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Historical Approach to the Role of Women in the Legislation of Iran: A Case Study on the Twenty-First Parliament

Sarah Sheibani¹, Shiva Jalalpour^{*2}

Abstract

One hundred and ten years ago, men and women took constitutionalism to achieve justice in Iran. National Council was the result of the Iranian people's struggle for justice, both women and men. Men policies from the beginning of legislation put women as minors and lunatics and bankrupted and banned them from vote. However, the Constitutional Revolution as a turning point and a national revolution played a key role in changing attitudes to women and structural context of their participation provided. In this paper, with the use of descriptive-analytical as well as quantitative methods, we sought to answer the question that what was the position of women in the twenty-first Parliament. The results of this study suggest that when Iranian women were allowed to participate politics, they have achieved to show their ability in politics as we saw examples in the twenty-first Parliament in which women had twenty-two percent participation.

Keywords: election law, the twenty-first National Council, women's political participation, Iranian women rights, women suffrage.

¹Graduate Student, Department of Political Science, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University, Ahvaz, Iran.

^{2*}Corresponding Author, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Ahvaz Branch, Islamic Azad University of Ahvaz, Iran.

1. Introduction

Until the reign of the Qajar dynasty, there was no specific detail about the procession of women and their role in socio-political developments. A few items that come in the historical books are related to women's role in supporting the troops at war against enemies; however, most of descriptions are related to been a housewife.

In the Qajar era, until the early twentieth century, women in all fields of life had humble and pejorative positions. Female literacy rate in the 17th century was only four percent, but even so women had been forced to hide their literacy because of the male-dominated culture of traditional society and religious treats (Zahed, 2005: 29). But in general we can say that the presence of social and protest women in Iran goes back to the late 19th century. Women movement at this moment was not an independent movement and organized, coherent and with women's motivation towards the realization of women's rights, but also small movement following and leading men. Finally, after the constitutional decree issued by Mozzafar Din Shah on 14 October 1906, the Parliament officially opened. After the victory of constitutionalism, women who were involved alongside men in the victory of constitutionalism, in 1907, demanding the attainment of the right to vote, their political parties recognized by Parliament, but unfortunately after a long discussion, the Parliament finally voted that associations are illegal. And in Article IV of the Constitution, they were deprived of the right to vote. Then in the Article Seven of the mentioned constitution were deprived of the right of election (Rasouli, 2013: 79).

Finally in 1963 following the Shah's White Revolution, the electoral law was amended regarding entering to the parliament. And then only, the Consitution has preserved electerol rights of women.

Hence, on 26 September 1963, for the first time six women became representatives of the National Assembly. Despite the large numbers of books and articles about the role of women which further explores the role of family, community, and feminism, the vacancy feel about the research on the starting point and the structural causes of the role of women activists in the field of political participation than ever before. Therefore, in this article we are going to discuss the status and role of women in the legislative arena.

Political participation of women in Iran can be assessed at two levels of the populaces and the elite. Forms of political participation of women at the level of populace, including: Participation in elections and the right to vote in elections, participation in groups and

associations and political parties, and participation in the social experience, such as war. All these activities enhance the communication between women and society and therefore can be considered as a form of political participation (Mustafa, 1996: 66-67). Participation at the elite level, including: the number of female representatives in the Legislature, participation in the political executive and four levels of national administrative service, participation in administrative and public services, and participation in international service. In this paper, according to the created, legal opportunities the preparation of a structural framework to activist's activism and the preparation of the legislative representation of women in Parliament and their participation in the twenty-first Parliament are investigated.

2. Political Participation of Women in the National Council 1-23

National Council was one of the most important achievements of the Constitutional Movement that its establishment and implementation of the principle of power separation put Iran among the constitutional countries and parliamentary systems in terms of political structure.

The Parliament is community composed of representatives elected by the people based on the principles of power separation in order to consult and take decisions regarding the affairs of the country and pass laws and surveillance to the executive branch.

After opening the first session the National Council on 13 October 1906, women recognized the field to be ready to enter and for its effective presence in the field of cultural, social and political activities. And tried to fulfill their activities in legal channels. But the traditional culture of the society and attitudes based on gender discrimination was not transformed and they faced with many obstacles and problems.

