2010 compared to the beginning of the decade.

### **Social welfare index**

Social welfare is an expression that is more concerned with a multifaceted social,

economic and political situation and it is the preservation of human dignity and the society's responsibility towards it. The complexity of this concept originates from the complexity of social and economic relations, as well as the construction of power and concepts such as democracy and civil society. (Makaro, 1999, p. 3).

According to the statistical data of the World Bank, both per capita income and GDP indicators in Iran have gone through an upward trend during the years 2000 to 2010 and have always moved upwards. The lowest amount of per capita income in this period is related to the year 2000, which is 10.33, and the highest amount is 17.39 in 2010, and it has grown by 63%. Also, the lowest amount of GDP is related to the year 2000 and is 109.6, and the highest amount is related to the year 2010 and is 486.8, and it has somehow experienced a growth of 344 percent. In general, these two indicators have had a relatively favorable situation and trend in Iran.



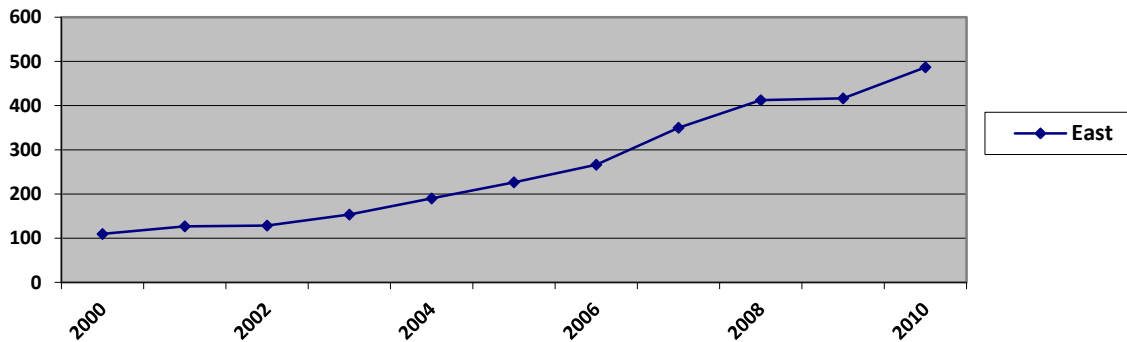


Fig 3: Iran's Gross National Product (2000-2010)

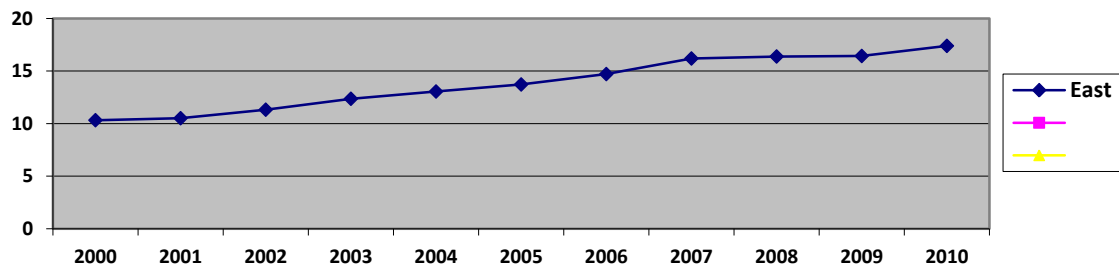


Fig 4: Per Capita Income in Iran (2000-2010)

Source: (World Bank, 2020)

### 1- Status of Health index

Providing public health can accelerate the process of economic growth and development by increasing the productivity of the labor force and thus achieving higher social welfare. Therefore, providing and increasing the level of physical, mental, and social health of people in the society is one of the most important duties of the government and a part of government spending is always allocated to this issue.

The healthcare sector in Iran is one of the sectors that has been significantly affected by government interventions in the last thirty years. These interventions are mainly of two types;

1- Interventions are aimed at providing prevention and public health services and generally services that cannot be systemati-

cally provided in the private sector for universal coverage.

