CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION
In previous chapters we have surveyed the situation of women in Iran and India, as well as the impact on them of globalization. In the first chapter, we outlined our main hypothesis that “with the creation of new spaces for the action of social movements, notably women’s NGOs, globalization has provided the basis for the rise in the number of NGOs and the extent of their operations, because it leads to a decline in the influence of the state and brings about the establishment of international communication networks”. In the second chapter, we explained the historical evolution and development of women’s awareness and activities in Iran, starting with the Tobacco movement in the period of Qajar (1775-1925), till the present. We also explored the role of Iranian women in the Islamic revolution, as well as their active presence in society, especially in higher education. We also studied in detail the activities of women’s NGOs in Iran, as this is the central focus of our study.

In chapter three, our focus shifted to India and the participation of Indian women in the anti-colonial movement. We look at social reform movements of the 19th century as well as the 20th century contemporary women’s movement that developed after 1975. As in chapter two, here we again study the role of NGOs in the life of contemporary Indian women.

In chapter four, we moved to the larger theoretical issue of globalization. This term is used to define various aspects of global expansion in the past decade. However, we study globalization with specific reference to its impact on women’s lives, activities, and women’s NGOs in both Iran and India. The debate on globalization has largely ignored its effects on marginalization groups, ethnic minorities, and the experiences of women, as well as the specificities of major creeds and cultures, particularly in developing countries. By focusing on Iran and India, and
more specifically on women in these countries, we hope to make the globalization debate more relevant to society as a whole.

In chapter five, we presented statistical data, with an account of field work done to compare the situation of women's NGOs in Iran and India. Analyzing the questionnaires that formed the basis by our research, in our first section, we looked at the role of space, funding and political systems in the functioning of NGOs in both countries. The second section studied NGOs activities and their role in empowering women. The third section studied the relationship between women's movement and women's NGOs, and how the existence of NGOs in Iran is, in fact, the basis of women's movement. In the fourth section, our focus was on factors that help develop the activities of NGOs at the national level. We also examined the interrelationship between women's NGOs in different countries. Our last section dealt directly with the effects of globalization on women's NGOs. We find that globalization objects the goals of the organization, and that these are a strong relationship between the globalization phenomena and the realization of women's rights in both countries. We also look at the threat that globalization poses to NGOs. Thus, we have explored in great detail both the similarities and the differences of women's NGOs in Iran and India.

Having summarized our first five chapters, we move on to examine our hypothesis, main question and supplementary questions which were introduced in the first chapter. This will be done by going through the following four main claims that we make.

1- Globalization has Played a Vital Role in Increasing the Number of Women's NGOs.

Globalization affects women's NGOs in the entire world, especially in developing countries. In other words, globalization has contributed to increasing awareness of women's potential rights in each society.
Globalization intensifies the process of the growth of women’s NGOs. We can prove this argument through increase of the number of the women’s NGOs in Iran and India. Through globalization, the World Bank and other international institutions pay attention to the affairs of women and allocate some amount of budget to the fulfillment of various projects. It also extends the scope of the activities of the women’s NGOs. Now, some women’s NGOs in Iran and India have shown activities in internal and international level, before; they were limited to internal activity.

In today’s world, one of the successful tools in attracting the awareness and voluntary participation of women is to create popular organizations or NGOs. Knowing that, in an overall development, participation does not end in just voting. Women’s participation should provide women the opportunity to have free dialogue and active participation in civil activities.

For a long time, Iranian women have been interested in working in voluntary activities. In ancient Iran, contributory groups were the central core of voluntary networks. Charities were the most traditional forms of organized participation, and the most sustainable organization forms in terms of financing and providing manpower. The financial resources of charities were the direct contributions from people, and their approach was based on social spirituality. During the Constitutional revolution, educational associations were formed, and the central core of NGOs became modern. The organizational structure of educational associations was elitist and relied on the financial resources of wealthy women.

The associations played a significant role in establishing several schools for girls, and women’s clubs, and in helping women to step into the fields of journalism or teaching. Modern NGOs were formed during the construction period (1989-1997) by semi-governmental technocratic elites, influenced by the decentralized movements. It should be said that from the mid 1990s, the number of NGOs have jumped tremendously. As a result we are witnessing an increase in the number of women’s NGOs in Iran, from 55 in 1996 to 470 in 2004. In addition to direct global factors for
increasing quantity of NGOs, like the Beijing conference, there are also many indirect factors to be traced. For instance, the unprecedented growth in education for women of different social classes during the political reform (1997-2005) were among the indirect factors that accelerated and facilitated the growth and development of women’s NGOs in Iran. Considering that, the open social and cultural atmosphere developed during political reform 1997 to 2005 in Iran was also in the light of globalization and was affected by the cultural, mental and scientific interactions with the world.