According to Article 1 of the first season of the Election Guidelines, the Class of Qajar and princes, scholars and clergymen, nobility, merchants, landowners, farmers and traders were allowed to participate in parliamentary elections. However, based on the third and fifth articles, female tribe, women, foreign nationals, people with stunted growth and those who are in need of legal guardians, who are known as the corruption conviction, murderers, robbers, bankruptcy, and etc. were denied from the choice and selection (Parliament D, 1907: 139).

While in the first House the bill that was for female students to facilitate the education of women and the common progress of country girls was read in parliament (4th Session), but often talks were about negotiations on the exclusion of women in elections and be elected in

state and provincial associations (68th Session, 1946), and talk about the exclusion of women took place in the election of the City Council and municipality (69th Session).

Finally by starting the parliament, the exclusion of women from the field of political participation was not only revised, but in less than a year by approval of legislation provincial associations (Article 7) and the law of municipality (Article 15) that was reaffirmed (Apostles, 2013: 76).

3. Political Participation of Women in the 21th National Council

3.1. Structural aspects of women's representation in the 21th National Council

In 1962, new legislation of state and provincial associations that the condition of Islam and being male had been removed from the qualifications of the candidate approved by National Council and the Senate that brought with them a massive wave of protests. Finally, on 6 February 1962, the reform of so-called White Revolution in the six-point was put to a referendum.

And women for the first time participated in a referendum in order to earn the right to political participation, and with the approval of the six principles, the Council of Ministers on 12 March 1962, under Article II of the Constitution, approved a reform of the electoral law and prepared the enfranchisement to the women then the 21th Parliament, on Thursday,, 10 May 1964 approved the letter of Council of Ministers. And according to it, the first paragraph of Article 10 1) Women, 2) Those outside the growth and those that are under legal guardianship, 3) Foreign nationals, 4) Persons that their leaving from the true religion of Islam in the presence of a fully qualified religious judges approved, 5) People who are less than twenty years old, 6) Fraudulent bankrupt, 7) Beggars and those who earn livelihood without honor, 8) Murderers, robbers and other guilty parties that have been deserved to legal Islamic law punishment, 9) Political guilty that upraised and took action against the national government and the independence of country that were disqualified to being a parliament member. And the second paragraph of Article 13: 1) Princes without intermediaries (sons and brothers and uncles of King), 2) Women, 3) Foreign nationals, 4) Employees of the military police and gendarmerie, land and sea with the exception of honorary officials, 5) General and partial Governors and their deputies within the same mission, 6) The tax authorities in the territory of their mission, 7) Fraudulent bankrupt, 8) Murderers, robbers and other guilty parties that have been deserved to legal Islamic law punishment, 9) Notorious with guilty

those who their corruption in religious belief and their leaving from the true religion of Islam in the presence of a fully qualified religious judges approved and prevailed, 10) Political guilty that upraised and took action against the national government and the independence of country were amended regarding women electoral rights.

The election law of National Council approved in 1926 that are relating to the qualifications of elected individuals and electors removed and also the Senate removed the word male from Article 6 and 9 (approved in 14 May, 1949). So with the approval of this single article, the barrier of women entrance into legislatures in Iran, 57 years after the Constitutional Revolution was broken.

The 21th parliamentary elections were held in 1963. The Parliament had stayed in charge around just above two years. Many candidates of that Period were unknown people and were not famous in their constituencies (Marwa, 2007: 226). The most important issue that have been seen in the election campaign of Parliament was women's participation in elections of this Period which is considered as a landmark in the fate of the constitutional parliamentary era. Iranian women, who constituted about half of Iran's population, from the thirties had begun their political activities and demanding their rights. Although at that time their aim was to achieve social demands but the situation changed with the onset of the progressive center. The starting of progressive center activities under the leadership of Mansour before the 21th election, the platform for their political activities was provided. The main objective of women from participating in the political activities were participating in parliamentary elections and qualifying for the National Council of the boards (Abadian, 2004: 281-280). Among the acceded to the Parliament (198 people), for the first time have been seen the name of six women named Nayyereh Ebtehaj Samii, Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi, Shaukat Malik Jahanbani, Farrokhroo Parsa, Nozhat Nafisi and Hagar Tarbiat.

