

# 1.5m Women Leading Households

## 60,000 Broken Marriages Each Year

One and half million women are currently heading their households around the country, head of the Center for Women and Family Affairs said, pointing out that each year the divorcee population grows by 60,000.

As reported by Fars news agency, Zohreh Tabibzadeh Nouri made the remark at the inaugural ceremony of a breast cancer screening program for women breadwinners under the coverage of Imam Khomeini Relief Committee.

The official put the

number of registered women who are the main source of income for their families is 1.2 million at present. "Some 800,000 of this number are protected by different support organizations. About 400,000 of them receive no support and are left to their own devices," she noted.

Tabibzadeh Nouri explained that half of the new divorcees each year have to financially support their families.

"Considering the number of widowed women as well as those with disabled or addict husbands, approximately 1.5 million women are currently

heading their households," the official elaborated.

Highlighting that the center's budget had increased threefold during President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's period in office, she vowed that the funds would be directed toward empowerment and employment of female population.

The official underlined that empowerment of women, strengthening family foundations and promoting religious beliefs in families are the core responsibilities of the center.

"The center does not offer any financial assistance to these women, but helps them stand on their own feet," Tabibzadeh Nouri stressed.

She said in order for marriages to work, both spouses need to undergo skills education.

"Experience shows that providing education to only one spouse will not eventually lead to strengthening marital bonds; rather, in certain cases, it results in divorce," she noted.

The chairwoman named livelihood as the most urgent need of women-led households.

"It is the government's responsibility to provide



Close to 400,000 women-led households are not covered by support organizations.

these women with basic living requirements," the official observed.

Tabibzadeh Nouri said that Agriculture Jihad Ministry, Tribal Affairs

### Farideh Golbou

Journalist, story-writer and researcher Farideh Golbou was born in 1940 in Tehran to a family fond of Persian culture and literature. After completing her university education in journalism, she started her work in newspapers and at the same time initiated a teaching career. Before the age 20, she wrote her first novel 'Blind Road' which received kudos from book readers. Her second novel 'Narrative of the Age' which was published in 1994 won an award from Gardoun literary magazine.



She has conducted research works on Masouleh and Abyaneh, Iran's two historic villages. She has also authored 'Mass Media' as a textbook. Her other works include novels based on 'Laili and Majnoun', 'Khosrow and Shirin' and 'Haft Pelkar' the masterpieces by Nezami Ganjavi, the greatest romantic epic poet in Persian literature. The first two works are translated in Portuguese and French. Her 'Laili and Majnoun' was republished 15 times. Other novels penned by Golbou can be named as 'Two Strangers' (translated into English), 'After Love', 'The Fourth Experience', 'Magic', 'Countess Salma' and 'Taj Mah's Heritage'.

She is married to noted university professor and researcher Parviz Kardovani.

## Agriculture Graduates Jobless

Close to 13,000 female graduates of different agricultural fields are out of jobs, an advisor to agriculture jihad minister on women's affairs said.

Tahmineh Daniali was quoted by IRNA as saying that the unemployed graduates should be given self-employment loans allocated to business plans with quick returns.

The official who was speaking at a meeting of the ministry's female personnel in Bojnourd, North Khorasan province, said the Agriculture Jihad Ministry currently has 10,000 women personnel.

"Of this number, 6,000 are employed by the ministry and the rest by its subsidiaries," he added. Daniali who also heads the ministry's Office for Rural and Tribal Women Affairs stated that a databank of women staff

of the ministry's offices and organizations has been launched.

She maintains the databank which contains facts and figures about the female personnel will help provide better support for them.

