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978-1-107-07260-2 - Access to Justice in Iran: Women, Perceptions, and Reality

Sahar Maranlou

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Access to Justice in Iran

Women, Perceptions, and Reality

This book offers a critical analysis of access to justice from international / Islamic perspectives to highlight various aspects of access to justice previously not discussed in the body of literature in the context of Iran. It provides a detailed picture of the workings of the Iranian legal system, together with a review of barriers that people face in their path to justice. This book explores legal empowerment and gender, and presents the findings of a survey study on the perceptions of Iranian women toward the justice system in their country. It is designed to focus on women's basic legal knowledge, their familiarity with legal procedure, their perceptions of cultural barriers, the issues that influence their preference for mechanisms of dispute solutions, and their level of satisfaction with their chosen courses of action. The book draws upon a broad range of primary and secondary data sources to offer pragmatic policy solutions.

Sahar (Zahra) Maranlou is an independent legal researcher who has written extensively in the fields of the Iranian legal system, women's rights, civil society, human rights, and Islamic law. She has consulted for a range of national and international organisations, including UNICEF and UNDP, and has provided Iranian organisations with her expert legal opinion in the areas of law and empowerment. She is a member of the steering committee for the Global Alliance of Justice Education. She is a visiting lecturer at the University of Brunel and has taught Islamic Law at the University of Warwick. Please visit her website, www.saharmaranlou.com, for additional information.

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Acknowledgements

I turn to right and left, in all the earth
I see no signs of justice, sense or worth:
A man does evil deeds, and all his days
Are filled with luck and universal praise;
Another's good in all he does – he dies
A wretched, broken man whom all despise.
Ferdowsi

This journey I have undertaken has been long, fascinating, and sometimes arduous, with obstacles and limitations littering its path. Along the way, numerous individuals have helped me and supported this process. First and foremost, I would like to thank my mentor, Professor Shaheen Sardar Ali, for her inspiration, direction, and support throughout the study. Significant recognition must go to all those individuals who gave their time to share their experience and expertise with me. I thank all of the participants who supported this research by completing questionnaires and participating in interviews. Without that group of women, researchers, scholars, officers, judges, and law professors, this research could not have taken place. Because of the sensitive political atmosphere, many of these individuals are not explicitly identified, yet they have provided a significant background to the study.

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Abbreviations

ABA	American Bar Association
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
CCA	United Nations Common Country Assessment
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CEU	Central European University
ECHR	European Convention on Human Rights
GEM	Gender Empowerment Measure
GLPLI	Global Law Programs Learning Initiative
GPD	Gross Domestic Product
HDI	Human Development Index
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IRI	Islamic Republic of Iran
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
OEO	Office of Economic Opportunities
OSJI	Open Society Justice Initiative
PPP	Purchasing Power Parity
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCAC	United Nations Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Program

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xii	Abbreviations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UK	United Kingdom
WB	World Bank