3.2. The amount of political participation of women in the 21th National Council

To reveal the level of political participation of women in the 21th parliament, it is necessary to review the level of political participation of each women that reached to 21th parliament.

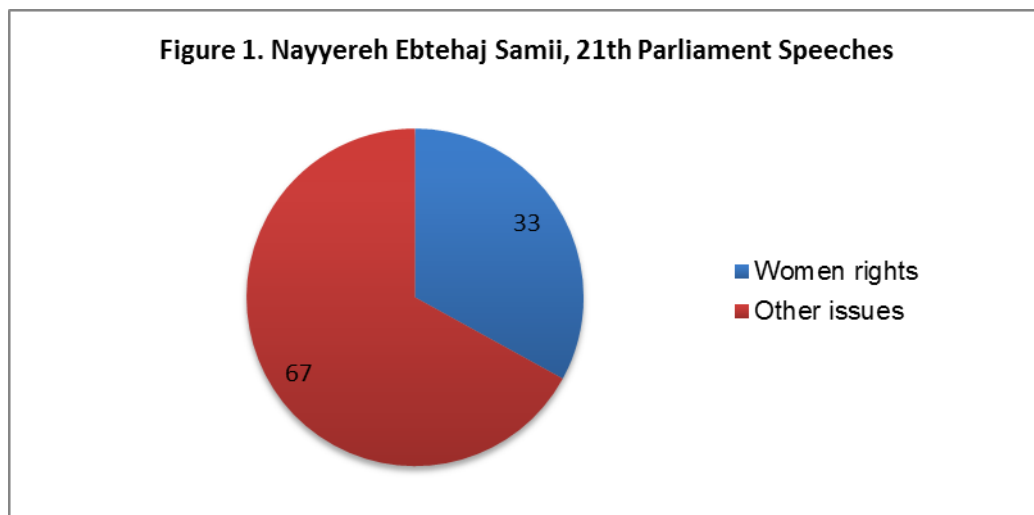
3.2.1 Nayyereh Ebtehaj Samii;

Nayyereh Ebtehaj Samii was born in 1915, in Rasht. She was a government's employee (the Ministry of Education) and had a higher education in the language and translation. She was an active person in various areas including having the positions such as president of the

association of American school graduates Tehran, a member of the firm protection of mothers and babies, as vice president of Lion and Sun society of Rasht. She also was the representative of National Council in terms of 21, 22, 23 and 24 of Rasht and was a member of the Cultural Commission and the Secretary of Labour and Social Affairs Commission (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 25).

Her legislative endeavors: after appreciating Shah for the giving the voting rights to women and Social justice, she talked in about of economic and literacy status of rural women and girls. In Session 66, 15 May 1964, a brief report about the trip of four representatives of Iranian women that were invited by the British government. In session 330, March 1966 speech in about the 8th of March and the value of this day for ladies (Detail of Discussions, Volume 21).

In general it can be said that in two cases, the subject of his talk was about women, and in other topics: one case about politics, two cases about social, one case also talked about economic issues. Thus, according to collected data and, as it is visible in Figure 1, 33% of the statements of Ms. Samii was about women and 67% of the rest was about other conditions such as politics, economy, thanks and congratulations and condolences and cultural issues.



3.2.2. Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi;