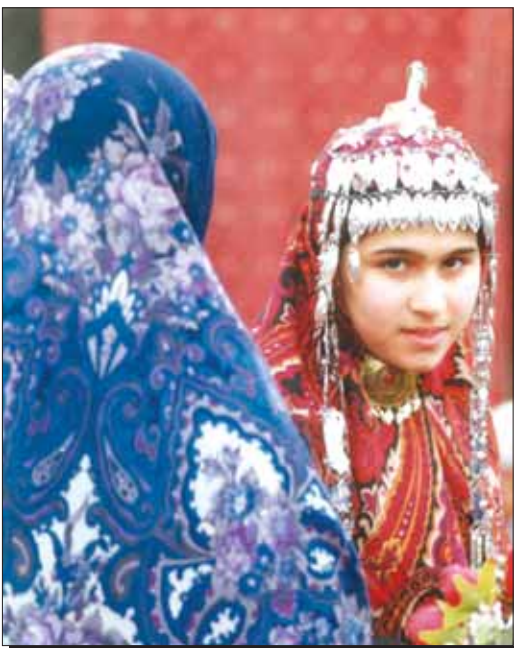
Criticizing the ambiguities surrounding certain laws or the ignorance of regulations, Daniali stressed that all offices should have advisors on women's affairs to defend the rights of female personnel.

The official insisted that women employees should undergo on-the-job training, be assigned to jobs commensurate with their capabilities, and receive equal pay for jobs of equal value.

She also advised heads of organizations to appoint women with higher efficiency and expertise to managerial portfolios.

Susan L. Taylor (US journalist, born in 1946):

Women are holding up the world. We're taking care of our children and, very often, our parents and sometimes our grandparents.



A young Turkmen girl clad in traditional costume in Gonbad-e Kavous, Gorgan province

## Chinese Doctors Push C-Sections

Until a generation ago only five percent of all deliveries, the Xinhua news agency reported, citing medical experts.

"Caesarean sections earn doctors higher profits so they tend to persuade pregnant women to have the procedures," said a doctor who did not wish to be named.

In hospitals in Beijing,

fees for Caesarean sections are three to four times higher than those for natural births, according to Xinhua.

Despite the higher price, doctors have no problem selling Caesarean sections, because they are seen as an alternative to the pain associated with natural birth, the agency said.

## 1st Exclusive Island in Orumiye

Arzou Island in Lake Orumiye will turn into a women-exclusive beach and island in the upcoming summer, the Persian daily Iran reported.

Unveiling the plan, managing director of West Azarbaijan Municipalities Organization said that the island, one of the 102 islands in Orumiye Lake, will be equipped with recreational facilities for exclusive use by women.

Mohammad Ali Aqaei explained that all services on the island are to be rendered by female personnel.

Women are transferred to the island using four ferries belonging to the organization, he added.

He promised that the island's current welfare facilities would improve by establishing small restaurants and medical centers managed by women.

Highlighting that the project will

breathe a fresh air into the southwestern province's tourism, he put the credit allocated for the scheme at between one and two billion rials.

Aqaei is of the opinion that the island enjoys a suitable geographical situation for becoming a women-only beach.

Earlier in September, IRNA reported that women had warmly welcomed the first women exclusive beach and swimming area in the southern port city of Bushehr in June.

Head of Sadat Recreational and Sports Complex in Bushehr, Fatemeh Safarzadeh, said the initiative had helped partially resolve the absence of proper swimming areas for women.

The launch of the exclusive beach, including cycling track as well as a playground for children, has helped promote local tourism as well.

## Beijing Jintai Museum To Hold Photo Exhibit

A photo exhibition of Iranian women and their activities in different field will open in Beijing Jintai Art Museum on Feb. 28, IRNA wrote.

The six-day exhibit will feature part of achievements made by Iranian women in political, social, cultural, scientific and sportive arenas during the

post-revolution era.

Fifty photos by Iranian photographers will be showcased during the event.

The exhibit is jointly organized by Cultural Department of Iranian Embassy in China, IRNA's office in Beijing and Jintai Museum.