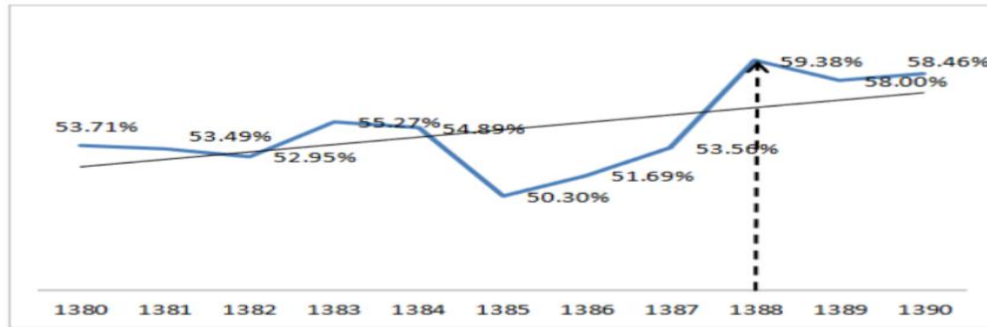
2- Interventions with an emphasis on policies whose subject is generally the provision of health and medical services at a lower cost than the private sector for consumers and improving access from this point of view.

The financial resources of the healthcare sector in most high-income countries are mainly provided through taxes and social insurance, and in low-income countries, mostly through direct household payments. In Iran, according to the studies of national health accounts, the financial resources of the healthcare sector are 30% from public sources, 11% from employers, and more than 50% through direct household payments. (Alvani, 2009, p. 11).



In the field of health and health in Iran, many reforms have been made in the field of increasing justice in health payments, but despite the efforts that have been made in this field; The statistics of the National Health Accounts indicate that out-of-pocket payments constitute a large share of health financing resources, which can

be considered a serious obstacle in the fair enjoyment of health services. According to the obtained statistics, from 2001 to 2011, the share of out-of-pocket payments of Iranian households in the total health expenses increased from 53% to 59%, and the highest amount was in 2018, equivalent to 59%.

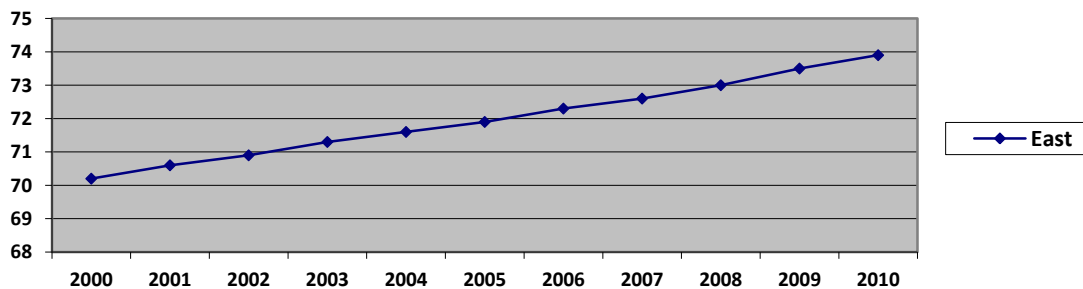


**Fig 5: The share of out-of-pocket payments of Iranian households in total health expenses**  
(Nick Ravan, 2014, p. 41)

**1- 1- Life expectancy at birth:**

The graph of life expectancy in Iran between the years 2000 and 2010 shows the upward and growing trend of this index towards a slight improvement with a regular rhythm. The lowest value of this index is related to

the year 2000, which shows the number of 70.2. And the highest rate of its growth is in 2010, which is 73.9, and in fact, from the beginning to the end of the decade, this index has only grown by 5%.