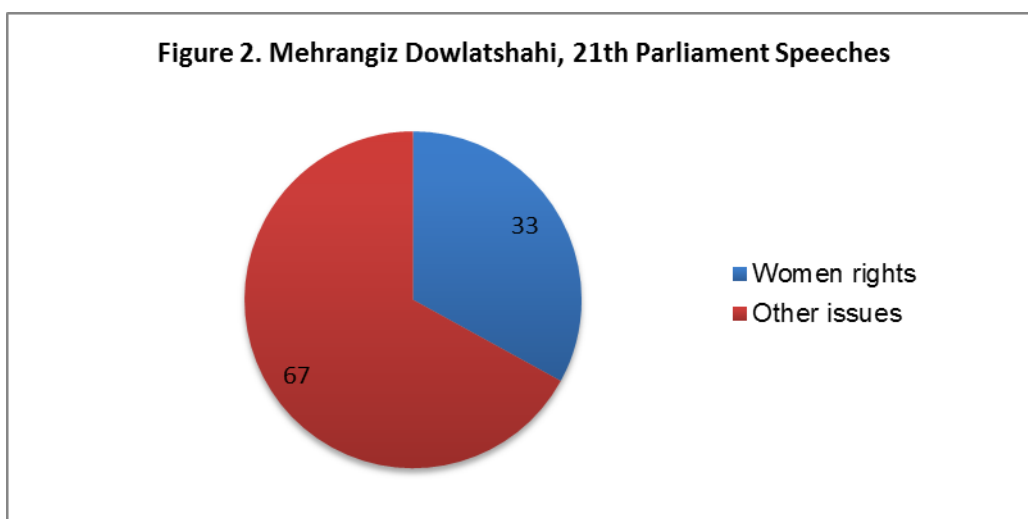
Mehrangiz Dowlatshahi was born in 1911 in Isfahan. She has a university education in social sciences from Germany. Some of their activities include: an employee of Imperial

Organization for Social Services in 1946, employee of Support Association of prisoners, employee of construction agent of country, representative of the National Council in the course of 21, 22 and 23 of Kermanshah and the first and only woman ambassador of Iran (Iran's ambassador in Copenhagen) in April 1976. Of his innovations was the formation of the international exhibition of woman activities with participation of 30 Asian and European countries and also the establishment of Rahe Noo society in 1964, was a founding member of the Iran Novin Party, and founder of the party branch in Kermanshah, participation in the International Council on behalf of the Supreme Council of Women and on behalf of Ashraf Pahlavi, participation in international forums such as the Commission on the Status of Women, Conference of work and vice president of the International Council of Women (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 255). She was elected as Rapporteur of the fourth branch and a member of the Plan Commission and State Commission.

The pre-agenda speech of lady Dowlatshahi in the twenty-first Parliament include: at a session 7, November 19 of 1963, gave reports of the presence of the Shah and Farah Diba in Kermanshah. In Session 45, March 18 of 1963, the new plan submitted by the Rahe-No society for the strength of the family in terms of protection of women and children. In Session 108, 3 November 1964, congratulated the birthday of Mohammad Reza Shah and thanked for the equality of women with men, in session 125, December 19, 1964, talked about the UN Charter and human rights. In session 165, 25 March 1965, gave a report from the establishment of Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations in Tehran.

In session 206, 2 November 1965, congratulated to Afghan women for equal political rights with men and their entrance to parliament (Detail of Discussions, Volume 21).

Ms. Dowlatshahi talked six times about the ladies and other debates have spoken 12 times, including four times political issues of the country and in eight cases also have talked about social issues. As shown in diagram (Figure 2), 33% of her speech were in about women and 67% of the remaining were in about the other issues.



3.2.3. Shaukat Malik Jahanbani;

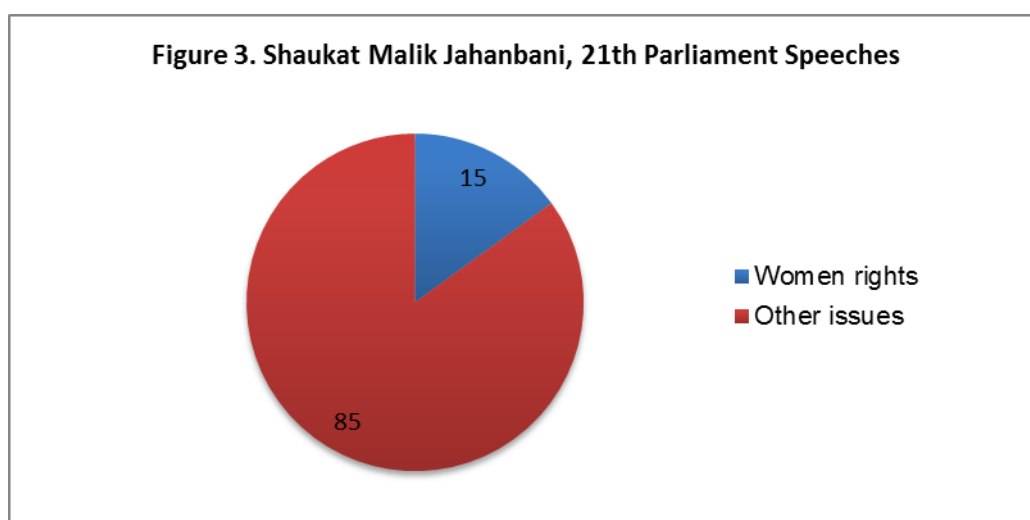
Shaukat Malik Jahanbani was born in Tehran and completed her studies in Iran and France. Among his jobs: Employment in the Ministry of Culture, translator in National Bank (1936), Established several primary and secondary schools (1938), Management of Iran high School, Counselling by the Supreme Council of the crowd of women, President of the National Cultural Group, General Director of Farah Pahlavi Foundation, board member of the women, sports Council, Board Member of Arya October Industrial University and Board Member of Red Lion and Sun population Tehran, and was also the founder of Iran's Cultural Institute. Jahanbani was representative of the National Council in the course of 21, 22 and 23 of Tehran and has been Senate representation. Jahanbani have talked 23 times i.e. five hours and 45 minutes totally (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 5-254).