Women played a key role in the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Henceforth, the Islamic government has tried to create a healthy environment wherein they can easily involve in social, cultural, educational and to a lesser degree political fields. At present, girl students outnumber boys in higher education centers.

## Ardebil Planning Special Libraries

Specialized women libraries will be established in northwestern Ardebil province, director of National Youth Organization's Girls and Women Research Department said.

According to IRNA, Forough Nilchizadeh stated that the libraries are aimed to promote awareness and academic advancement of women on the one hand and encourage studies

on women, comprising half of the Iranian society.

The official, who was speaking at a meeting to assess problems of women in Ardebil province, noted that a 10-volume book on successful couples will soon be available to provide the public with role models of happy marriages.

Meanwhile, secretary of Ardebil Women and Family Committee stressed that involvement of women in social activities has to be increased.

Parvaneh Rezaqolizadeh stated that an educational scheme to promote hejab will also be implemented in provincial junior high and high schools.

## Health

### Fibromyalgia

Nine years ago, Paduano was in a failing marriage, raising two young sons in Connecticut, working full time and managing some chronic health problems. Such challenges would wear anyone out, but Paduano was feeling more than fatigued—she was also in pain.

"It felt like somebody hit me with a baseball bat—but all the time," says Paduano, who was told by a rheumatologist that she was suffering from fibromyalgia.

In fact, fibromyalgia is a chronic pain disorder characterized by generalized muscle pain. Sufferers count about a half dozen "tender points" where pain is intense. These points are in the neck, shoulders, below the elbows, and the lower back, hips and legs. And fibromyalgia can be accompanied by a host of

other wide-ranging conditions, ranging from irritable bowel syndrome to depression.

Although people have suffered with it for a long time, fibromyalgia only got its name in the last decade. But because of the far-ranging and seemingly disparate symptoms, many physicians misdiagnose the condition as osteoarthritis, depression or anxiety.

Fibromyalgia is especially common in older women. Dr. Don Goldenberg, a medical advisor at the Arthritis Foundation, says 3 percent of women have fibromyalgia at age 40; 7 percent by age 70.

Goldenberg says about 80 percent of those with fibromyalgia suffer from extreme fatigue and sleep disturbance, while irritable

bowel syndrome plagues as many as 70 percent of sufferers. Other common problems, in addition to depression, include anxiety, headaches and cognitive problems.

The medical community has only recently started to get a handle on fibromyalgia. In the 1980s a few specialists began developing treatments for the non-fatal condition, and in 1990, the American College of Rheumatology gave the syndrome its name. Within the last decade, researchers have learned more.

"We no longer think this is a disease primarily of muscle," Goldenberg says, "but one of the central nervous system."

While researchers have not proven what causes fibromyalgia, there are a number of theories.

The leading theory is that fibromyalgia is caused by a dysregulation or imbalance of neurotransmitters in the brain like serotonin, which helps to ease physical pain.

Some scientists believe an unidentified infectious agent, such as a virus, may trigger fibromyalgia in certain people. Extreme stress, injury and trauma are also believed to trigger the syndrome.

Tamara Liller, head of the Fibromyalgia Association of Greater Washington, Inc., who has suffered with the condition for 20 years, says Coping with fibromyalgia is "like peeling an onion." With so many symptoms, "you have to peel away at the layers to get people to feel better. What's tough with fibromyalgia is that not everyone responds the same way [to treatment]."

Medication and exercise are known widely for helping to manage the condition.

Like many fibromyalgia sufferers, Paduano takes low-level doses of the antidepressant Elavil which helps her relax and break the cycles of disturbed sleep that exacerbate her pain.

Exercise is also critical to combating the symptoms of this condition. Paduano finds that water exercises are particularly helpful. She also believes that meditation has helped her to limit the medications.

Such an approach may include one or more of the following: physical therapy, massage, chiropractic, osteopathy, aerobic exercise, biofeedback and other relaxation therapies, behavioral therapy, acupuncture and nutritional therapy.