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Multidimensional child deprivation in Iran

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Introduction

In recent decades there has been worldwide acknowledgement that children's well-being should be analysed in a multidimensional way (Gordon et al, 2003a,b; Minujin et al, 2005; Redmond, 2008; Roelen, 2010). Subsequently, various methodologies have evolved over time concerning the definition and measurement of various aspects of deprivation (Nussbaum, 1992; Sen, 1993; Robeyns, 2006; Alkire and Foster 2008). Therefore, a wide range of literature has been produced on the status of deprived children in various developing and developed countries (Wagstaff and Watanabe, 1999; UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2000; Land et al, 2001; Gordon et al, 2003a,b; Notten and Roelen, 2010). Meanwhile, poverty scholars are increasingly highlighting the importance of contextualising deprivation analyses within the sociopolitical realities that surround communities (Wagstaff and Watanabe, 1999; Gassmann, 2000; Rogers, 2003; Belloni and Carriero, 2008; Jones, 2009; Wells, 2009; Bourdillion et al, 2010). Similarly, the context in which children's deprivations are studied is important. Despite commonalities among this age cohort, there are socioeconomic and political particularities in different societies that affect children's lives and their transition to adulthood. These particularities shape children's being and social identity in multicultural societies (Matthews and Limb, 1999; Qvortrup, 1999; de Moura, 2001; Monteith and McLaughlin, 2005).

As a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, Iran is not unusual in exposing children of various regions to diverse socioeconomic political and cultural realities (Atabaki, 2005; Hosseinbor, 2009; Khorshidi et al, 2010). However, for decades, scholars have predominantly focused on political disparities while studies on minorities' socioeconomic conditions are scarce. Similarly, there are few disaggregated data on

children's well-being from different ethnic groups in Iran. This chapter aims to analyse children's multidimensional deprivation and to examine differences between regions in Iran in 2009. The analysis aims to explore who are the most deprived children and how inequalities in children's deprivation can be distinguished on regional grounds. The data used in this study are drawn from the latest national income and expenditure survey conducted by the Statistical Centre of Iran in 2009).

Contextual analysis

In the past three decades, Iran has gone through many changes in sociopolitical, cultural and economic conditions. It is important to investigate some of these changes in order to contextualise the findings of this chapter.

Economy

With approximately US$330 billion gross domestic product (GDP) in 2009, Iran has the second largest economy in the Middle East and North Africa (after Saudi Arabia), and is categorised as a lower middle-income country (World Bank, 2010). Economic instability and fragility have blighted the country since the 1979 revolution. In 1977, two years before the revolution, Iran was experiencing its highest economic growth, with the real GDP per capita growing 6.6% per year (Abrahamian, 1980; Salehi-Isfahani, 2006). The economic growth was mainly a result of an improved oil export and as such, subject to fluctuation in the international market. On the other hand, a small elite controlled the oil revenue with little regard for fair income distribution. Therefore, the sharp rise in income did not translate directly into the living standards of the average Iranian household (Salehi-Esfahani and Pesaran, 2008). The Islamic revolution in 1979 was partly a consequence of these inequalities. After the revolution, GDP per capita declined continuously due to various reasons: the eight years of devastating war with Iraq (1980-88), oil price collapse, emigration of skilled professionals and international sanctions imposed on the country. By the end of the war (1988), GDP per capita was half its previous level of 1977 (Salehi-Isfahani, 2006). After the Iran–Iraq war, the country was left with over a million casualties and US$650 billion in damage (Ehsani, 1994); in many ways reconstruction was an overwhelming task. The government started to decrease its control over the market, oil revenue started to recover and at the same time private investments

were initiated. Nevertheless, the country was not able to set a long-term industrialisation strategy or to mobilise internal resources required for economic transformation (Ehsani, 1994).[1] As such during the 1990s, GDP per capita continued to react to various economic and political instabilities. To date, economic instability remains a major challenge for the government. Both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reported GDP per capita annual growth as 7% in 2007-08, and 2-2.5% in 2008-09. In this chapter, child deprivation is analysed for 2009.

Childhood

Within the childhood discourse, some contextual specifications also need to be acknowledged. First is the age of end of childhood. The Iranian Constitution, civil and penal codes are all prepared in the light of a particular interpretation of *Sharia law*[2] (Yousefzadeh, 2010). Consequently, there are implications for children at various levels, especially for girls. For instance, the age of criminal responsibility is 8 years and 9 months for girls and 14 years and 7 months for boys;[3] the minimum age for marriage is 13 for girls and 15 for boys, and so on. As such, from a legal perspective, children's transition to adulthood happens at a very young age in Iran. Second is the cultural diversity among children. Iran is populated by diverse ethnic and linguistic groups that are mainly concentrated in certain geographic areas (Aghajanian, 1983). There is no official data on the population of ethnic and religious minorities in Iran; however, different sources refer to more than 40% of the population as minority ethnic groups in the country (Akhbari and Zolfeghari, 2009; Kheiltash et al, 2009; Khorshidi et al, 2010). Over time, ethnic groups in Iran have experienced various times of political unrest (Atabaki, 2005). For instance, Arabs and Kurds were in the frontline cities in the war with Iraq (1980-88). The civil conflicts after the 1979 revolution affected Kurdistan and southern cities of West Azerbaijan differently and more severely than other provinces. Meanwhile, for decades some of these regions have been among the more deprived areas of the country. Although this chapter only focuses on a snapshot from 2009, it is acknowledged that deprivation is carried over from past decades in some provinces inhabited by minority ethnic groups, particularly Sistan and Baluchistan (Aghajanian, 1983; Chillar, 2005). Third is the overall socioeconomic development of the country. Being a lower middle-income country, Iran has been able to improve its basic health and education indicators (World Bank, 2007). Although disparities still exist (both in terms of gender and geography), the overall

trend has improved, especially since the 1990s.[4] Therefore, child rights issues in contemporary Iran are not that much about basic education or vaccination coverage, but about other evolving issues related to modernisation. For instance, in 2009, immunisation coverage for all vaccines was 99%, and the primary school attendance ratio between 2005 and 2009 was 91% for girls and 94% for boys (UNICEF, 2011). However, the modernisation process and subsequent rapid urbanisation have contributed to evolving urban social inequalities. Some of those social inequalities directly affected children in the poor neighbourhoods of large cities as well as suburban areas, street children and child labour (Assadi, 2011). Nevertheless, due to a lack of data, we were not able to examine these important dimensions. As such, it is important to note that multidimensional child deprivation in Iran, as portrayed in this chapter, does not capture all child rights issues in contemporary Iran, including child abuse, street children, prostitution, execution of minors and juvenile delinquency.

