

Feminism in Iran

Feminist Anthropology in the World: Transnational Dialogues -
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Early History of Feminism in Iran

Iranian Women's Rights Movement and their feminisms emerged after the Iranian Constitutional Revolution in 1910. The movement remained active until 1933 in which the last women's association was dissolved by the Reza Shah Pahlavi's government.

the Iranian Revolution (1979) gave a rise to another wave of feminism in Iran. However, Iranian women's lives, their activism and Feminisms have been restricted since the Islamic Revolution.

The post-revolutionary era is considered as a controversial historical period in contemporary Iranian history, predominantly due to the intensification of violations of human rights and a major transformation of Iranian women's lives, a significant transformation that smells like disloyalty and ingratitude, perhaps, because after decades of being in the forefront of democratic struggles in the Pahlavi regime, Iranian women could shift a considerable number of discriminatory policies.

Iranian Feminists

Iranian feminists are fighting the same battleground just like other feminists are fighting for their human rights in the western societies and elsewhere in the world.

In pre-revolution and post-revolution era, they have used their different feminisms to challenge a patriarchal and religious society's unequal and discriminatory treatment of Iranian women as well as challenging the stereotypical understanding of the west on women's lives in Iran in different historical periods which had high stakes for them, from persecution to imprisonment, to abandonment, to executions and honour killings to living a diasporic life in exile.

After almost forty years of Islamic government's strict rules on controlling and misusing women in Iran, they are still struggling in this battlefield as a result of a tyrannical system of oppression existing in Iran.

State Persecution of Feminist Anthropologists



Photo Credit: Toronto Star

Homa Hoodfar was brutally interrogated for 112 days in Tehran's Evin prison. She has been investigated for what the government called "dabbling in feminism and security matters," She was released in 2016.

Nasrin Sotoudeh



The prominent Iranian human rights lawyer, Nasrin Sotoudeh is sentenced to 38 years and six months in prison and 148 lashes because of her peaceful human rights work, advocating and defending women's rights and protesting oppression and discriminatory laws against Iranian women.

Research

Due to the sensitivity of the issues around feminism and the state's hostility towards academics, anthropological and research in humanities in general suffers from a lack of neutrality in Iran. In other words, doing anthropology and especially anthropology of women is difficult and risky for researchers.

Despite the restrictions and risk, Iranian feminists including feminist anthropologists are conducting research on various aspects of women and LGBTQ people, whether they are based in Iran or living a diasporic life in exile.