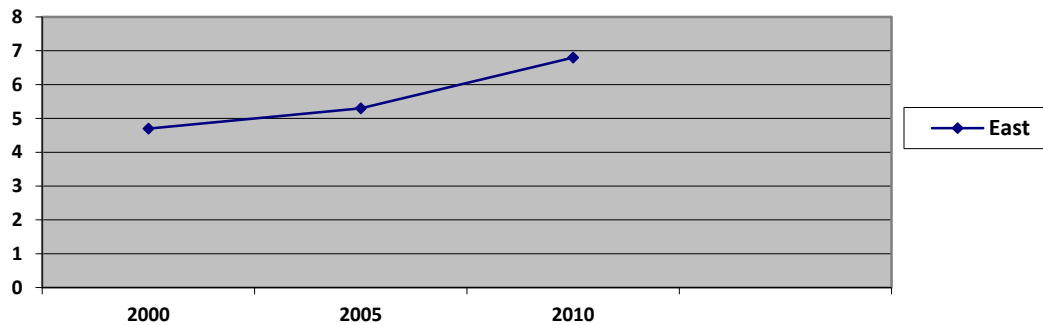
**Fig 6: Life expectancy in Iran (2000-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

**1- 2- Current health expenses**

As can be seen from the graph below, regarding the current costs of health, it is inclined

towards growth and development and has experienced a growth of 44% during the years 2000 to 2010.



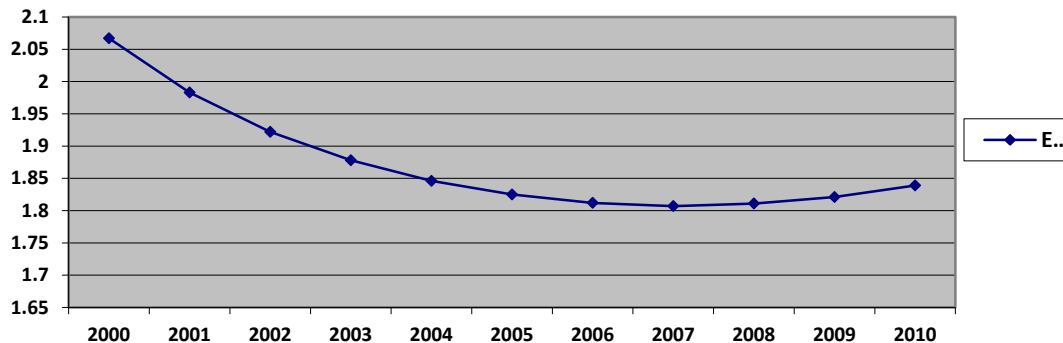
**Fig 7: Current health expenses in Iran (2000-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

### 1- 3- Fertility rate in Iran

By examining the statistics and figures published by the World Bank about the state of fertility rate in Iran during the years 2000 to 2010, we see a downward trend in this regard. So that the year 2000 with the figure of

2.067 is the peak of this index and its lowest value is in 2007 with the number of 1.807. After that, it faces a slight growth again and reaches 1.839 at the end of the decade. But in general, compared to the beginning of the decade, it is facing a decrease of 11%.



**Fig 8: Fertility rate in Iran (2000-2010)**

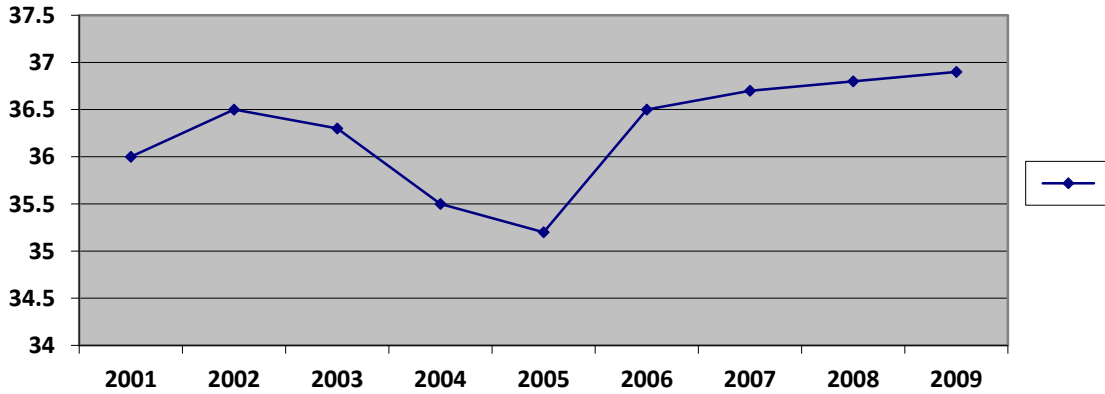
Source: (World Bank, 2019)