Methodology and conceptual framework

Some United Nations (UN) exclusive summits and events have provided specific insights into poverty and child poverty in particular.[5] The UN General Assembly in 2007 provided a multidimensional definition of children's deprivation, using a rights-based approach. In this chapter, in order to define child deprivation dimensions and indicators, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is used as the reference in this study for a number of reasons:[6]

- The Convention applies a holistic approach in defining children's rights and brings together the socioeconomic, cultural, civil and political rights of the child. Therefore, using the UNCRC as the point of entry assists this research to consider different dimensions of children's well-being. It must be noted, however, that not every dimension is examined in this research because of a lack of available data.

- Applying the UNCRC also makes it possible to view the child and childhood from a social construct perspective. Under its different articles, it deconstructs the concept of the child as the girl child, at-risk children, refugees and minority groups, etc. It also deconstructs children's different roles and rights (the right to freedom of expression, freedom of association, etc). Therefore using the Convention as a guide could lead this research to take into

account the diversity and particularity of the child, interactions with his/her surroundings and the setting of childhood (Kjorholt, 2004).

- In an ideal world, children, child rights practitioners, policy makers and other duty bearers should work together to define the various dimensions of child deprivation, and in turn, ensure the objectivity of the indicators. A number of studies have applied such an approach in defining different dimensions of child deprivation (Feeny and Boyden, 2003; Harpham et al, 2005; Sixsmith et al, 2007; Barnes and Wright, 2009). However, this research did not have the luxury to engage children and child rights stakeholders in defining deprivation dimensions. Therefore, using the Convention as a guide also helps in avoiding subjective judgements in choosing the dimensions.

It must be noted that the Convention itself has been criticised by various scholars for its universalist approach and for imposing Western standards (Bentley, 2002; Arts, 2010).[7] However, the drafting process of the UNCRC was participatory, and delegates of different countries debated and negotiated areas of their concern. Eventually, the Convention set the minimum non-negotiable rights, and some more controversial areas were left flexible in order to accommodate more diversity (see, for example, Article 1 and the definition of the child) (Arts, 2010). The Iranian delegate also participated actively in that process (Afshin-Jam and Danesh, 2009) and eventually Iran ratified the Convention in 1994 with a general reservation: 'The Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves the right not to apply any provisions or articles of the Convention that are incompatible with Islamic Laws and the international legislation in effect.'[8]

One of the areas affected largely by the negotiating process of drafting the UNCRC was the defining age for the end of childhood. The Convention's Article 1 defines children as 'every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier'. Meanwhile, the Iranian legal system defines the age of end of childhood as nine lunar years for girls and fifteen lunar years for boys (Article 1210 of the Civil Code) (Yousefzadeh, 2010). Applying the Convention's Article 1 may not help in defining the age threshold of the indicators of this research as it leaves it flexible to the domestically applicable laws. Nevertheless, when it comes to *some* important indicators (minimum age of marriage, minimum age for work), the Convention refers to other international instruments[9] with specific thresholds.[10]

While the Convention is treated as a guide for this research, it is also important to define the methodology for applying the Convention to the research. This research applied the 3 P's approach in categorising dimensions of poverty: *provision, protection and participation* (Cantwell, 1993; Penn, 1999; Lurie, 2003/04). The various categories do not compete with each other and were not considered as distinct definitions. The aim was rather to formulate the articles for easier examination of the applications of those rights, while acknowledging the essential interdependence of the three categories. Under *provision* are grouped children's rights to material and non-material resources that are essential for their full development (money, love, power, opportunity, knowledge, self-esteem, etc). Also, the importance of including all children, particularly from marginalised groups, is elaborated under various articles. Under *protection* are categorised children's rights to be protected from exploitation, neglect and abuse. Similarly, the right to access the proper means of information as well as an enabling environment to *participation* are explained under a number of articles.

Accordingly, child deprivation in this chapter is discussed under six dimensions, seven indicators and three main categories (the 3 P's). The study focused on outcome indicators, with the level of analysis focusing on the individual child. Nevertheless, for some indicators the data was only available or relevant at the household level. Data was accessed through the Statistical Centre of Iran and is available to the local independent researchers. The Statistical Centre of Iran conducts an income and expenditure study on an annual basis of sample households in both rural and urban areas (36,868 households in the 2009 survey). The samples are representative at the national level. The income and expenditure surveys have been running since 1963, but the computerised version is only available from 1984 onwards. The government collects the data for macroeconomic analysis. It is carefully designed and considerably detailed (Salehi-Isfahani, 2007). It has a wide geographic coverage and includes large samples. The sampling consists of two stages, stratified at rural and urban and province levels. The latest census is referred to in order to select sample blocs and households on a random basis (five blocs and five households from each bloc). In each level – rural, urban and province – the number of blocs is the total number of observation divided by five (Farzin, 2008). Apart from information in income and expenditure, there are also questions on general characteristics of the household members, some of which is used in this research. In this chapter we use the latest available data, that is, 2009.[11] In defining indicators, a three-level division was applied (deprived, moderately deprived, not deprived) as opposed to

a binary approach. The continuum range of deprivation has already been introduced by other scholars within the child poverty discourse (Gordon et al, 2003a). The reason to apply a deprivation continuum approach in this chapter is that the binary approach separates different groups of children in an absolute term. For instance, a child is either enrolled in school at the right age, or is not. As such, those children who attend school, but who are older than their cohort, are equated with those children who are not enrolled at all. In this particular example, very different reasons could contribute to the child's status of not going to school or repeating grades. Therefore, and in order to avoid unjustified dichotomies in this study, we decided to define indicators of deprivation at three levels.

In order to measure the multidimensional poverty rate in this study, a dual cut-off identification strategy was applied (Gordon et al, 2003a; Alkire and Foster, 2008). As such, children who were deprived from at least two dimensions were identified as deprived. Moderately deprived children were identified as being moderately deprived in two or more dimensions or deprived in one dimension. Deprivation was measured for each dimension using the indicators and thresholds described in Table 14.1. The thresholds were defined to establish three mutually exclusive deprivation levels (deprived, moderately deprived, not deprived), and to avoid deprivation level overlapping. We used two groups of indicators: the first group was used for education, child labour and child marriage dimensions and measured for each child; the second group was measured at the household level and was used for housing, water and sanitation, and information dimensions. The first group of indicators was measured for the whole population and disaggregated by gender and area (urban and rural). In addition, both groups were presented by province and household type. The correlation between education deprivation and child labour was analysed in detail and discussed by age cohort.

