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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Representation of the Ideal Woman Model in the *Alam-e Nesvan* Journal

Ghorbanali kenarroudi¹✉ 

1. Corresponding Author: Assistant Professor, Faculty of Documents Research Institute, National Library and Archives of Iran, E-mail: gh-kenarroudi@nlai.ir

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Introduction:

The press has historically functioned as more than a medium for disseminating information; it has served as a site for the production, reproduction, and contestation of dominant discourses. In this context, women's periodicals in Qajar and Pahlavi Iran emerged as important platforms for discussing women's social issues and redefining their roles within society. Among these publications, 'Alam-e Nesvan' (1921–1935) occupies a prominent position due to its reformist approach to women's issues.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Iran was characterized by economic underdevelopment, political instability, and a predominantly patriarchal social structure. Although women lived under significant social constraints and were largely excluded from political participation, they played active roles in nationalist movements, constitutional reforms, and campaigns supporting the National Bank and the boycott of foreign goods. Despite these contributions, the 1906 Constitution denied women political rights and excluded them from full

citizenship. In response, women increasingly advocated for educational reform and equal access to learning, leading to the establishment of girls' schools and the publication of women's journals. Within this historical context, the present study seeks to identify the dominant discourse governing articles related to the promotion of women's knowledge and awareness in Alam-e Nesvan and to examine the linguistic and media mechanisms through which this discourse was constructed and reproduced.

With the Constitutional Revolution, the number of newspapers published in Iran increased significantly. Taking advantage of the limited opportunities that emerged during the constitutional movement, women used periodicals - the most important means of communication at the time - to express and disseminate their views and objectives (Kenarroodi, 2022, p. 12). Some women went beyond publishing newspapers and played a crucial role in sustaining the revolution through initiatives such as establishing girls' schools and founding women's associations (Jalali, 2010, p. 44).

The newspaper 'Danesh', managed by Dr. Effat Sayyah Sepanlou (known as Kahhal), was first published on the 10th of Ramadan 1328 AH (1910) and is recognized as the first women's periodical in Iran. It was followed by 'Shokoufeh', published under the responsibility of Maryam Amid Semnani (Mozayyen al-Saltaneh), founder and principal of the Mozayyenieh School, between 1912 and 1916 AH (1912-1916). These publications, both issued in Tehran, were respectively the first and second periodicals devoted exclusively to women (Sadr Hashemi, 1984, Vol. 3, p. 8).

Unlike 'Danesh', 'Shokoufeh' reflected social transformations in Iran and developments in the wider world to a much greater extent. Following the 1921 coup d'état and the growing emphasis on economic and social modernization, the publication of women's periodicals expanded considerably. Women's social and cultural participation became a central theme in these journals, which often adopted a critical perspective in addressing various social issues, particularly those related to women.

Method:

The study employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as its theoretical and methodological framework. Critical discourse analysis is an interdisciplinary approach concerned with the dialectical relationship between language, power, and ideology. Among the major CDA traditions developed by Teun van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, and Norman Fairclough, Fairclough's model was selected because of its text-oriented and practical analytical framework. His approach examines discourse through three interrelated dimensions: text, discursive practice, and social practice. Accordingly, the analysis focuses on textual description, interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and explanation of the relationship between interaction and broader social contexts.

Findings:

'Alam-e Nesvan' was the first Iranian women's magazine published under the supervision of an editorial board, appearing in Tehran from 1921 to 1935 under the ownership of Novabeh Khanom Safavi. Produced largely by graduates of the American Girls' School, the magazine promoted women's education, literacy, social awareness, and reform. Although it frequently presented itself as non-political and expressed loyalty toward the state, many of its articles critically addressed the disadvantaged position of Iranian women, emphasizing issues such as

educational deprivation, social inequality, and patriarchal domination. Through its representations of women's conditions and its advocacy of education and social reform, the magazine contributed to the formation of a new discourse on women's identity and social roles.

Conclusion:

This study aims to provide a scholarly and realistic understanding of women's lives during Iran's modernization period by examining the discourse of women's knowledge and awareness in 'Alam-e Nesvan'. By analyzing the magazine through Fairclough's critical discourse framework, the research seeks to reveal how language and media were employed to shape social perceptions of women, promote specific ideological values, and redefine women's identities within the broader project of modernization in early twentieth-century Iran.

Data Availability Statement

Data available on request from the authors.

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Ethical considerations

Not applicable.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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