For example, In the session 13, 28 November of 1963, speaks about the importance of the Ministry of Culture and knows gambling as a cancer in the community. And also she knows training for teens as obligatory. And at the session 25, 15 January 1963 warning about cheating and common unhealthy foods and the importance of the controlling and checking the food. Also at the meeting 64, May 10, 1964, she had speech about culture.

In the session 80, 19 June 1964, had a request from Deputy of the whole culture of the country to improve culture and resolve problems in the textbooks. In Session 84, June 28, 1964, she introduced the Farah Pahlavi charity population. In the session 88, 7 July 1964, attended to the culture and hygiene and again pointed out the problem of food control.

In the session 312, December 24, 1966, congratulating for Mother's Day and spoke about the position of mother and importance of training mothers by education (Detail of Discussions, volume 21).

According to information obtained from the proceedings of the 21th parliament, 7 items addressed the women issues and 48 cases was in other issues such as 5 times political, social time in 31, 12 times as well as on economic issues. As it is clear from the information and Figure 3; 15% of Ms. Jahanbani statements were about women and 85% of the remaining were about other mentioned issues. In addition, she was vice chairman of the Cultural Commission.



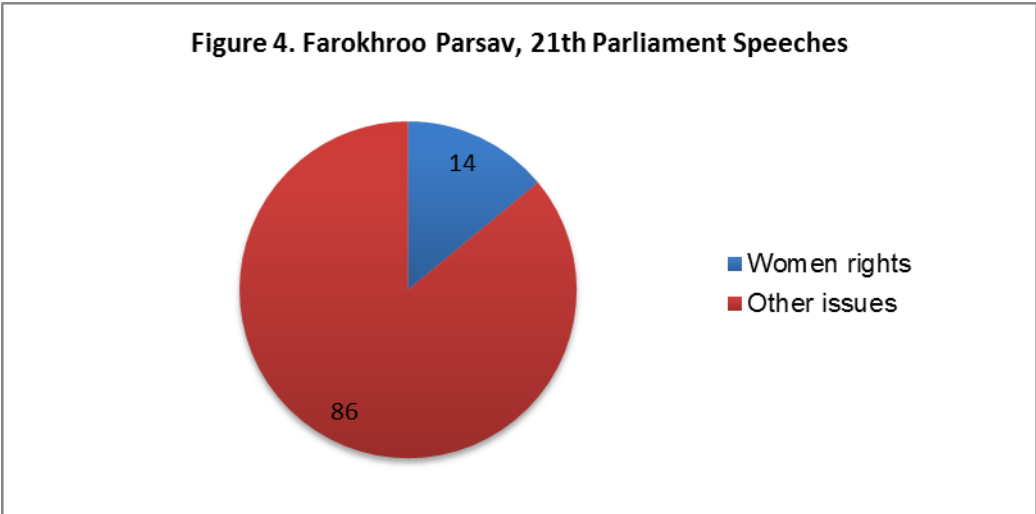
3.2.4. Farokhroo Parsay;