Rationale behind the choices for the indicators in the Iranian context

Education

The education system in Iran consists of three levels: five years of primary school, three years of secondary school (junior high school) and three years of high school. Primary school starts when children complete their sixth birthday. However, those children who are born after August have to enrol with the next year's cohort. As such, as this

Table 14.1: Indicators for children's multidimensional poverty in Iran

	Dimension	Indicator	Not deprived	Moderately deprived	Deprived	Age group
Provision	**Education**	School enrolment	% of children attending primary or secondary school – age matches the grade	% of children attending primary or secondary school – age does not match the grade	% of children not attending primary or secondary school	6-17
	Housing	No of people per room	% of children living in households with two people or less per room	% of children living in households with three people per room	% of children living in households with more than three people per room	0-17
		House materials	% of children living in houses with metal skeleton	% of children living in concrete houses	% of children living in houses made with brick, stone, wood or mud	0-17
	Water and sanitation	Access to safe drinking water and sanitation	% of children living in households with access to safe drinking water and bathroom	% of children living in households with access to safe drinking water but no bathroom	% of children living in households with no access to safe drinking water	0-17
Protection	**Child labour**	Working status of children	% of children not working (neither paid job nor household care)	% of children: 15-17 who are in paid job and study, 7-17 children who do household chores and study, and children who seek job and study	% of children: under 15 children who are in paid job, children who seek job and do not study, children who do the household chores and do not study, children who seek job and do not study, and children who are in paid job and do not study	0-17
	Child marriage	Marital status of children	% of children who are not married and have no children	% of children who are married	% of children who are married and have children	9-17
Participation	**Information**	Access to means of information	% of children living in households with access to radio, television, computer and internet	% of children living in households with access to radio or television; and computer or internet	% of children living in households with no access to radio, television, computer and internet	0-17

study also shows, some children start the first year of primary school at the age of six and some at the age of seven. In light of the fact that each grade has a different code, the relevant code was considered to identify the children's grade in each cohort.

Both primary and secondary school enrolments were examined in this study. The Iranian Constitution elaborates the right to education under Article 30, 'the right of the people'. Article 30 defines the government's duty to provide free education, not only for primary

school but also for secondary education. There is also the Education Act 1974, which spells out the government's duty in providing *free* and *compulsory* education for *all* up to the end of secondary school (junior high school). As such, the Act sets the standard lower than what is stated within the Constitution. Article 30 of the Iranian Constitution also focuses on education for all and is therefore introducing a non-discriminatory principle in providing education to children. On the other hand, the Constitution's Article 13 focuses on *recognised* minorities and their religious performances within the limits of the law. Accordingly, Zoroastrians, Jews and Christians are the only recognised minority religions. There is no reference to other religious minorities and their right to education. For instance, Bahahi children cannot attend public schools unless they declare themselves as Muslims and deny their own religion. Similarly, refugee and migrant children may only benefit from public school if they have official documents. Hence, in practical terms, the non-discriminatory principle, as defined in the Iranian Constitution, is not applied for children's education. The UNCRC, on the other hand, spells out a child's right to education in different articles. Article 28 stresses compulsory and free primary education for all, and elaborates on equal opportunity and progressive realisation of a child's right to education. Under the Convention, a state's duty to ensure access to secondary education is second in priority after primary education. In fact, while states are called on to ensure free and compulsory primary education for all children, they are *encouraged* to provide different forms of secondary education and to offer financial assistance in *case of need*. The unequal stress on primary and secondary education in the Convention does not imply unequal usefulness. Rather, it means that providing free and accessible compulsory secondary education may not be possible for a number of countries. Therefore, they should focus on free and obligatory primary education for all as the first step.[12] Iran has progressively improved primary school enrolment (Millennium Development Goal 2006); therefore, secondary education is also examined in this study.

Net enrolment in each schooling year is an indicator for the proportion of children who are not deprived. Also, children who are younger than the matching age for each grade are categorised as not deprived. Children who are enrolled in school, but their age does not match their grade (older), are categorised as moderately deprived. Deprived children are the age cohort not enrolled in school at all. Other relevant education indicators (for example, quality of education) were not analysed in this chapter due to lack of information.

Housing

Under this dimension, two indicators were examined, both contextually specific and domestically designed: the safety of homes and number of people per room. In the past decades, Iran has been affected by strong earthquakes, causing devastating casualties (1972, more than 5,000 dead; 1978, over 25,000 dead; 1990, more than 40,000 dead; and in 2005 over 25,000 dead) (Amirabadi et al, 2007). Expert opinions concerning the number of dead and injured are primarily concerned with the strength of the houses, their frame and structure and materials used in the building (Amirabadi et al, 2007). Accordingly, the Statistical Centre of Iran has conducted a series of studies to measure the strength of homes in different parts of the country. 'Strong homes' are defined as shelters with a metal or concrete structure (Amirabadi et al, 2007). Accordingly, in this study, children living in houses with either concrete or metal structures were categorised as not deprived; those who lived in houses with metal or stone in the material (but not the structure) were categorised as moderately deprived; and those living in houses with mud or wooden materials were categorised as deprived. As for the second indicator, that is, number of people per room, the domestic standards define the appropriate density as two people or less per room (Kazemipoor, 2004). Accordingly, children living in houses with up to two people per room were categorised as not deprived; three people per room were defined as moderately[13] deprived; and more than three people per room were categorised as deprived. Eventually, one composite indicator was used: children deprived in at least one indicator were deprived; children who were not deprived in any of the indicators were not deprived; and the rest were categorised as 'moderately deprived'.

Water and sanitation

There is no specific reference to water or sanitation in the Iranian Constitution. In the UNCRC, access to safe drinking water is mentioned under the child's right to the highest standard of health services, that is, Article 24. Access to safe drinking water and a bathroom were the two indicators under this dimension. Ideally, sanitation should be analysed (WHO and UNICEF, 2004) as opposed to having a bathroom. Nevertheless, the questionnaire used in this study did not include any question on sanitation. Therefore, owning a bathroom was extrapolated to mean sanitation. No access to drinking water was categorised as deprived under this research – regardless of access

to a bathroom. Access to water but no bathroom was categorised as moderately deprived. And access to both water and bathroom indicates non-deprivation.

Child labour

In the Iranian Constitution, there is no specific reference to child labour. However, in the Labour Law there are several articles discussing children. Article 79 of the Iranian Labour Law prohibits employing individuals of below 15 years of age.[14] In addition, according to Article 84, in case of hazardous jobs for the health or moral character of the trainees and youth, the minimum age is defined as 18. The UNCRC refers to child labour in Article 32 specifically as well as Article 39. The articles do not introduce a specific minimum age. However, the *Implementation handbook for the Convention* calls for defining the minimum age based on other international instruments, particularly International Labour Organization (ILO) No 138 (the Minimum Age Convention 1973).