### 1- 4- Nutrition status

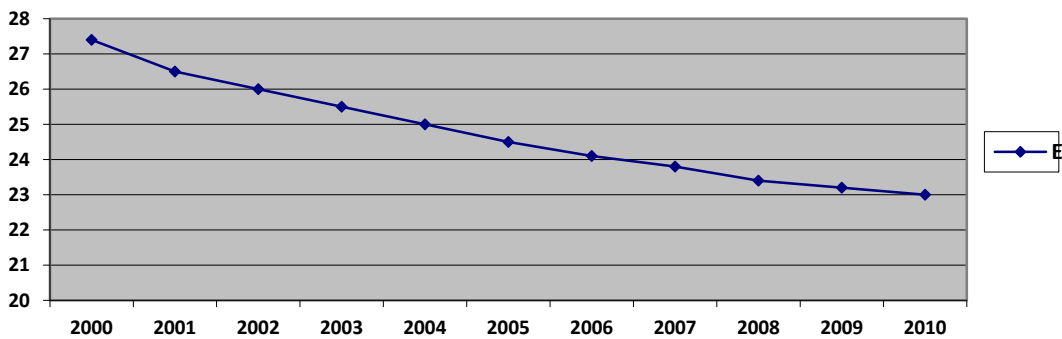
Nutrition status is directly related to the health status of a society. A study on the nutritional pattern in Iran shows that compared to a desirable dietary pattern, the consumption of fats, sweets and sugary substances should be reduced and instead the consumption of vegetables, fruits and dairy products should be increased.

It shows the trend of the share of bread and cereals, vegetables and fruits in the total food expenditure of households in the whole country. This trend went up during the years 2001 to 2009 and remained almost at the same level in 2004.

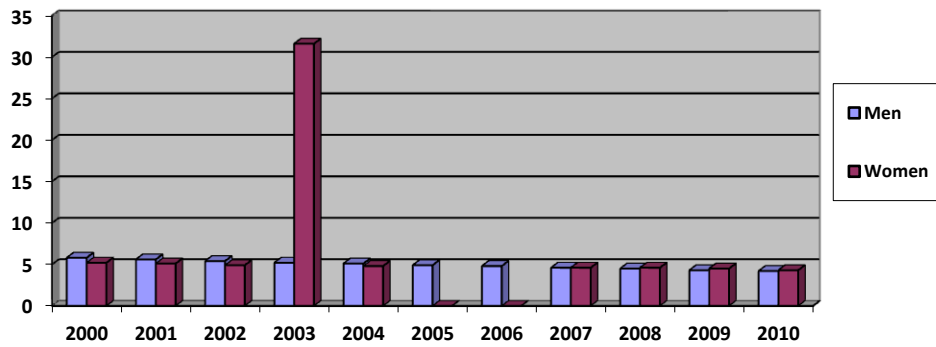
During the years 2005-2003, it decreased and during the years 2006-2009, it experienced an upward trend.



**Fig 9: Nutrition situation in Iran (2000-2010)**  
Source: (World Food Organization report, 2010)



**Fig 10: Prevalence of anemia in women of reproductive age in Iran (2000-2010)**  
(World Food Organization report, 2010)



**Fig 11: Nutrition and disease status of adults in Iran (2000-2010)**  
Source: (World Food Organization report, 2010)

According to the report of the World Nutrition Organization, no progress has been made in Iran to achieve the goal of reducing anemia in women of reproductive age. Meanwhile, there is not enough data to evaluate Iran's progress in the field of exclusive breastfeeding. However, the latest statistical data show that 53.1% of babies aged 0 to 5 months are exclusively breastfed. Also, regarding infectious diseases related to diet, limited progress has been achieved until 2010. But in general, Iran has not shown any progress in achieving the goal of obesity. So that it is estimated that 35.5% of adults aged 18 and above and women and 22.3% of adult men are obese. The prevalence of obesity in Iran is higher than the regional average of 10.3% for women and 7.5% for men. It is also estimated that diabetes affects 15.5% of adult women and 13.9% of adult men. (World Food Organization, 2020).