Farokhroo Parsay was born in 1921 in Qom. She holds a higher education degree in Doctor of Medicine from Tehran University. In 1963, she was elected as a member of the 21th National Council of Tehran with the support of the Iran-Novin party, and had a post as the secretary to the board of directors of Parliament and was elected to Ministry of Education. She also was appointed as Minister of Education in 1962. Her other activities were: the head of the Women's Cooperative Union, a member of the Supreme Council of Physical education of women, Head of girls sports camps, chairman of the university's female population. President of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Commission of the women population and member of the association of the country's sports schools. She has received several awards and medals,

including Sports Service Medal, Fourth-November medal, and Pass medal. It was also the first woman in the cabinet that had travelled to numerous countries such as France, the USA, Germany, Italy, Britain, and China and so on (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 3-252). She was also a member of the Budget Commission and the rapporteur of Cultural Commission (Detail of Discussions, Volume 21).

Her speeches in the Parliament include protest against the incorrect implementation of the rules in Session 13, 28 November 1963; in Session 20, 26 December 1963, on principles, ethical remarks, and cultural insurance; in Session 45, May 8, 1963, on complaint about discrimination in benefits between men and women civil servants; in Session 49, March 18, 1963, on the importance of educating scout and cultural educations and training the children; in Session 52, March 22, 1963, on the importance of water; at the meeting 122, December 1964, congratulating on the occasion of Muhammad's first revelation and note and discuss the jihad bill in about national progress. In Session 123, in 1964, news reports and the social services are sacred. In Session 123, in 1964, gave reports about the starting of the Holy social services.

According to the collected studies, Mrs. Parsav has spoken 2 times in women's issues and 12 times on other issues, including political 3 times, 6 times social and 3 times economic issues. So, according to this information and Table 4, 14% remarks of Mrs. Parsav was about women and 86% of the rest were about the other issues mentioned above.



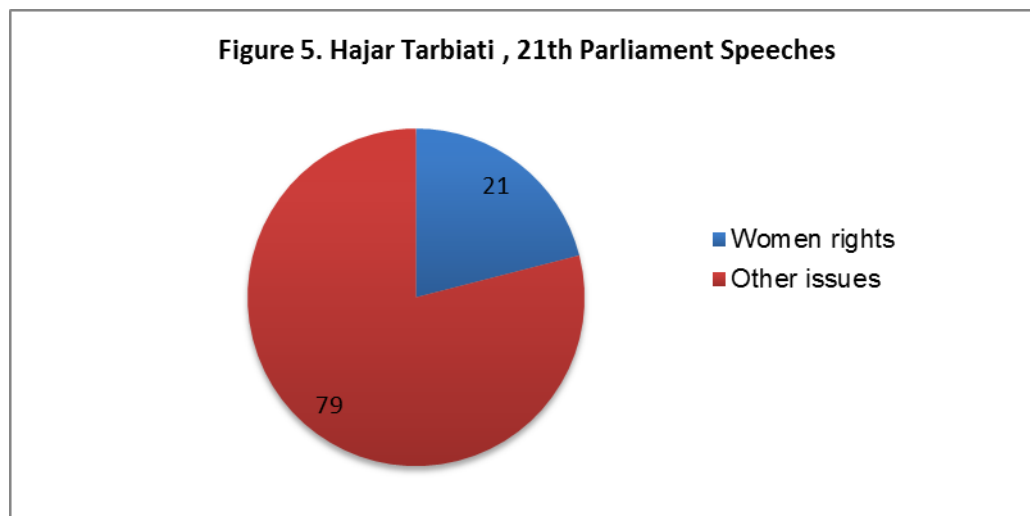
3.2.5. Hajar Tarbiati;

Hajar Tarbiati was born in 1231 in Tabriz. His father was a member of the Iranian embassy in Turkey. She trained and completed high school in Turkey and married with Muhammad Ali Tarbiat –the Vice-Dean for Education and returned to Iran. He was fluent in French and has written and translated a number of works. Among his jobs: director of the Board protection of mothers and dean of women's vice president council in the Women's Organization of Iran, representing in the sixth Senate. She was among the first women's unveiling. She has a lot of contribution in the development of schools in Tabriz. The establishment of schools for girls in Tabriz, dean of primaries Institute (Daral moalmat) 1932. In 1934, with the support of Reza Khan, founded the first high school in the style of Turkey were unveiled. In 1314 she founded the Center for Women. In 1940, she was elected by Reza Shah to the presidency of Noorbakhsh High school that up to that time was run by American Mayson. In 1950, she was working as the head of the social affairs department in the Interior Ministry.