In order to define the threshold for the child/adolescent's work, the context and social class needs to be taken into account (Zimmer-Gembeck and Mortimer, 2006). For instance, in many developed countries, adolescents may choose to work in order to have independence from their family, or use their income for other purposes, for example, travelling. However, in developing countries, neither the deprived families nor their children seem to have other choices but to send their children to work when they need extra income for the household. In other words, children have to contribute to the family's income; they do not choose to work. In addition, their parents cannot trade off the immediate benefit from their children's work with long-term educational achievements. In fact, a family's social class and economic resources are the key factors in sending their children to work (Newman, 1999; Blustein et al, 2000). Consequently, children's work and education are often in direct competition (Shanahan et al, 2002). One other consideration about adolescent labour is that often their work (for both girls and boys) is examined within the paid market. Therefore, if the work involves producing goods for self-consumption or household chores, it is not considered as *work*. As it is predominantly girls who are involved with household chores, the work also means acquiring gender roles (Cunningham, 2001; Leaper and Friedman, 2007). In this study and in the context of Iran, non-deprivation means no engagement in income-earning jobs. Additionally, a child's education was considered a key factor in defining the threshold. Finally, doing

household chores was also treated as *work*. As such, the threshold was defined as follows:

Deprived:
- Children under 15 who are working
- Children under 17 doing household chores, *and not studying*
- Children under 17, working or seeking a job *and not studying*

Moderately deprived:
- Children under 17, seeking job and study
- Children under 17, doing household chores, and studying
- Children over 15, working and studying

Not deprived:
- Children, under 18, not working

Child marriage

According to Article 1041 of the Iranian Civil Code, the minimum age for marriage is 13 for girls and 15 for boys. As for the UNCRC, a specific minimum age is not set for marriage. However, the *Implementation handbook of the Convention* refers to Article 2 in order to apply a non-discriminatory approach to set the minimum age for boys and girls. It also refers to the Convention on the Consent to Marriage[15] as well as the general recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).[16] In this study, age 18 was considered to define the threshold for marriage indicator. The threshold was set as 18 mainly in order to ensure children's rights to education, health and development. Nevertheless, in Iran specifically there are also reasons related to age of legal responsibilities for financial matters. Article 1210 of the Iranian Civil Code defines the age of maturity as 9 for girls and 15 for boys. However, the Article has a note that conditions financial responsibility to full legal capacity,[17] and the age for full legal capacity is not elaborated further. This note also refers to boys, that is, age 15 is also not considered the age of full legal capacity. Therefore, married children may not be given required legal financial responsibilities. In practical terms, they are not considered *matured*. Accordingly, indicators are defined as: children who are married and are already parents, categorised as deprived; children who are married as moderately deprived;[18] and those who are not married by the age of 17 as not deprived.

Access to means of information

Increasingly, children use the media in its different forms in their daily lives. In Iran, too, although television and radio continue to dominate the role of providing information, the internet and computers are increasingly available to both children and adults. Even in some of the most deprived regions of Iran, internet cafes provide children and adolescents with the opportunity to access some of the latest technology and means of information.[19] Access to means of information and media sources are codified in the Iranian Constitution as well as the UNCRC. Both sources refer to responsibilities of the state to improve public awareness through the media (Article 3 of the Iranian Constitution and Article 17 of the UNCRC). The right of minority ethnic groups to use their own language in the press and media at the regional level is spelled out in Article 15 of the Iranian Constitution. Similarly, Article 17(d) of the UNCRC refers to the particular linguistic needs of minority groups. The dataset, however, enables us to analyse access exclusively. However, we acknowledge the importance of examining the quality and nature of the media products. It is also crucial to analyse how much time is spent watching television or what kinds of programmes are being watched. What kinds of programmes are produced for different social groups? How do various social groups differ in their use of diverse forms of media? How are computers or the internet used? And so on (Vandewater et al, 2006; Dooly, 2010; Rideout et al, 2010). Due to lack of qualifying information, this study only examined *access* to television and radio, computers and the internet. In light of the fact that qualifying information on access was not available in the questionnaire, possession of the means (television, radio, etc) was examined as the proxy measure. Computers and the internet were examined partially because they could have educational value. But equally important was exposure to independent news through them (as opposed to what the state media was providing). Meanwhile writing 'blogs' is another form of access to information. Blog writing has been an important area of exposure to information, particularly for adolescent girls. It allows them to raise and share social issues that concern them in an anonymous manner (Shekarloo, 2004; Yousefzadeh and Sherkaloo, 2010). Access to all means is an indicator of non-deprivation. Partial access (either of the means) shows moderate deprivation, and no access to any of the means indicates deprivation.

Data analysis

As mentioned earlier, the research examines data from the 2009 national survey on households' income and expenditure. The overall sample included 36,868 households and 150,647 people from all 30 provinces in the country and was nationally representative. It represents a population of 76 million. Out of this number, 22 million (46,613 observations) were children (0-17), that is, 29%, 48.5% girls and 51.5% boys. About 66.6% of the children of the sample lived in rural areas and 33.4% of the children were living in urban areas. The survey sample was weighted at the household level. The dataset has frequently been used for poverty estimations,[20] and scholars refer to the fact that the large samples that cover wide geographic areas allow for estimates of average expenditures (Farzin, 2008). Demographic results (see Table 14.2) are comparable with the UN population prospects (UN, 2009), especially for the child population.

Table 14.2: Demographic stratification comparison (2009)

	Survey (weighted)	UN – population prospects
Total population (000s)	75,999	74,196
Children (0-17) (000s)	22,064	22,221
Children (% of total population)	29.0	29.9
Male children (% of total males)	29.7	30.2
Female children (% of total females)	28.3	29.7
Boys (% of total children)	51.5	51.3
Girls (% of total children)	48.5	48.7

Table 14.3 presents the proportion of children under all three levels, that is, deprived, moderately deprived and not deprived, as a share of all children for whom the indicator can be applied. At the country level, the dimensions with higher deprived ratios are housing (30.5%), education (9.4%), child labour (7.6%) and water and sanitation (3.4%), followed by information (1.5%) and child marriage (0.5%). The moderately deprived ratios are higher for information (92.9%), housing (55.3%), education (11.3%) and water and sanitation (7.8%), followed by child labour (3.3%) and child marriage (2.1%). The order does not change by gender or by area (urban/rural). Deprivation is respectively higher for girls and rural areas than for boys and urban areas.