## 2- Status of educational index

As health is one of the forms of investment in human resources; Today, the education sector has become one of the most important sources of economic growth and development and provides the reason for growth and productivity and finally achieving advanced stages of development and social welfare. In the continuation of the topic, we will examine the status of the educational index in Iran:

### 2- 1- Expected years of education

According to human development reports, the expected years of education from 2000 to 2010 are as follows. As seen in the diagram below; As we approach the last years of the aforementioned decade, the expected number of years of education increases and compared to the lowest number of years, which is related to the years 2004 and 2005, it has grown by about 19%.

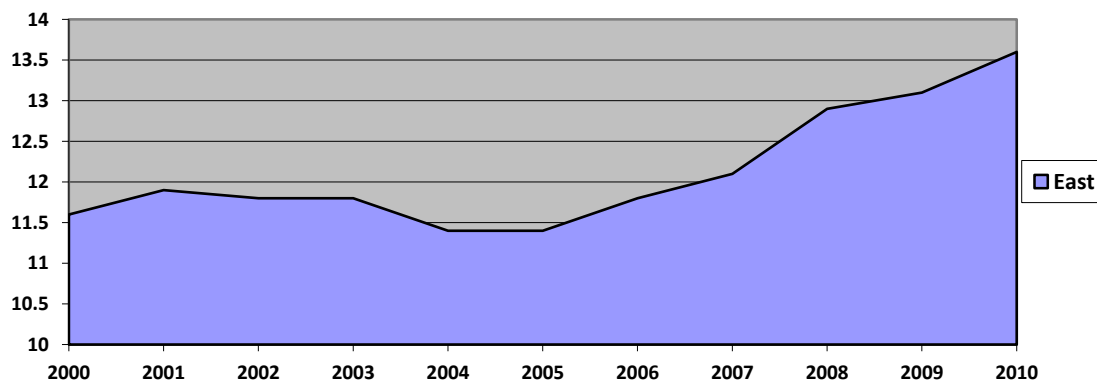
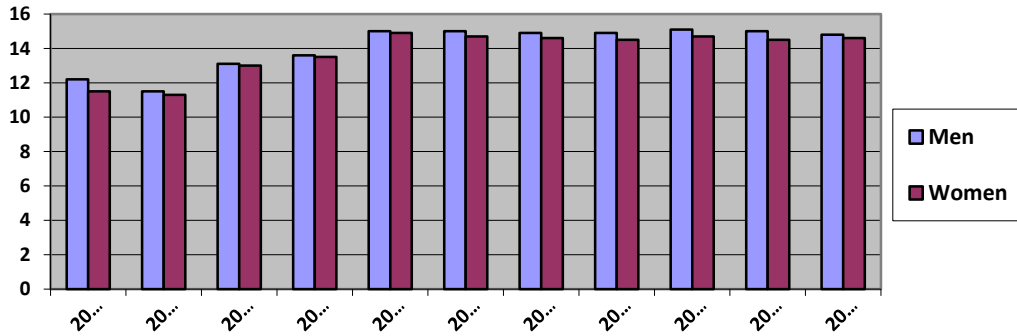


Fig 12: *Expected years of education in Iran (2000-2010)*

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

Regarding the expected years of education by gender, we can say that in the mentioned years, we have seen that the

number of these years has grown almost equally among men and women with a slight difference (1.5%).