In 1963 she was elected as Tabriz representation in 21th parliament and served as vice chairman of the commission Justice. She was also a member of the Cultural Commission. In Period of 22 she was elected from Tehran. Ms. Tarbiati had spoken in the House 13 times i.e. a total of three hours and 15 minutes (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 4-253.). From Mrs Tarbiatis speeches in the House can be point to 17th session, 14 December 1963, as a cultural representative, speaking about the progress of culture among the public, especially in rural areas and villages and noting the high rate of illiteracy among women. In Session 19, December 24, 1963, in about the liberation of Azerbaijan as well as the establishment of institute for protection of mothers and babies, and refers to the situation of Iranian mothers in rural areas and villages, especially in remote areas and to form midwifery and nursing schools in the provincial capitals and the city. Also in meeting 30, in 1963 talking about, thefts in the educated class. In Session 45, March 1963, complaints from women about violation of their rights. At the meeting 242, 3 March 1965, discussed in about Iran's progress from the beginning of the Pahlavi to the next. At the meeting 317, 27 January 1966, speaking of 17 January and its impact on the lives of women and also in the meeting 368, 25 June 1967, thanks to the Iran-Novin party for their cooperation in the family support bill.

According to information obtained, she have spoken 7 times for women, and 34 times other issues, including: 5 times politics, social 11 times, 10 times in relation to the economy and 10 times talked about the culture. Thus, according to obtained information 21% of women and

79%, the rest of her remarks were in about other, issues that has been mentioned above (Figure 5).



3.2.6. Nozhat Nafisi;

Hajar Tarbiati was born in 1911. She has secondary education and was considered as representation in the National Council in the Period of 21th parliament from Baft. This lady in her all thirty-three month Period of representation did not go behind the podium and had no speech (Mousavi Ebadi, 2005: 252). In the sextuple branches of Parliament she was in the fifth branch and also she was in the Parliament Cooperation Commission, a secretary in the Foreign Affairs Committee and the investigative commission (Detailed Discussions in volume 21 sessions 2).

4. Conclusion

In the history of progression and development of the countries, some events have amazing effects on all areas and aspects of the community. The recall of this historical events and developments are necessary and should not be considered as repetitive.

For example, after the new bill approval of state and provincial association in 15 October 1962, the approval of the six principles of the so-called White Revolution on 6 February 1962, the formulation and adoption of a modified electoral law and permitting women the right to vote by the Council of Ministers on 12 March 1962 and its approval by the 21th National Council on Thursday,, 10 May 1964, are among those historical events. From what was passed been revealed that on the one hand, the legal barriers to the entry of women into

legislatures Iran was resolved, and on the other, legal opportunities for women to enter into the realm of political participation was triggered. A total of 198 deputies attended in the twenty-first Parliament that had 192 men and 6 women, women's presence in this Parliament were three percent.

During the research by the authors was conducted in the proceedings of Parliament, in the twenty-first Parliament a total of 381 sessions was held that women representative spoke in this course of its 85 sessions and they have a total of 94 times pre and post-agenda speech. In this parliament a total of 130 women have speech 36 of which are specific to women (28%), which is just a case of an individual (3% of topics), and other 35 items, were in about women social issues (97% of topics) and 94 subject (72% of the issues) on topics such as political (in 12 cases, i.e. 13% of subjects) social (that a total of 55 cases, ie 58% of subjects including: congratulations and thanks and condolences were 34 cases i.e. 36% issues, constituencies, four cases i.e. 4% debates and society, (77 cases 18% of issues) the economic (3 of the 3% of subjects) and cultural, 24 cases of the 26% of issues. Also in the twenty-first Parliament was held 381 sessions in a total, that women representative talk in the 85 sessions and have a total of 94 times pre and post-agenda speech. So given that women participate in the 85th session of the 381 parliamentary sessions had pre and post-agenda speech so they had the presence of 22 percent in the twenty-first Parliament.

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