Chapter 4

Profile of the Study Area
CHAPTER LAYOUT

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4.1 History of Tehran

Tehran (or Tethran), is the capital of Iran. The word of Tehran’ means ‘warm mountain slope’. During the Safavid period, Shah Safi created a military base in Tehran and had two great towers erected there which became known as Ghalesmeydan and Ghales hessa. In the Gajar period, Tehran was chosen as the capital city of the country. During the reign of Agha – Mohammad khan, the governmental headquarters were built north of Emam Zade Zayd during the reign of Fath Ali Shah the Soltani mosque, the Abbas Abad Bazaar and the Ilchi Garden (the site of today’s Russian embassy) were added.’

Figure 4-1: A perspective of Old Tehran in 1900s

Source: secondary data

The city of Tehran has several historically reputed sites which include- palaces of sa’d Abad, Niavaran, Sahebqaranyyeh and Golestyan, the mosque of Seyyed Azizollah the great Bazar of Tehran and a multitude of museums, such as Reza
Abbasinuseum the carpet museum of Iran Abguinesh (glass and ceramics) of the Azadi museum, etc. Leisure and sport resorts around Tehran include Abe Ali, Dizin Gajerh and Shemshak ski stations the Karadj Dam water ski station and the slopes of Daband and Shenioram.

Today, Tehran, capital of Iran, is located on an ancient strategic crossroad, It is on the intersection of roads that extend from the southern parts of the country along the Zagros mountains, Persian Gulf, Shiraz, Isfahan and from the west ,Mesopotamia, Qasr- e shirin, Kermanshah, Hamadan.

Unlike Isfahan, no sizeable river passes through this province’s town, other than Karaj. In higher parts of the slope, i.e., over 1500m it becomes cooler, while major water resources in the area have provided for the development of big and arborous (mainly popular and fruiters) villages. Lower parts, Between 900 to 1200 in have a fertile soil and a gentle slope that permit a productive agricultural activity. In these plains, there are many sourced of surface or underground water tables supplied by aqueducts, floodways and branched out rivers.

The city of Tehran had a population of about 11 million people at the time of the last official; census in 2006. With its cosmopolitan air, Tehran district houses diverse ethnic and linguistic groups from all over the country and represents the ethnic linguistic composition of Iran (with a different percentage though) more than 60 percent of Tehran were born outside Tehran. Tehran is the largest Persian - speaking city in the world and Persian is the standard language used throughout the country. Although indigenous people of Tehran before the 19th century were Mazandaranis who Still reside in the southern slopes of Alburez, the majority of Tehran residents are Persian who speak many different dialects of Persian corresponding to their hometown, including Esfahan, shiraz, yazd, Khuzestan, Lori, etc. the second largest linguistic group is that of the Azeri-speakers.
4.2 Geography

Tehran district is located on the southern slopes of Alborz and is approximately an equal distance from the eastern (Afghanistan) and western (Turkey, Iraq) borders while sitting on the ancient and famous city of Rey. Tabriz and Mashhad are respectively 550 and 750 kilometers away. Tehran is not far from khazar (Caspian Sea) with an aerial distance of 100 kilometers. However Alborz and Emamzadesh hashem passes with an attitude of more than 2700 meters, must be over taken on the way from Tehran to Mazandaran to reach the sea. Isfahan, the capital during the Safavi dynasty, is 350 km to the south.

![Map of Tehran](image)

**Figure 4-2: Map of Tehran**

*Source: secondary data*

Today, Tehran metropolis is the most urbanized area between Istanbul and Karachi. These distinct elements, i.e. mountainside and desert have formed the region’s landscape as well as its natural, social and cultural environment. It is from high to low from cold to warm, and from summer resorts to poles and human activates have followed suit. Tehran is a mountain city with an attitude of 900 to 1700 meters above the sea level, its urban area spreads entirely over the Iranian plateau on the
slopes of a very high and dense mountain barrier with a peak of 3933 m (better known as Towchal) which is 2200 m higher than the city’s residential areas. From Qazvin to Varamin the view is dominated by the Alborz Mountains, with rivers that are full in springtime and dry in summertime, flowing to satiate underground water tables hidden in the very thick layers of sedimentary rocks (gravel sand and clay) from the quaternary. Multiple aqueducts bring the water to surface that, in turn, flow through irrigation canals and brooks along all streets and avenues of Tehran and many other towns and cities within the province.

4.3 Political Systems

The constitutional revolution (Mashrutoyat) in 1923 discovery of petroleum in 1908, and the First World War (1917-1920) had led to the overthrow of the Qajars in 1923. The new ideas accelerated efforts and made Tehran a befitting society involved in deep change.

Figure 4-3: Iranian Parliament

Source: secondary data

For the first time in 1930, the laws and regulations that promised the beginning of a new era of democracy were formulated. Iran is a sovereign republic which has accepted democracy as a way of life. In particular, Iran has followed the USA model of parliamentary democracy. The people elect their representatives and send them to
parliament. The union government is formed by parliament and the president is the head of the nation.