As shown in Table 14.3, the most pressing issues for the 'deprived' groups are housing and education in rural areas. Some 44% of rural children live in houses where either there are more than three people

Table 14.3: Dimensional deprivation incidence rate (%)

		Provi-sion	Protec-tion	Partici-pation			
	Level	**Education**	**Housing**	**Water and sanitation**	**Child labour**	**Child marriage**	**Information**
Total	**Deprived**	**9.4**	**30.5**	**3.4**	**7.6**	**0.5**	**1.5**
	Moderately deprived	**11.3**	**55.3**	**7.8**	**3.3**	**2.1**	**92.9**
	Not deprived	**79.3**	**14.2**	**88.8**	**89.1**	**95.4**	**5.6**
Female	Deprived	10.3	–	–	8.3	0.9	–
	Moderately deprived	10.0	–	–	3.2	3.5	–
	Not deprived	79.7	–	–	88.5	95.6	–
Male	Deprived	8.5	–	–	6.8	0.0	–
	Moderately deprived	12.6	–	–	3.5	0.7	–
	Not deprived	78.9	–	–	89.7	99.3	–
Rural	Deprived	14.8	43.8	9.2	12.9	0.5	3.3
	Moderately deprived	12.8	52.0	18.4	4.8	2.6	95.5
	Not deprived	72.4	4.2	72.5	82.3	97.9	1.2
Urban	Deprived	6.7	23.8	0.6	4.9	0.4	0.6
	Moderately deprived	10.6	56.9	2.5	2.6	1.8	91.6
	Not deprived	82.7	19.3	96.9	92.5	97.8	7.8
Provinces							
Sistan and Baluchistan	Deprived	21.3	62.6	19.1	14.6	1.0	10.5
West Azerbaijan	Deprived	16.5	28.1	3.7	14.9	1.0	0.6
Qazvin	Deprived	6.3	41.7	0.1	4.4	1.2	0.5
Kerman	Deprived	9.6	41.1	13.2	6.3	0.4	2.8
Khorazan Razavi	Deprived	12.2	39.5	1.5	9.8	1.2	0.9
Hormozgan	Deprived	9.5	29.5	11.4	6.9	0.5	4.1
Zanjan	Deprived	8.4	43.2	1.4	7.9	0.5	0.1
Kurdistan	Deprived	11.1	27.5	1.7	8.4	0.8	0.1

(or more) per room or the house does not meet national safety standards. Further examination of housing indicators, at the national level, suggests that under the number of people per room indicator, 26% are deprived (more than three people) and about 21% are moderately deprived (more than two but up to three people). Also, under the safety indicator, 9% of the children are deprived and 70% are moderately deprived. The safety of the house and materials used in the structure is a major challenge; that is, most children are moderately deprived. The deprivation rate under the number of people per room is significantly higher in rural areas (34.5% rural, 21.3% urban). Similarly, house safety is more of a

rural issue for deprived groups (19.1% deprivation in rural and 4.0% deprivation in urban areas). Moderately deprived groups, however, are equally bad in both rural and urban areas (73.7% rural, 68.0% urban) under house safety. As such, safety of the rural buildings could explain the casualty of the earthquakes in the rural areas.

Table 14.4 shows that 3.5% of children between the ages of 6 and 11 are deprived of an education, that is, they are not enrolled in a school at all. UNICEF's *State of the World's Children 2010*[21] indicates net primary school rates at 91% for boys and 100% for girls between 2003 and 2008 (UNICEF, 2010). Neither the overall enrolment ratio (net) nor disparities between boys and girls at the primary school level in UNICEF's report is consistent with our findings in this study. Also, UNICEF's report does not show the breakdown for urban/rural areas. The UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) statistics, however, show 96% net enrolment in primary school for girls and 100% for boys in 2008 (UNESCO, 2008). Finally, the Iranian government's second report (in collaboration with the UN) for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) indicates more than a 98% enrolment rate overall for primary schools in 2005 and does not provide a breakdown for boys and girls (Government of Iran, 2006). Deprivation among children of secondary school age (12-14) is higher compared to the primary school cohort. Our study indicates that some 12% of all 12- to 14-year-old children were deprived and 19% moderately deprived. UNICEF's 2010 report indicates 21% deprivation among boys and 25% deprivation among girls. Neither UNESCO nor the second MDG report provide information on secondary school enrolment rates. In our study, the deprivation rate for the high school cohort was not included under the education indicator. However, it is important to note that education deprivation increases by age (see Table 14.4). Similarly, child labour is more frequent among older children. As for moderate education deprivation, children aged 12-14 outnumber other age cohorts. Moreover, below the age of 14,

Table 14.4: Education deprivation rate, disaggregated by age cohorts (%)

	Deprivation level	6-11	12-14	15-17
Education	Deprived	3.5	11.8	15.6
	Moderately deprived	9.6	18.7	7.9
	Not deprived	86.9	69.5	76.5
Labour	Deprived	1.1	9.2	15.2
	Moderately deprived	0.0	0.1	10.7
	Not deprived	98.9	90.7	74.1

moderate deprivation is higher than deprivation. Thus it is more likely that children continue their education while working when they are in primary or secondary school. However, working children who are older than 14 are more likely to drop out of school.

Our analysis (see Table 14.3) shows that deprivation from access to safe drinking water and sanitation is highest in Sistan and Baluchistan, Kerman and Hormozgan respectively (19.1%, 13.2%, 11.4%). The latest official report indicating access to water and sanitation in 2002 by UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) suggests that in 2002, 4% of the urban population and 31% of the rural population did not have access to sources of safe drinking water in their houses. Similarly, 14% of the urban population and 22% of the rural families did not have access to sanitation (UNICEF and WHO, 2004).

Breakdown of the rural/urban data suggests that the critical issues for moderately deprived children are information and housing, both for rural and urban areas. Some 95.5% of rural children have limited access to means of information. In addition, 68.0% of the children in urban areas live in houses with moderately safe materials used in the structure. As for child labour, 12.9% of rural children are deprived, that is, they are either under 15 years old and already working, or they are between 15 and 17 years old and are engaged in income-earning jobs or household chores and *do not attend school*. As for gender differences with regards to child labour, girls outnumber boys (8.3% versus 6.8%). The higher rate is partially due to household chores performed by young girls. It is important to note that in our analysis household chores were counted as deprivation only if the child was not attending school. As such, the working status of the child affects girls more proportionately than boys. As for marriage, married children, who are already parents, make up less than 1%. However, 4.4% of girls are married under the age of 17, most of them between 15 and 17.