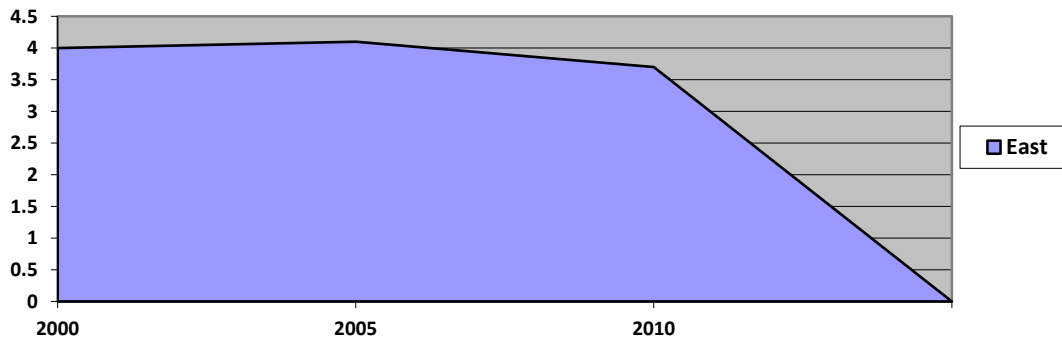


**Fig 13: Expected years of education by gender**  
Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

**2- 2- Government expenditures for education**

Government expenditures for education include current education, capital and transfer costs in education, which are expressed as a percentage of the gross national product. These figures, which are published by the Human Development Organization every five years, can be seen in the table below. As it can be seen, the amount of government spending decreases as we approach the last

years of the mentioned decade and it is not in a very favorable situation. Meanwhile, in the last years of the mentioned decade, the GDP has been growing. And this means that the government has not acted well in this field and the government's concern for education has decreased and has allocated about 7.5% less expenses for education than in the early years of the decade.

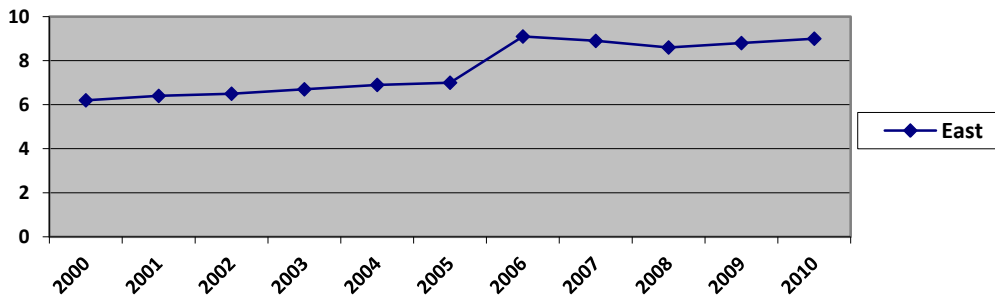


**Fig 14: Government expenditures for education in Iran (2000-2010)**  
Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

**2-3- Average years of education**

The average years of education, which includes the number of years of education received by people aged 25 and above, has been converted using the official duration of

each level. This index in Iran during the years 2001 to 2005 has a gentle upward slope and suddenly in 2006 the growth of this index reaches its peak and again after this year, along with small fluctuations, it becomes low and high.

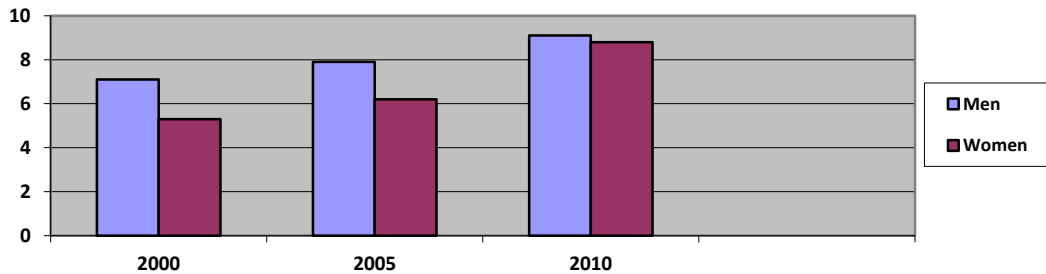


**Fig 15: Average years of education in Iran (2000-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

Also, according to the table below, by gender, the statistics show that the average years of education in men are higher than in wom-

en, and in both genders, the closer we get to the end of the mentioned decade, the trend is increasing.



