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# Youths' perception of development in Iran: A sociological appraisal

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### Abstract

The paper explores how youths and development are the two sides of the same coin. Development substantially influences the youths materially and nonmaterially in every society irrespective of class, caste or creed. While modern technology generates social development, the process inevitably impacts the youths, and the vicious circle continues. The expansion of modern social movements across the world including Iran, has widely influenced the youths in various respects — their lifestyles, value systems and socio-economic expectations have changed and transformed. Youths in Iran in recent decades have greatly experienced modern tertiary education which contributes to further change in social dimensions. Moreover, half of the youth who are females have experienced acquiring modern education that is determining in social development at national level. However, the scenario has led to various challenges too. The present research has used a combined style of theoretical and empirical methods to each the necessary data. In the empirical part of the research, 400 samples were randomly selected in different parts of Tehran City.

**Keywords:** Social development. Youths. Modern education. Urban life. Lifestyle

### Introduction

Youth and development as the two sides of the same coin, reciprocally affect each other. Development is a process denoting a movement from a traditional order to certain desired types of technology and associated forms of social structure, value-orientations, motivations, and norms with special refrence to the youth. One of the most important aspects of development is the one that attracts the youth at its large-scale, i.e. influencing substantially the material well-being of the people in general, and the youth in particular. Global experience suggests, however, that advanced technology by itself cannot be transferred; an anspicious setting for its effective diffusion is provided by a common "behavioural system" mainly within the youth.

The ideological, motivational, institutional and organizational components of this system must also be there, in one form or another for a successful development process (Dube 1993:112). However, without a transformation of young people, and the attendant cultural transformation (development), modern technology cannot be sustained; the means that generates social development.

The essence of social development is to be found in the capacity of a society to operate highly complex organization. The complexity of these organizations also increases with higher degrees of social development which intrinsically includes economic development either.

Functionally, youth are geared to adapt old knowledge to new uses, produce new knowledge, and apply it to one or more fields of human life. They also affect the widest possible diffusion of new knowledge and its uses. Therefore, though youth development is the outcome of social development, **it** also highly affect**s** social development.

While development is facilitated and influenced by technological changes such as modern information and communications technology, the social group which is highly influenced, i.e. the population that is very vulnerable under its pressure, are the youth, not only in Iran, but also in many other developing countries.

Socio-economic development is not a new process. For over the past five centuries firms in the economically advanced countries have increasingly extended their outreach through trade and production activities more through colonialism (Khor 2001: 1). Sociologically speaking, this process has much targeted the youth in terms of social conducts, behavior, lifestyle,

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consumption patterns etc. Similarly, social development highly contributes to the liberalization of norms, values and cultural principles with special reference to the youth.

While the most important aspects of socio-economic development are breaking down family structure, and socio-cultural change among different generations, international trade also spread, and national economic barriers broke down as well. However, the pace of development has increasingly affected all the developing countries including Iran with a focus on the youth, and as a result, a lot of challenges are emerging among them.

The increasing transnational, social, economic and cultural networks which have facilitated the expansion of modern social movements across nation-states including Iran, have influenced local population and preferably the youth. Though these movements initially emerged in the West, owing to the liberalization processes in different areas, they have won many adherents in many developing countries as well (Hettige 1996: 6).

Social development has raised new issues for sociologists in a number of areas. As a result, different sociologists have responded to the phenomenon in varying ways. They try to explore the tensions and challenges in social, economic and cultural contexts. Modernity which has been associated with the onset of industrialization, the growth of capitalism (its inequalities and forms of conflicts), and the appearance of an increasingly complex and differentiated institutional culture (Bilton et al., 2002: 46.), has led to various changes in the youths' lives.

The classical contributions of Marx, Weber and Durkheim were in their differing ways, devoted to improving our understanding of all these aspects of modernity. Such a process started progressing less in the former part of the 20th century, and more in the latter part of the 20th century. The dimensions of modernity can only be illustrated properly today in global terms when explored sociologically. The boundaries of such developments no longer merely belong to countries such as Western Europe or Japan, but the dynamics of modernity through and as a result of globalization has made the world grow smaller, and countries have become increasingly interlinked. However, the key term for such change / transition is the globalization of modernity. Such a scenario is leading to various challenges particularly among the youth with a population use of a country of 79.5 million (WPDS, 2016).