In India, the first Mahila Mandals (women’s groups), organized by the Hindu revivalist and reformist organizations, the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj, created space for women for socializing and for education. The social reform movement also became instrumental in the growth of women’s organizations, mostly in urban areas, during 1880-1930. In the history of the women’s movement in India, the Bharat Stree Mahamandal has a special significance. It marked the beginning of women’s organizations by women leaders and set the trend for many later organizations. By the early 1900s, women’s organizations based on language, religion or welfare services proliferated, mainly in urban centers, but remarkably all over India. After independence, the dust and din of women’s activism gave way to the development of institutions and organizations.

The Indian women’s movement has hundreds of organizations but no single one can be called representative of it. The few existing directories of women’s organizations give such sparse information that it is not possible to differentiate welfare groups from the more political ones. Often, it is difficult to know if an organization is a hundred years old or recently established, alive only on paper or a mature group. What can be said however, on the basis of historical evidence, is that the largest number of organizations emerges during the peak phases of social movements meaning after world women decade (1975-85).

The democratization process has also played an indirect role in increasing the
number of women’s NGOs by demanding more contribution of people. The Johns Hopkins Comparative Study of the Third Sector after democratization process has found more than one million NGOs in India representing various sectors, ranging from the environmental to social development sectors including women’s NGOs, although, they come in all sizes and differing structures with differing approaches. So it can be claimed that, whether directly or not, the mushrooming growth of NGOs in general and women NGOs in particular is highly effected by globalization.

2- Globalization has Increased the Qualification of Women’s NGOs.

First, women joined social movements as followers of men and afterwards, they showed their effective role and supported men’s goals. At this time, women did not make any particular demands. In the second time period, women started separate activities on their own special issues, making progress in pressing their demands.

Globalization changed the traditional structure of women’s NGOs to the modern form. In Iran, in the last decades of 18th century most women’s NGOs worked in the field of charity. But they are now specialized and follow specific affairs which are considered as one of the standards of high quality for women’s NGOs. The structure and process of women NGOs formation and their activities can be divided into three classes:

1. Women NGOs with traditional structure with activities in local level
2. Women NGOs with semi traditional and half-modern with national range of activities
3. Women NGOs with modern structure and national and international activities

In the light of globalization, the specialized organizations now can contact their counterparts with similar activities all over the world and share experiences. With globalization, there has been the possibility of ignoring the borders geographically, politically and culturally and focusing on matters common to women. Historically,
the women's movement has had many ups and downs. In the late 20th century and the globalized world, the women's movement of western countries could spread all over the world and was enriched by other cultures.

The contemporary women's movement in India spans a large canvas. There are small groups as well as large national level organizations. While some are recent, having been formed only over the last two decades, others go back to over 50 or even 100 years. Some organizations focus on single issues while other organizations cover a vast range. The organizational structure as well as activities undertaken differ.

With the changes in number and specialization, consequently, women active in these organizations could identify themselves to specified number of activities which are not necessary religious or humanitarian. The purpose of their activity could be characterized even as political. In our view the women's NGOs are, in certain political conditions, the most effective shortcuts to raising the rights of women by women themselves. NGOs are able to educate, and empower their members generally and motivate them toward some specific actions. From our survey of women's NGOs in Iran and India, we found that in both countries, women face similar problems. The increase in the number of women's NGOs in Iran might be a manifestation of the increase in knowledge and seeking ways to remove inequalities. The results of our questionnaire showed that the NGOs were active in their central goal, which was women's empowerment.

Women's organizations in different countries now are relying on local NGOs for solving local problems. They are also increasing contacts with their counterparts in other countries. The results of our questionnaire showed that in both Iran and India, the women's NGOs have a relationship with the women's organizations in other countries.
3-Globalization is the Cause of Emergence of Women’s NGOs Networks.

From 1975 onwards and during subsequent decade (which has been nominated as women decade), International women networks were established and women’s activists communicated effectively together and accessed resources and information.

Globalization makes worldwide networking and communication possible. Some of these networks are regional while others are international. In the light of globalization, women understood the necessity of these networks and established many regional and international networks. These networks are important factors for successful women’s movement and the goals of such networks can be summarized as follows:

Extend communication, exchange Information, Workshops, organizing support of service, support from women’s organization, improve and expansion, women’s life, especially poor women and access to equality and gender justice. To achieve these goals, women’s communication networks have to be established. At present, women communication networks in the level of world are active, for example we can to name some of these networks:

- Isis Women’s, Women’s features service (India), Commonwealth Women's Network (CWN), International Women Tribune Centre(IWTC), Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE), Women Living Under Muslim Laws/ International Solidarity Network (WLUML), The Association of Women of the Mediterranean Region (AWMR).(for details about these Networks, see Appendix )

The United Nations also facilitates women’s organizations in networking across countries. Some of the UN agencies like UNIFEM and UN Women Watch coordinate activities of women’s organizations in different countries.

