

Fourth Session of the Forum on Minority Issues
28-30 November 2011, United Nations, Geneva Statement submitted
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Baloch women's access to education is limited through the laws, practices and policies of the Iranian regime. Their language is prohibited in public and official places. Baloch girls start school in a foreign language as all schooling is conducted in Farsi. This is not specific for only Baloch children but also for Kurdish, Ahwazi, Turkomen and Azeri children, as 70 % of the Iranian population are educated in a language that is not their mother tongue.

As a result Balochistan suffers from high illiteracy levels, and is the poorest and least developed region in Iran.

- Baloch women are suffering from institutionalised discriminatory laws through the practice of Gozinesh, which is an ideological selection procedure for state officials and employees.

The practice of Gozinesh is a tool to exclude Non-male and non-Shias from political and economic arenas.

Students seeking higher education are also subjected to this practice. Those who do attain education become unemployed and have no opportunity to improve their lives.

Limited educational and economic opportunities for Baloch women are part of their daily life.

External barriers for the empowerment of Baloch are found in the laws, practices and policies of the state. According to article 115 of the Iranian constitution Baloch women cannot stand for presidency because of their gender and their ethnicity.

The factors affecting Baloch women's access to education also impact their access to justice. Baloch women have no access to information in their language. For example when a Baloch woman is under trial she cannot defend herself against the charges as the charges against her are in Persian and she is not given access to an interpreter. She is therefore left powerless to what she is going to be punished for.

Internal barriers such as patriarchal structures that limit women's freedom are difficult to challenge because the Iranian system does not provide protection for minority women since there is no encouragement to seek support with the state.

Baloch women have no representation on national or regional level to address their desires and grievances. It is the Iranian state that violates against Baloch women opportunities to fully take part in political and economic life. The centralized state is built on selectivity and does not pave the way for Baloch female empowerment. The system needs to change from a centralized to a federal system where women and ethnic groups have the same rights as the male and the majority. The minority women should be given greater autonomy to decide their fate.

I will end my statement with the word of a young Baloch female blogger "how can society flourish when half of it is being excluded in all areas of life" this sentence and the struggle of minorities and women are making them victims of the state that is supposed to protect them.

I encourage all governments specially Iran to fully implement the draft recommendations on education.