## Research Methodology

The nature of the research made the researcher adopt a combination of methods of research; containing a theoretical perspective and an empirical method as appropriate tools for conducting this research project. Though the main sources for the research have been empirical survey, social science theories and social policy reviews supplemented the work by ad hoc interviews. The researcher thinks there is value in bringing together issues and insights from a range of social science and applied disciplines to discuss the quality of life of the youth in Iran as a developing country with very young population structure.

In the empirical dimension of the study, 400 male and female youths of age groups 18-29, plus 200 children who were randomly selected out of the universe of study for interview. While the main technique of study was administering questionnaires, the researcher used interview method too, as per necessary. However, eventually the completed questionnaires were extracted and analyzed.

## Theoretical Perspectives

Concepts of childhood and youth have shaped the interests and assumptions of those studying young people, and the contexts within which they are able to do so. Sociologically speaking, both children and youth have been widely neglected in the social sciences, perhaps because until recently the social sciences were male dominated (Prouth and James: 1990).

The reason for this argument is that it is assumed that as children's lives are impermanent, they are unimportant (Montgomery:2001); or because youth need never be taken very seriously ( Wulff : 1995). So far as it has been investigated, research with children has until recently been dominated by developmental psychology.It was initially conceived as a way of finding solutions to general psychological problems, rather than concerned specifically with children/youth development (Jenks:1996).

On the other hand, though educationalists are concerned with children as already-constituted recipients of schooling, but seldom delved further into children's lives, However, from 1990 on, sociologists, anthropologists and geographers began to recognize children and youth as legitimate subjects of study. A new paradigm, the " new social studies of childhood" has stimulated research that is critical of the psychological perspective.

Another theory illustrates that while the study of children has its roots in the field of education and psychology, the study of youth is more recent, and began in the 1950s and 1960s among criminologists, and later psychologists, followed by sociologists, inspired by concerns surrounding the "nuisance" posed by working-class adolescents on urban streets (Valentine et al.1998). In recent years, due to increasing social change in various dimensions, many more sociologists have begun to take a wider interest in the lives of ordinary (untroublesome) youth.

However, many of the theories and perspectives on youth focus their priories on youth education, employment, hunger and poverty, health, environment, juvenile delinquency, leisure time activies, full and effective participation of youth in decision- making, conflict prevention among the youth, promotion of intergenerational relations among them and the like (UN: 2002). Overall, since childhood and youth are understood in very different ways in different societies, and at different times, there are different perspectives towards them — similarly, they create different challenges, and consequently need different solutions. Such a state of affairs has brought about the background in recent decades to have numerous international actions designed to improve the situation of children and youth worldwide. Based on findings, experiences, and opinions of relevant scholars, and global models, children are passive, vulnerable and the responsibility of their families; followed by the notion that youth are inherently troublesome and at risk.

However, there are conditions and circumstances that are thought to best favor children's psycho-social well-being and development. Thus, those children who do not enjoy such life circumstances are believed to be at risk, and consequently their development and adaptation to society are undermined (Boyden et al.1997:22).

## Globalization of Culture

The global spread of capitalism contributes to the spread of commodities that, while finely tuned to local markets, carry messages, and thereby change the culture and habits of the people with special reference to the youth. That is, the spread of global commodities imply a globalization of culture; leading to youth challenges.

Becker (1987), argues that the strength of world capitalism is directly related to its ability to sell not merely goods, but also ideas, and more generally ideologies that sustain our levels of consumption. That is to say, the growth of consumerism among the youth has been heavily reliant on the growth of transnational mass media dominated by firms such as Sony, Sky TV and so on. The power of these mass media strongly and gradually change the standards of the youth.

Political change also contributes to globalization of culture. Palmer (1992: 143) draws attention to the key socio-political shifts that have occurred in the world since 1980s, and especially since 1989, when the fall of Berlin Wall led to a lot of changes in different areas in the ex-Soviet Bloc, and in particular among the youths, i.e. followed by various youth challenges. That is, a complex of challenges which still continue.