As we saw with our questionnaire, the results showed that both Iranian and Indian groups believe that factors leading to improvement of women’s NGOs at the
international level are more important than other factors. The women NGOs believe the activities of the United Nations for women’s activities are vital.

4-Globalization is Reducing the Influence of the State by Empowering NGOs for more Contribution: from Above and Below

As we mentioned before, theorists have distinguished between globalization from above and globalization from below. The former refers to those neo-liberal economic policy measures (e.g., the Washington Consensus or the Atlantic Consensus) that implies the state activities in globalizing the society. The latter refers to transnational advocacy networks, global social movements, or solidarity movements across borders such as environmental, human rights, labour rights, and women’s rights movements and organizations which present the contribution of integrated groups of people in decision making. Even the groups that make up what is called the anti-globalization movement in fact reflect the positive side of globalization; that is, the ability of people to unite and act transnationally. Although there have been international solidarity movements in the past (e.g., the slavery abolition movement, the women’s suffrage movement, the workers’ movement), contemporary globalization from below is distinguished by its breadth, scope, and efficacy, largely the result of the technological revolution.

The pressures of international institutions and multinationals to globalize are making interest groups, such as NGOs and other civil society movements, evolve globalization from below. This concept embodies the reduction of state influences and empowers NGOs to promote globalization from below.

For instance, the Fourth International Conference of Women recognized for the first time an official identity for the NGOs, in the framework of communication between governments and NGOs. It provided suitable grounds for a powerful presence of NGOs through governmental organizations. In any event, preparation for, and participation in the conference, gave new life to the women’s NGOs and gradually defined grounds for identifying the NGOs as new actors in Iran. Thus,
gradually women demands for more contribution in decision making arose and women’s NGOs challenged the state monopoly in acting for women’s rights. During the period we are talking about, a special budget was allocated for women’s NGOs activities in Third Five year Development Plan (TFDP).

This event followed the establishment of an open atmosphere for political and social activities which encouraged women to participate in the administration of the country and expansion of women NGOs. As a result we are witnessing an increase in the number of NGOs from 55 in 1996 to 470 in 2004 and in Fourth five year Development Plan (FFDP 2005-2010) in Iran, there was a special allocation for women’s affairs.

In India too, the 1985-90 Five-Year plan of the Indian government included NGOs explicitly in its plan for the first time and integrated them in the development process. The vast numbers of NGOs in India have varying tasks and purposes. The ‘New Women’s Movement’ gathered momentum in this context of a broadened and intensified popular upsurge, emerging sometimes from within and sometimes in alliance with these groups. This growing status and NGOization of the women’s movement has been noted within the movement itself, leading to often acrimonious debates. In the 90s, another feature is that a common platform has emerged at the national level with the women’s wings of national level political parties. The post-independence Indian women’s movement is usually viewed as having three phases: the period of the 1950s and 1960s, the decades immediately following freedom, during which there was little organized activity, the period of the 1970s and 1980s, marked by the Emergency, the International Women’s Year, and the report of the CSWI on the status of women in India, related events which combined to produce the enormous activism of the new autonomous women’s groups; and the most recent phase, following the Shah Bano case judgment in 1986. This was a period of withdrawal from the protest agendas of the earlier decade, into introspection, consolidation, and new directions, the latter for the most part turning toward involvement in NGO work in health, literacy, welfare, and development.
At present, a woman in India, Iran or elsewhere knows that her rights are equal with other women in western countries and that is obviously a reduction in state power. The impact of the political system on the NGOs of any country is not denied. Hence, based on results collected from our questionnaires, we can conclude that the political system has directly affected the functions of women’s NGOs in Iran, while the political system has not affected the women’s NGOs functions in India and these organizations have more freedom to act. The difference could be embedded in the political system itself. India is an established democracy. But in Iran, given the powerful theocratic democracy in place, women’s NGOs in Iran have little claim and access to the judiciary. Now women can occupy some positions in judiciary that were not open to them. Thus, women’s NGOs in Iran have to act very carefully.

Globalization has thus increased enormously the numbers of the NGOs working for women’s rights and subsequently empowered women to contribute more to governmental decision making. As a result, we can see a sharp decrease in ability of the state to pass laws through the parliament without considering the claims women’s NGOs.