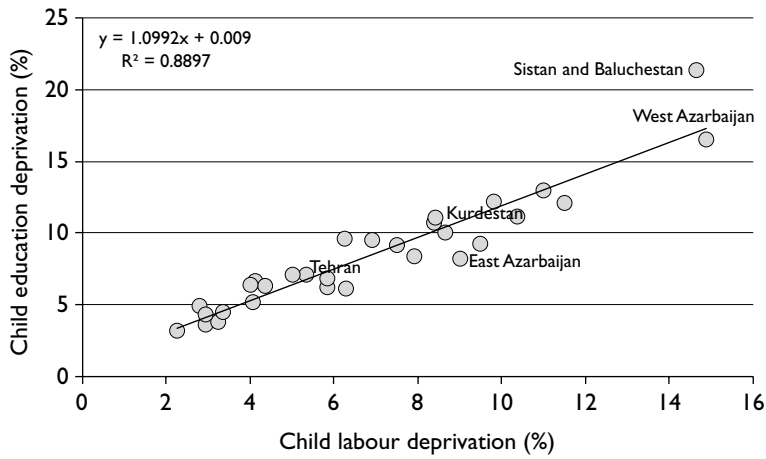
Regional disparities, gender inequality and the rural/urban divide exist under all indicators. The highest education deprivation rates exist among rural girls in Sistan and Baluchistan (26.2% girls, 16.8% boys), West Azerbaijan (20.1% girls, 12.5% boys) and Kurdistan (14.9% girls, 7.7% boys). Similarly, child labour has the highest gender disparity in West Azerbaijan (18.9% girls, 10.5% boys), Sistan and Baluchistan (18.6% girls, 11.1% boys), Hamedan (12.8% girls, 10.3% boys), North Korasan (11.8% girls, 9.1% boys), Golestan (12.8% girls, 9.0% boys), Kurdistan (10.1% girls, 7.1% boys) and East Azerbaijan (11.8% girls, 6.8% boys).

Sistan and Baluchistan has the highest level of deprivation in four dimensions (education, housing, water and sanitation and information),

and the second one in two dimensions (labour and marriage). West Azerbaijan (labour, education and marriage), Qazvin (marriage and housing), Kerman (housing, water and sanitation and information), Khorazan Razavi (education, labour and marriage), Hormozgan (water and sanitation and information), Hamedan (education and labour) and Golestan (education and labour) have high deprivation rates[22] under two or more dimensions. Zanjan (housing), Kurdistan (marriage), Khuzestan (information), Qom (housing), South Korazan (water and sanitation), North Korazan (labour) and Ardebil (marriage) have high deprivation rates in one dimension. It is important to note that most of the above-mentioned disparity provinces (see Table 14.2) host minority ethnic groups. Therefore, child deprivation is more likely to affect areas with minority ethnic groups, particularly Sistan and Baluchistan and West Azerbaijan.

Examining correlations between different dimensions suggests that a high correlation exists between education and labour (0.76). Other important correlations are between housing and water and sanitation (0.27), child marriage and labour (0.23), and information with housing (0.22). Figure 14.1 shows the correlation between child labour and education across different provinces. Sistan and Baluchistan and West Azerbaijan have the highest rate of working children who are not enrolled in school. Kurdistan and East Azerbaijan are in the middle, while Tehran is among the provinces with the lowest percentage of working children who do not attend school. It must be mentioned, however, that street children selling flowers, newspapers, and so on are

Figure 14.1: Correlation between education and child labour, disaggregated by province



observed more frequently in Tehran and its suburbs. As such, it is more likely for working children not attending school at the provincial level to work either at home or in factories or workshops.

Closer examination of the family system data suggests higher deprivation rates under housing, labour and child marriage in polygamous families (see Table 14.5), and under education in single-headed, extended and polygamous families. On the other hand, there is a lower deprivation rate among children living with both parents in nuclear families, except for child marriage and housing, which are lower for single-headed families. Also, Table 14.5 suggests that working children are more likely to drop out of school in polygamous families. However, the ratio of working children who still attend school is higher in single-headed families. As such, children in polygamous and single-headed families are more likely to fall within deprived and moderately deprived groups. Further qualifying information is, of course, required to examine the causality between family system and dynamics with regard to children's multidimensional well-being. Although this analysis does not suggest a causality relationship, the correlation is observed.

Disaggregated data on single-headed families shows higher deprivation rates in male-headed families under all dimensions, except for child marriage. The most pressing areas are education and labour. Fourteen per cent of children in female-headed families are deprived

Table 14.5: Deprivation rate, disaggregated by household type (%)

Dimensions	Deprivation level	Single-headed nuclear	Both parents nuclear	Both parents extended	Single-headed extended	Poly-gamous
Education	Deprived	15.3	8.0	16.8	19.4	19.3
	Moderately deprived	12.9	11.1	11.9	15.7	11.0
	Not deprived	71.8	80.9	71.3	64.8	69.7
Housing	Deprived	26.5	30.0	35.0	28.3	46.9
	Moderately deprived	61.4	54.4	59.3	64.9	47.9
	Not deprived	12.1	15.6	5.7	6.8	5.2
Child labour	Deprived	13.1	6.3	14.2	14.0	15.1
	Moderately deprived	3.9	3.0	5.7	9.0	4.1
	Not deprived	83.0	90.7	80.1	77.0	80.8
Child marriage	Deprived	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.9
	Moderately deprived	1.1	1.5	6.8	5.5	1.8
	Not deprived	98.9	98.0	92.7	94.5	97.3

from education compared to 23.2% of children in male-headed families. Similarly, while 12.7% of children in female-headed families are deprived under labour, in male-headed families 15.7% of children are deprived (see Table 14.6).

Table 14.6: Deprivation rate in single-headed households, disaggregated by gender (%)

Dimension	Female-headed households	Male-headed households
Education	14.0	23.2
Housing	24.8	37.2
Water and sanitation	4.0	8.1
Child labour	12.7	15.7
Child marriage	1.1	0.0
Information	3.7	11.3

A comparison between the deprived and moderately deprived ratio in different provinces (see Table 14.7) indicates that the ranking of the provinces is not consistent in rural and urban areas. As expected, rural areas have higher deprivation rates than urban areas. While the disparities between deprived rural and urban children are significantly large, inequalities under moderately deprived children are relatively small. As for gender differences, deprived girls outnumber boys, whereas moderate deprivation is almost the same for girls and boys. As discussed earlier, the gender difference could partially be explained within differences in the labour and education dimensions. Provinces with a higher rank in child deprivation also have higher disparities between rural and urban areas. Overall deprivation at country level is not representative of the situation of deprived children in Sistan and Baluchistan, Kerman, South Khorasan and West Azerbaijan. It is also important to note that while dimensional deprivation rates suggest higher deprivation in provinces with minority ethnic groups, the overall deprivation ratio masks large ethnic disparities. Overall child deprivation is highest in polygamous and single-headed families respectively.