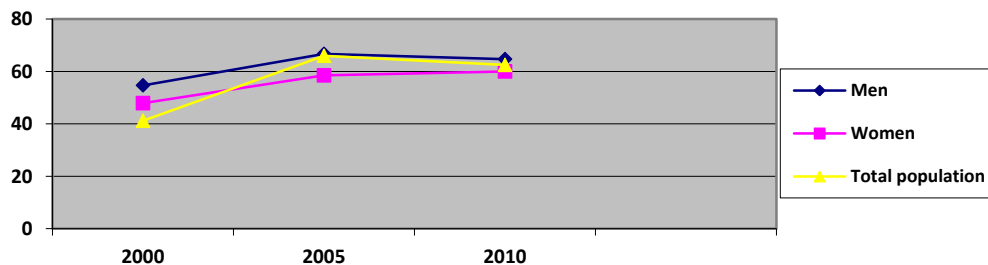
**Fig 16: Average years of education by gender**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

#### 2- 4- The population with at least secondary education

The population with at least secondary education at the age of 25 years and above in men and women was published in 2000, 2005 and 2010

and has gone up with a gentle slope. Also, regarding the difference between the population of men and women with secondary education, the statistics show the superiority of secondary education in men with a small difference.



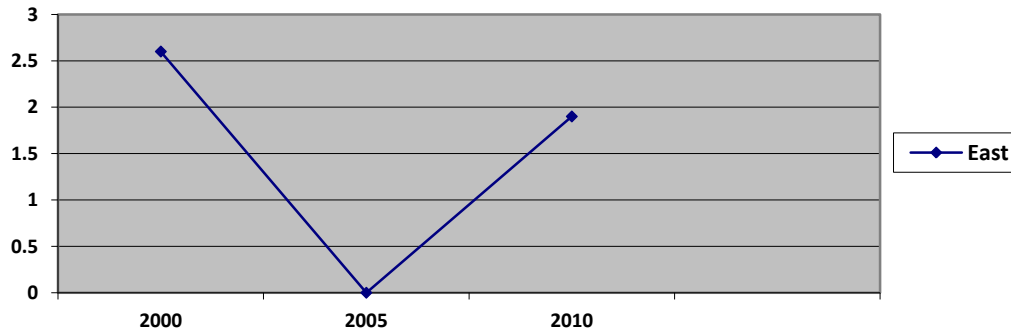
**Fig 17: Population with minimum secondary education in Iran (2000-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

### 2- 5- Dropout rate in elementary school

This rate includes the percentage of students from a certain group who enrolled in elementary school and dropped out before the end of elementary school. According to the statistics published in the human development database,

which reports this index every five years, in 2000, this figure was 2.6, and in 2005, there was no report of dropping out of elementary school in Iran. And in 2010, which is 1.9, compared to the beginning of the discussed decade, it has gone down by 26%.



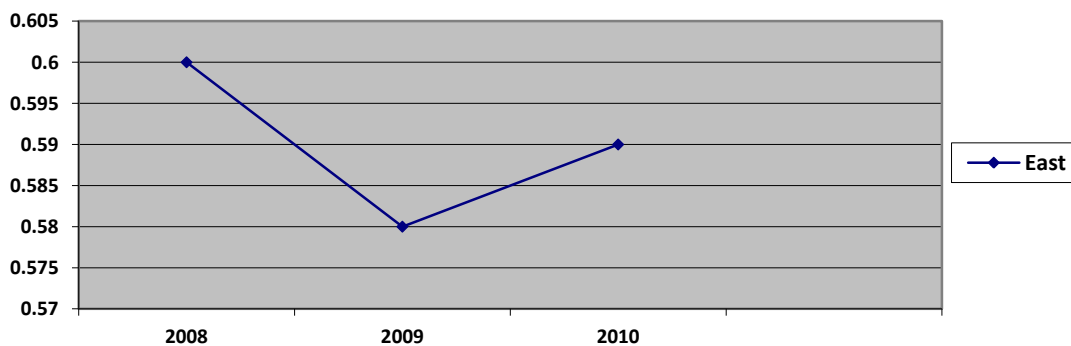
**Fig 18: Graph of dropping out rate in elementary school in Iran (2000-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