Four decades of intense development activities in Iran have brought to the fore the critical significance of culture. It has led to great cultural change and cultural autonomy. However, culture has also moved centre stage, and contributes to the processes of growth. Globalization has also influenced the aesthetic, psychic, creative and integrative functions of culture. Similarly, globalization of culture has led to new concerns, **i.e.** prevention of the degradation of environments, preservation of scarce natural resources, population control, and so forth (Dube 1995: 21). Any consideration of the quality of life will be meaningless**,** if it does not take into account deeply-held cultural values, and that is where challenges rise. Human resource development also has vital cultural underpinnings. The notion of basic or minimum needs, i.e. nutrition, education, health, housing, employment, and leisure for the youth and by the youth, is organically linked to culture and development. In this perspective, culture still acquires more significance.

However, the politicization of culture has its own inherent dangers. It can lead to vulgarization (including erosion of core values and creativity)**,** and to promotion of discord, conflict, and violence. It can even block normal processes of orthogenetic and heterogenetic cultural growth. (Dube 1995: 23). These are some of the dangers (particularly for the youth) against which humanity has to be warned.

## Children/Youth and Education

Schooling is increasingly known as a feature of children's lives worldwide. Over the past century, three approaches have been advocated to escape the consequences of widespread poverty, rapid population growth, environmental problems, and social injustice[3]. However, to respond to all those mentioned, education must be used extensively and multidimensionally everywhere including Iran, regardless of geographical zones, people's caste or creed etc. That is to say: use technology, to produce more and alleviate shortages. The *fewer forks* approach says: make contraception and reproductive health care available to eliminate unwanted fertility and slow population growth.

The *better manner* approach says : eliminate violence and corruption ; improve trade, the operation of markets, and government provision of public goods; reduce the unwanted aftereffects of consumption such as environmental damage; and achieve greater social and political equity between young and old, male and female, and rich and poor (Cohen:1995).

Providing all children/youth with a high-quality primary and secondary education, whether through formal schooling or by alternative means, could in principle support the three above -mentioned approaches. Overall, education provides economic benefits, builds strong societies and improves health, i.e. leading to social development. That is, it promotes not only children's and youths' quality of life, but as a whole, the society's quality of life. It is widely an accepted humanitarian obligation and human right.

Surprisingly and as a good news, over the past century, access to education has increased extensively among all classes of children and young people, illiteracy has dramatically fallen, and a higher proportion of children and youth are completing primary, secondary, or even tertiary education than ever before. But, huge problems remain, and controversial problems are created. In this process, many children/ youths are graduated without being able to get employment etc.

There are certain challenges faced by many developing countries including Iran. Many studies of the economic aspects of education indicate that, in many developing countries more "*quantity*" of education is practiced rather than the "*quality*" of education ; and the result of which is the growing number of young graduates without the prospects of job opportunities. However, quality defined here by measured mathematics and science skills, reflects variety of factors such as family inputs, health, schooling, and so forth.

Moreover, children's and youths' experiences of schooling differ greatly for reasons associated with schools and educational systems, and reasons associated with children's and youth's lives outside school. However, development specialists are increasingly concerned about the quality of education.

## Conceptual Considerations

The youth problems have become very acute not only in Iran, but it is assumed to have dangerous dimensions in other countries too, even in the developed societies. While youth problem was not of prime importance in the former part of the 20th century, it gradually became important in the latter part of the same century**;** more due to emerging social change, more educational attainment by the youth, change of expectations, social development, or so to say increase in social expectancy, lengthening of educational duration, late marriages and so on. All these have come to play part in creation of challenges among the youth. Such waves and challenges have entered the developing countries including Iran through modernization, Westernization and in recent years, globalization.

While in the past, the youth course was not so manifest, and individuals used to jump into adulthood and take functional responsibilities early in their life, after their adolescence, new life conditions gave a different meaning and identity to the youth course.