The moderately deprived rate (75.3%) significantly outnumbers the deprived rate (8.6%). Figure 14.2 shows the multidimensional deprivation rate in both rural (dotted line) and urban areas. Ranking in rural and urban areas is different for moderate deprivation. Also, provinces with a higher deprivation rate have lower moderate deprivations.

Overall, about 75% of children are moderately deprived on a national level, and there are clear disparities between rural and urban

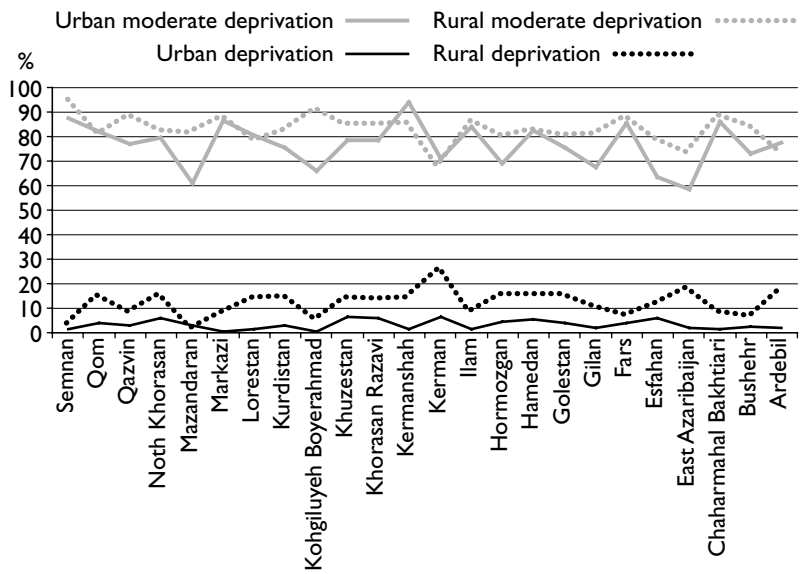
Table 14.7: Child multidimensional deprivation and moderate deprivation rate (%)

Province	Rural deprivation	Urban deprivation	Rural moderate deprivation	Urban moderate deprivation
Zanjan	13.4	2	86.5	86.1
Yazd	9.8	3	88	90.2
West Azerbaijan	20.6	5.3	75.6	82
Tehran	8.2	3.4	83.5	63
South Khorasan	20.8	4.4	79.2	85.2
Sistan Baluchistan	43.7	16.5	56.2	8?.7
Semnan	3.9	1.4	95.2	87.7
Qom	15.6	4.2	81.4	81.8
Qazvin	8.6	3.1	89.3	77.1
Noth Khorasan	15.4	5.9	82.5	79.3
Mazandaran	3	2.9	81.1	60.9
Markazi	8.1	0.6	88.8	86.7
Lorestan	14.4	1.4	79.2	80.4
Kurdistan	14.6	2.9	82.3	75.7
Kohgiluyeh Boyerahmad	5.3	0.6	90.8	65.9
Khuzestan	14.7	6.6	84.3	78.5
Khorasan Razavi	13.7	5.9	85.3	78.6
Kermanshah	14.1	1.5	85.4	94.1
Kerman	26.5	6.6	67.9	71
Ilam	9.1	1.6	87.6	84
Hormozgan	16.6	4.7	80.1	69.2
Hamedan	15.6	5.7	83.2	82.3
Golestan	15.6	4	80.6	75.3
Gilan	9.7	2.2	81.5	67.6
Fars	7.5	3.9	88.5	85.4
Esfahan	12.6	6	78	63.4
East Azerbaijan	17.5	2.1	74.5	58.5
Chaharmahal Bakhtiari	8	1.5	89.2	86.1
Bushehr	6.7	2.7	83.9	73.1
Ardebil	18.2	2.2	73	77.6
Country	**16.6**	**4.6**	**79.1**	**73.4**
Female	9.0		75.6	
Male	8.2		75.0	
0-5	3.2		80.1	
6-11	5.4		77.9	
12-14	12.6		73.7	
15-17	16.9		66.7	
Single-headed nuclear	15.3		73.0	
Both parents nuclear	7.5		74.7	
Both parents extended	12.9		81.0	
Single-headed extended	11.0		80.4	
Polygamous	24.4		71.2	

Table 14.8: Child multidimensional moderate deprivation rate (%)

Province	Rural	Urban	Province	Rural	Urban
Semnan	95.2	87.7	South Khorasan	79.2	85.2
Kohgiluyeh Boyerahmad	90.8	65.9	Lorestan	79.2	80.4
Qazvin	89.3	77.1	Esfahan	78.0	63.4
Chaharmahal Bakhtiari	89.2	86.1	West Azerbaijan	75.6	82.0
Markazi	88.8	86.7	East Azerbaijan	74.5	58.5
Fars	88.5	85.4	Ardebil	73.0	77.6
Yazd	88.0	90.2	Kerman	67.9	71.0
Ilam	87.6	84.0	Sistan Baluchistan	56.2	80.7
Zanjan	86.5	86.1	**Country**	75.3	
Kermanshah	85.4	94.1		79.1	73.4
Khorasan Razavi	85.3	78.6			
Khuzestan	84.3	78.5	Female	75.6	
Bushehr	83.9	73.1	Male	75.0	
Tehran	83.5	63.0	0-5	80.1	
Hamedan	83.2	82.3	6-11	77.9	
Noth Khorasan	82.5	79.3	12-14	73.7	
Kurdistan	82.3	75.7	15-17	66.7	
Gilan	81.5	67.6	Single-headed nuclear	73.0	
Qom	81.4	81.8	Both parents nuclear	74.7	
Mazandaran	81.1	60.9	Both parents extended	81.0	
Golestan	80.6	75.3	Single-headed extended	80.4	
Hormozgan	80.1	69.2	Polygamous	71.2	

Figure 14.2: Comparing children's multidimensional deprivation and moderate deprivation rate (%)



areas. Therefore, while decentralised strategies are needed to alleviate pockets of deprivation, different levels of policies are required to address systemic moderate deprivation in Iran. Information and housing are the two key indicators contributing to moderate deprivation. Excluding 'information' from the multidimensional calculations suggests a much smaller moderate deprivation at the country level, that is, 16.4%. Although we calculate the difference in deprivation ratios excluding the dimension of 'information' (that is, 7.6%), we do not recommend such an approach. As mentioned earlier, the government sponsors the media and there is no independent channel to access neutral information for adults and children alike. Therefore, it is important for children to be able to access independent sources of information. Access to computers and the internet is therefore becoming increasingly important.