### 3- Gender gap index

This index is calculated from four general indicators of education, health, economic participation and political participation. This index has been calculated by the World Economic Forum since 2006 and published every year. Every year, this index is calculated for 145 countries based on the data of the reports of

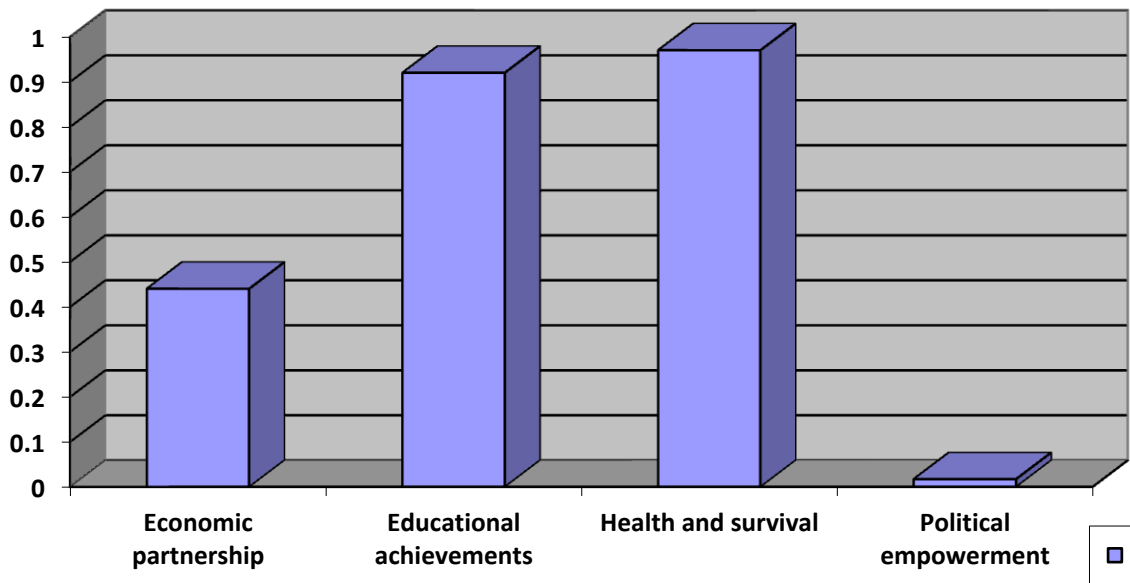
the International Labor Organization and the data of the Human Development Report; And the closer the calculated index value is to 1, it means more equality, and the closer it is to zero, it means more inequality. According to the published statistics, among the 13 selected countries of the Middle East, Iran ranked 5th in 2008, 9th in 2009, and 8th in 2010.



**Fig 19: Gender gap in Iran (2008-2010)**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)





**Fig 20: The four indicators of the gender gap in Iran until 2011**

Source: (Human Development Report, 2010)

### Conclusion

In the period from 2000 to 2010 in Iran, which is parallel to the last two years of the first period and the second period of the reform period and the first period of the fundamentalism period; In the field of efficiency and effectiveness, this country has not had a favorable situation and has always been moving and fluctuating in the negative spectrum. And in 2010, it reaches minus 0.48. The gross domestic product has also been growing continuously for a decade. In the field of health, the indicators of life expectancy, current health costs, and nutritional status have grown over a decade, and only the fertility

rate has decreased by 11 percent. Life expectancy, current health costs and nutritional status have improved and the fertility rate has decreased. Fertility rate also decreased in the middle of the decade and increased again at the end of the decade.

Regarding the educational index, both governments have experienced almost the same situation in terms of growth, and the closer we get to the end of the decade, the indices face an upward trend. In terms of gender gap, it can be said that in the middle of the decade, it had a more favorable situation than at the end of the decade and was closer to the number 1.

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