Critically speaking, the Western education started and

pursued in Iran in early 20th century. In that, and through the institutions concerned, the younger generations started to be educated away from not only their families, but new socialization started to acquaint the adolescents and youth with new values and patterns of life. The present educational system not only in Iran, but all across the non-Western world, based on the Western patterns, has uprooted the youth from their ties to their past, **i.e.** their value-system and civilization. Such conditions neither inspire the youth to imbibe the spirit of self-reliance, and self-help in themselves, nor it helps in character-building, without which nation-building remains almost a dream. However, despite all the illustrated criticisms, optimists believe that more contacts, new technologies, liberalized educational system and the like, pave the route towards social development in spite of the likely challenges.

Similarly, there is a moral obligation as well as the legal obligation towards children and youth. Children and youth all have a considerable amount to contribute to the world: after all, they are the future. Adults make decisions that will affect children when they are older, and therefore, children have to live with consequences of adult decisions (Hill et al. 1997). It is therefore suggested that, as children have first-hand experience of their lifestyle, and the issues that affect them, thus they should be seen and heard. Hence, the saying is rejected that: "Children should be seen and not heard."

**Iran's Children and Youth Reflections**
The concept of childhood, and importance attached to children, is culturally constructed and therefore varies between societies, as well as between individual children within societies. That is, the whole process has meaningful impact on the youth. Children's importance within families in Iran is culturally varied. In most parts of Iran, children represent not only lineage continuity, but also material survival of families and communities. Traditionally speaking, they are wealth- in - people; expected to provide labor, and support the older generations, and those who are sick or needy. Children's and youths' contributions to their families may be immediate or delayed. As observed and found out, middle-class parents in Iran work and do their best to control their children for future benefits, whereas lower-class parents expect their children to satisfy the family's immediate needs. The image of children as a

resource is, however increasingly challenging in the society not only in Iran, but in many other developing countries due to changing socio-economic and cultural conditions.

Sociologically speaking and under certain conditions, greater value may be attached to some children rather than others, and this leads to differences in their treatment. Children who have a major role in the household economy, or who will perpetuate the family name are in less danger of abuse than others. Birth order and gender are both important here. Those at greatest risk may be girls, the youngest in large families, children with particular behavioral or physical characteristics, orphaned, adopted or stepchildren (Boyden: 1991).

Within the past four decades the youth have come on the agenda in many countries in the developing world including Iran. Young people have developed their own culture, and a distinctive social identity which is more clearly differentiated from that of their parents. Three general features which are currently attributed to the youth include:

* They pursue a culture of leisure.
* Their social relations are organized round the peer groups rather than families or individual friends.
* Youth groups are particularly interested in "Style" by which is meant an interest in the use of distinctive language form, taste in a music or certain clothes etc.

However, it may be misleading to talk of one single youth culture. Rather, there is a multiplicity of youth cultures, differentiated, for example, by social class, gender and ethnicity. Clearly young people from different social classes, or ethnic groups have very different attitudes, tastes, ways of behaving and styles, as do young men and women. Nonetheless, globalization is narrowing the gaps.

In carrying out the present paper, a survey was conducted regarding the socio-economic state of life of the youths (both sexes) in Tehran. In that, the "universe of study" connoted age groups 18-29, followed by queries which directly and indirectly related with the youth issues. The survey contained queries on education, employment, literacy rate, marital status, financial supports of families, leisure pursuits, friendship network, tour & travels, using tobacco, occupations and income level**s** etc.

**Table 1:** Classification of Children Studied* by Age and Sex

| Ages | Total Number (%) | Males Number (%) | Females Number (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| — | 200 (100.00) | 100 (100.00) | 100 (100.00) |
| 10 | 30 (15.00) | 16 (16.00) | 14 (14.00) |
| 11 | 23 (11.50) | 11 (11.00) | 12 (12.50) |
| 12 | 24 (12.00) | 10 (10.00) | 14 (14.00) |
| 13 | 25 (12.50) | 12 (12.00) | 13 (13.00) |
| 14 | 27 (13.50) | 14 (14.00) | 13 (13.00) |
| 15 | 22 (11.00) | 12 (12.00) | 10 (10.00) |
| 16 | 26 (13.00) | 14 (14.00) | 12 (12.00) |
| 17 | 23 (11.50) | 11 (11.00) | 12 (12.00) |

* Those interviewed.