As for non-deprived groups, only 16.1% of children are not deprived at the national level.

Conclusion

In this chapter, a multidimensional child poverty approach was applied for Iran using data from the 2009 national level income and expenditure survey. We have argued that the contextual specification of the country should be considered when defining deprivation indicators and conducting analysis. Six dimensions were examined related to education, shelter, water and sanitation, child labour, child marriage and information, under the three broad categories of rights, that is, provision, protection and participation (the 3 P's approach).

The availability of data has limited a comprehensive analysis, and some aspects of the 3 P's approach are missing. As such, it must be highlighted that important areas in the context of Iran such as nutrition, child abuse, juvenile delinquency and execution of minors, freedom of thought, expression and association have therefore not been analysed in this chapter. We acknowledge the importance of these areas, particularly in the contemporary situation, where state-sponsored acts are limiting children's enjoyment of certain rights (Yousefzadeh, 2010). Nevertheless, further information is needed in order to be able to elaborate further on such areas. A clear conclusion of this chapter is that girls living in rural areas are significantly worse off than their male counterparts in the same regions and than their female peers in urban areas. The underlying determinants deserve to be investigated more thoroughly and this is one of the areas where future research will be focused. We have also analysed the situation of moderately deprived children. It is crucial to analyse the status of

moderately deprived and deprived children as their vulnerabilities could lead to weaker capabilities and problems in their transition to adulthood. In addition, duty bearers (both the state and families) need different resources and policies to remove barriers in moderate deprivation status compared to deprived situations. For instance, while barriers for school attendance are removed for deprived children, further steps are required to enable the children to adapt their educational needs. The analysis has also shown that children in particular regions are in more vulnerable situations compared to their peers in other regions. These regions are characterised by a large number of children from minority ethnic groups. Their status needs further exploration and deeper analysis to identify their specific needs and vulnerabilities.

Notes

[1] Ehsani (1994) refers to Ayatollah Khomeini's death, lack of clear vision to transform social and economic orders based on an Islamic model, and lack of homogeneity of the ruling clerics as some of the contributing factors in Iran lacking a long-term industrialisation strategy.

[2] *Sharia law* refers to the Islamic law defined by the Qur'an. It must be noted, however, that there are many different interpretations of the Qur'an within the Muslim world based on different doctrines. Consequently, the concept of *Sharia law* is rather vague and often reflects contradicting implications in different Islamic societies. Definition of the *Sharia law* and the way it is currently mainstreamed in Iranian legislation may not be considered as the only or the 'Shiite' interpretation of the Qur'an. Like most other religious sects, in Shiite Islam too, there are different interpretations. After the revolution, although different scholars with diverse doctrines were engaged in initial stages of Constitutional revision, gradually, progressive thinkers were excluded and marginalised extensively (Vahdat, 2003; Shaditalab, 2005). The progressive scholars believe in 'dynamic jurisprudence', a doctrine that focuses on the notion of time and place in interpreting *Sharia law* (Najafinejad et al, 2010; Künkler et al, 2007). The Late Grand Ayatollah Montazeri, Ayatollah Mojtahed-Shabestari, Late Grand Ayatollah Shariatmadari and Grand Ayatollah Sanei are some of the scholars with progressive views.

[3] Based on the age of puberty.

[4] We are also working on multidimensional child poverty analysis in Iran from 1984 to 2009.

[5] For instance, the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in 1995 and the UN General Assembly in 2007.

[6] It is important to mention that the UNCRC embraces other important international commitments and standards such as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or 'A World Fit For Children', with defined indicators that the Iranian government is committed to achieve.

[7] Articles related to the freedom of religion, adoption, alternative care, etc are some of these areas.

[8] Mehrpoor (2007), a former member of the Iranian Guardian Council, spells out the specific areas of concern regarding the UNCRC: Article 12(1) respect for views of the child; 13(2) freedom of expression; 14(1),(3) freedom of thoughts; 15(2) freedom of association; 16(1) right to privacy; and 29(d-1) the preparation of the child for a responsible life in a free society. These areas highlighted by the Iranian government are crucially important for reviewing the situation of children in contemporary Iran. Although these areas are largely overlooked and require examination, this chapter cannot focus on them due to lack of data.

[9] Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) or C138 Minimum Age Convention, 1973.

[10] However, for areas like criminal responsibility, the age of end of childhood remains a crucial challenge.

[11] This chapter is part of a PhD thesis analysing multidimensional child poverty in Iran from 1984 to 2009. The original research includes some other dimensions (including household income, exposure to violence, mobility, social exclusion and communication) among other dimensions that are discussed in this chapter. In light of the fact that the data still need further cleaning and administrative work, those dimensions could not be analysed in this chapter.

[12] *Implementation handbook for the Convention on the Rights of the Child* (2007).

[13] Some international studies on shelter deprivation categorise three people per room as moderately deprived (Gordon et al, 2003a,b).

[14] However, there are two exceptions to applying a minimum age to working children: individuals covered by the Civil Servants Act or other special employment laws and regulations; and workers in family workshops whose work is performed exclusively by the employer and

his spouse and blood relatives of first degree are not be governed by the provisions of this Law.

[15] Which set 15 as the minimum age for marriage for both boys and girls.

[16] That proposes 18 as the minimum age for marriage.

[17] '… the properties which had belonged to a minor who has now reached the age of majority may be given to him only if it has been proved that he has full legal capacity.'

[18] In fact, children who were married before 18 should be categorised as deprived and those who were married and parents as severely deprived. However, in order to keep consistency in defining indicators, we did not choose this option.

[19] Observed by one of the authors in Chabahar (Sistan and Baluchistan province) in an internet cafe at a shopping mall with young girls and boys using computers, visiting different websites. It is not possible to generalise the mentioned observation to all provinces and rural areas in Iran. Nevertheless, as the information in this study will also show, access has been improving throughout the country.

[20] Salehi-Isfahani (2006, 2007and Farzin (2008). It must be mentioned, however, that Salehi-Isfahani estimates the weights himself using the census data.

[21] *The State of the World's Children* is an annual report prepared by UNICEF in collaboration with governments' specialised ministries. As such, the data presented in those reports reflect government studies and their results for most parts.

[22] More than one standard deviation over the median.

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