**Table 2:** Classification of Youth Studied* by Age and Sex

| Ages | Total Number (%) | Males Number (%) | Females Number (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| — | 400 (100.00) | 200 (100.00) | 200 (100.00) |
| 18 | 29 (7.25) | 13 (6.50) | 16 (8.00) |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 19 | 39 (9.75) | 16 (8.00) | 23 (11.50) |
| 20 | 56 (14.00) | 20 (10.00) | 36 (18.00) |
| 21 | 51 (12.75) | 19 (9.50) | 32 (16.00) |
| 22 | 40 (10.00) | 14 (7.00) | 26 (13.00) |
| 23 | 38 (9.50) | 24 (12.00) | 14 (7.00) |
| 24 | 36 (9.00) | 20 (10.00) | 16 (8.00) |
| 25 | 34 (8.50) | 20 (10.00) | 14 (7.00) |
| 26 | 18 (4.50) | 13 (6.50) | 5 (2.50) |
| 27 | 28 (7.00) | 20 (10.00) | 8 (4.00) |
| 28 | 17 (4.25) | 10 (5.00) | 7 (3.50) |
| 29 | 14 (3.50) | 11 (5.50) | 3 (1.50) |

* Those studied through questionnaires.

## Analysis of Data

Overall, 400 senior children and youth of males and female were contacted out of the universe of study to collect the data required. In addition to that, 200 children of both sexes were also seprately interviewed, and in that their aspirations were sought towards education, new life-styles, future careers etc. Throgh this method, the researcher identified the value-system of the children, their problems, challenges and the like. Agewise, the highest frequency among the samples, i. e. 14 percent, belonged to the age group 20.

While levels of social mobility have grown in Iran in the past half century, the main means of which to achieve the end, has been "educational achievement." That is to say, educational qualifications play a determining part to achieve upward mobility. That also helps in cross-class marriages to take place within different social strata. However, remarkable decline in inequality of educational opportunities is quite observable/tangible in the Iranian society in the past few decades. While a major part of mainly higher education has been privatized, many middle-class, and even lower middle-class youths have got the chance to go to some open universities.

Moreover, as a result of the waves of the socio-economic change in the country in recent decades, attempts have been made to raise standards, and to tie all parts of the educational system more closely to the needs of industry. For that, higher educational qualifications by the youths are required.

Out of the total 400 youths surveyed, 49 percent of the respondents declared to be engaged in education, while the rest 51 percent were somehow graduated. Within various age groups, those youth at the age 20 had the highest percentage of educational engagement, i. e. 21% as compared with other age groups. This indicator stands at 16.7 percent for males, and 24 percent for females at the age group of 20. Surprisingly, in Iran, more females go to the university than males. That is to say, 58 percent of our female samples were engaged in studies as compared with 42 percent within the male respondents.

So far as the occupational status of the youths in our "universe of study" is concerned, about 69 percent of the respondents surveyed, were engaged in some jobs; both in private and public sectors. The indicator stood at 31 percent for the female respondents. In Iran, as the responsibility of bread winning is mostly associated with the males, more frequently employers prefer males.

In another inquiry, respondents were searched in terms of their age groups vis-à-vis their status of education. While 47 percent of all ages within males had finished high school, the corresponding figure for females was 41 percent. In case of university education, while 38.5 percent of all male respondents reported to be engaged in a university course, the corresponding indicator for males was 57 percent. In another comparison, the survey shows that males attend university courses till later ages than females; simply because they are more in search of jobs which are education-oriented. Instead, concentration of females in younger age-groups in education is higher. That is because female youths are usually involved in marriage / family affairs after their mid twenties.

Another set of data indicate that within all ages and samples, 77.3 percent was found unmarried, and only 22.7 percent was identified as married, while within the married youths in their early 20s frequency is very low for the age 24, i.e. 25.6 percent. The corresponding figure for the females of the same age is 50 percent. Therefore, the inability of the male youths to marry in their early 20s remains as a social issue for them under the conditions that they are not legally and culturally permitted to have contacts with the opposite sex.

So far as the accommodation status of married sample of the present survey is concerned, about 65 percent of the respondents asserted to be tenants, and only 35 percent to own personal housings. In Iran, the more people / youths are tenants, the more socio-economic problems they are likely to face since larger amount of their income should be allotted to rents. While the rate of those not having their own housings varies between 5 and 20 percent within different age groups, the rate of those who own accommodations ranges between 3.2 and 22 percent. As a result, social problems stemming from housing crisis are confronting the married youths in Iran especially in the larger urban areas.

In our survey, a question was asked on the assistance/supports received by the youths from their families. While about 23.5 percent of the respondents asserted not to be recipients of supports from their families, 30.5 percent declared to receive assistance from their families to some extent, and eventually 46 percent declared to be entirely dependent on their families for their livelihood and financial needs. Such burden on families creates a lot of family problems such as over-time work/labor by the parent(s), economizing in different sectors of their daily lives etc. While 20.6 percent of the samples asserted to be entirely dependent on their families at the age of 20, it was yet 6.5 percent for the youths at the age group of 24. Sociologically speaking, the phenomenon must be taken as a problem. It is more due to the macro-economic abnormality as prevalent in the society. Another indicator shows that the proportion of females entirely dependent on family assistance is 61.5 percent as compared with 38.5 percent within the male respondents.

In response to the query if the respondents were responsible for the expenditures of their family, 73.5 percent answered not at all, 20.5 percent responded to some extent, and

eventually 5.5 percent declared that they were entirely responsible for their families' expenditures. While the percentage of those responsible for family living costs was 8.5 within the males, it was only 2.5 for the female samples.

In today's world, leisure plays an important part in the lives of the youths nationally and globally. In Iran too, it appears as a complicated problem. In reaction to "leisure query" 27.8 percent of the youth declared to spend their leisure with sports, and 15.3 percent responded to go the cinema for their leisure. Similarly, while reading included 30 percent of leisure pursuits respectively engagement with computer was12.5 percent, using internet was 9.2 percent, and satellite use was 5.8 percent.

Abundance of youths in Iran creates the conditions for them to spend their leisure time together. To prove that, 41 percent of the respondents declared to spend as much as 4 hours a week with their friends as a part of their leisure. Similarly, those spending 5 to 9 hours with friends indicated 21 percent, while ratio of those youths pursuing their leisure with friends for 10 to 14 hours, and those 15 hours and more in a week was respectively indicated as 14.7 and 23 percent. Though the ratios for both males and females were almost very close, spending leisure time mostly happens with the same sex. However, increasing unemployment among the youths contributes to spending leisure with friends 15 hours or more in a week.

The survey also inquired about the tour and travel of the youths during the 12 months before the study. In that, 23 percent of the samples asserted that they did not have any travels at all during the period, 21.5 percent only once, 26.7 twice, and finally 28.8 percent illustrated three travels and more during the given time.

In their reaction towards tobacco use, 15.5 percent of the "universe" indicated to smoke cigarettes, while 84.5 percent gave negative answers to the question. Similarly, while 24 percent of the male youths used to smoke, only 7 percent of female youths illustrated to smoke cigarettes.

Based on the notion that occupation and income play a major part in the youths' security and well-being, our samples indicated to draw monthly incomes respectively as such: 21.5 percent between Rials 500000 and 740000 equivalent to US $ 57 and 85, 19 percent between Rials 750000 and 990000 equivalent to US $ 86 and 113, 30.8 percent between Rials 1000000 and 1490000 equal to US$ 114 and 171, and at last, 28 percent drawing Rials 1500000 and more equivalent to US $ 172 as their monthly income. The ratio for all occupations and incomes within the youths is 224. That is, for every one-hundred female youths with occupations and incomes, there are 224 male youths with the same conditions.

## Discusssion

Following the analysis of data, a brief discussion is provided to indicate youth development as the process whereby youths learn to conform to social norms; a process that makes possible an enduring society. That contributes to the development of society by transmitting of new and progressive elements of culture between generations. However, youth development may be conceived of as, the internalization of social norms. Based on the theories and perspectives on priorities of youth education, employment, health, leisure time activities, and youth participation in effective decision making, results of study show that 49

percent of the respondents was engaged in education and 51 percent was somehow graduated, which is an accepted form of socialization. The youth therefore feel a need to conform, which is an essential element of social interaction, and in the absence of which they would be at the risk of facing increasing problems in social milieu.

Youths' development through their socialization makes them actors to enter roles. This process has well been examined in the universe of our study, and within our respondents based on the theory by (Valentine et al. 1998). Study of youths more touched by criminologists up to 1950s, has in recent decades become very common among sociologists. That is because youths are the engine of development. Similarly, as an effect of social development, figures indicating youths' educational status stand at 47 percent for males and 41 percent for the girls. Such indicators guarantee further social development in Iran in the years to come. It could be argued that over-socialization which comes in terms of education, highly influences actors' behaviors and beliefs. At the end, and as a sociological remark, it may be argued that peace, prosperity and progress could be brought about, only if the youth are well socialized.

## Conclusion

Concerns about children and youths are ever-increasing, and also inspired by fear. Children are not held individually responsible for their own problems, and so to say, their quality of life; rather, they are the families and the society that are mostly blamed. Families are expected to fulfil certain functions, and failure to do so, attracts blames. Similarly, the society and social development must be capable of investing enough on the youths. Based on this notion, youths are also impacted in later stages of their lives. However, families having failed in their responsibilities, society must intervene to control the children and youth today, and for the future. Keeping these notions in mind that childhood and youth are understood in different ways and in different societies. Similarly, at different times, they are inherently "at risk" in different social, cultural, economic and even political spheres and circumstances. Young people's lives are shaped by the immediate contexts in which they live, i.e. the norms and values prevalent in their families and societies; and their healthy and happy lives depend on them. It is also significant that young people not only in Iran, but in most parts of the world are affected by global processes, and in many cases they result in common patterns of change especially within the children and youths. Processes including urbanization, migration, education, global communications, legal change etc., all contribute to changes within the children and youths, and as a result new youth cultures and identities are constructed — a value-system different from their previous generations. However, findings show that schooling has profound and immediate impacts on the children and young people's status, their social networks, their productivity etc. In conclusion, in the contexts of extreme poverty and vulnerability, many children and youths face difficult circumstances which will have impacts on their children too.

## Notes
**1- Globalization:** This concept refers to the process by which the world is said to be transformed into a single

system. It became an issue of great significance in the 1990s.Even before that, McLuhan in 1960 used the phrase "global village" to describe how in his view the world was shrinking as a result of new technologies of communication, followed by the growth of multinational companies (MNCs). In the current discussions, globalization has three dimensions or manifestations: economic, cultural and political. Based on the sociological interpretation of Parsons, it is an extension of the process of *"modernization"*.

**2- Youth culture:** The concept denotes that within the last sixty years or so, **youths** have become a more sharply defined category in most Western countries. It has also in recent decades found its priority in the developing countries. Young people have developed their own culture and a distinctive social identity which is more clearly differentiated from that of their parents. Three general features distinguish youth culture: It is a culture of leisure rather than work. (2) Social relations are organized round the peer group rather than families or individual friends. (3) Youth groups are particularly interested in " style " by which is meant an interest in external makers such as the leisure pursuits or a concern with personal appearance. There are a number of reasons for the appearance of youth culture, the most important of which are the rise in the disposable income available to young people, and a lengthening of the period of childhood into adulthood, caused partly by a greater involvement in part-time or full-time education up to the age of twenty-one or so.

**3- Social injustice:** It is known as the general condition in which the individuals do not receive what they deserve. This general conception implies social unfairness. Under such circumstances, there is an imbalance of individual and collective rights. Under the conditions of social injustice, there is not a fair distribution of civil rights, welfare and social policy. It leads to deprivation, inequality of opportunities, exploitation and discrimination within different classes of people.

**4- Quantity of education:** This concept more refers to increasing the number of entrants to the educational systems. Under such conditions many children and youths are graduated without enough skills and technical know-how. The process is extensively observable in many of the developing societies.

**5- Quality of education:** This concept of quality of education stresses that real development is highly dependent on higher standards of education. Bourdieu's arguments about the dependence of education on cultural capital means that the higher quality of education promotes and perpetuates the cultural capital. However, there seems to be a reciprocal relation between cultural capital and application of education. Anyway, under the conditions of qualitative education, problems are solved and social antagonisms are removed with special reference to the children and youths.

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