4.4 Social Situation

In 2004, the population of Tehran metropolis passed beyond 12 million. This is not disproportionate with respect to the total population of Iran (15.56%). Since 1976 other cities of Iran have had a faster growth rate than Tehran.

![Figure 4-4: Tehran Bazaar](image)

*Source: secondary data*

Thus, the proportion of Tehran’s urban region population to the total population, after its stability between 1930 and 1960 at around 25% decreased from 30.4% in 1976 to 24.1% in 1996. Tehran’s urban region is geographically very different from the 1970s not only in terms of population (according to 1990 census, Karaj, Eslamshahr and Qarchak had 940000, 265000 and 138000 inhabitants, respectively) but also socially culturally, economically and administratively.

4.5 Culture and Education

Tehran city is the biggest and most important educational center of Iran. Today there are nearly 50 major colleges and universities in Greater Tehran. Since the establishment of Darolfonoon in the mid-1800s, Tehran has amassed a large number
of institutions of higher education. Some of these institutions have played crucial roles in the unfolding of Iranian political events. The University of Tehran is the earliest state university and the largest university of Iran. Tehran also is home to Iran’s largest military academy, and several religious schools and seminaries.

Figure 4-5: Tehran University

Source: secondary data

Today Tehran has advanced modern hospital and other medical centers with hundreds of pharmacies, hotels of different categories, restaurants, movie theaters, mosques, churches and synagogues for religious minorities, banks with hundreds of offices all across the city, 26 museums, 10 cultural centers, 20 public libraries more than 50 universities and other institutes of higher education, an extensive bus services network, bus terminals at the city’s south east and west. An international airport (Mehrabad), a number of military airports, mini buses public and private taxi services, several insurance companies, large recreation centers for children, several large gymnasiums ski slopes, a multitude of large parks across the city, and all essential types of urban and recreation services. The city’s mass media include hundreds of newspaper and magazines, five TV networks, and five round the clock radio stations.
4.6 Economy

More than half of Iran’s industry is based in Tehran. Industries include the manufacturing of automobiles, electronic, equipment, military weaponry, textiles, sugar cement, and chemical products.

About 30% of Iran’s companies and 45% of large industrial firms are located in Tehran. Few foreign companies operate in Tehran which has three airports, including Mehrabad international airport, Imam Khomeini international airport, and Ghal’eh morghi airfield. The Tehran stock exchange, which is a full member of the federation international des bourse de valeurs (FIBV) and a founding member of the federation of Euro- Asian stock exchange was one of the world’s best performing stock exchanges in recent years.

4.7 Money changers

The currency in Iran is the Rial (pronounced’ reeyaal’) the Rial is like the $ or £ and is made up of 100 pieces called dinars. However, due to high inflation one Rial is worth little so that no fraction of it is really used on day to day basis.

The Rial was first introduced as the currency in Iran in 1798 as a coin. Back then it was worth 1250 dinars. In 1825 it was issued as part of a decimal system. The Rial replaced the Kran at par in 1932, although it was divided in to one hundred (new) dinars.

Figure 4-6: Iranian Currency
The Toman is an old term but is no longer an official currency. However it is still used on a daily basis in Iran and it refers to the amount of ten rials. One Iranian Rial (IRR)=100 dinars. Notes are in denominations of IRR 1,00 & 2,000 & 5,000 & 10,000 & 20,000 & 50,000. Coins are in denomination of IRR 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 250, and 500. In the old timers, coins were available in 50 dinars (10 Shahi, ½ Rial) 1,2,5, and 10 Rilas bank notes were available in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2000, 5000, 10000 and 50000 Rrials.

4.8 Iranian Automobile Industry

The Iranian Automotive Industry (IAI) is the second most active industry of the country, the first being its oil and gas industry. Today, Iran is the 12th largest automaker in the world and the largest in the Middle-East, with a total production of 1,295,421 cars per annual, including 35,901 commercial vehicles. In 2009 Iran ranked fifth in car production growth standing next to China, Taiwan, Romania and India.

Figure 4-7: Iran Khodro Corporation

Source: secondary data

As of 2001, there were 13 public and privately owned automakers in Iran, of which two - Iran Khodro and Saipa - accounted for 94% of the total domestic production. Iran Khodro, which produced the most prevalent car brand in the country - the Paykan, which has been replaced in 2005 by the Samand, was still the largest with 61% of the market in 2001, while Saipa contributed 33% of Iranian total production in the same year. The other car
manufacturers, such as the Bahman Group, Kerman Motors, Kish Khodro, Morattab, Traktorsazi, Shahab Khodro, Zagross khodro and others together produced only 6%.

![Image](image.png)

Figure 4-8: Saipa Corporation

*Source: secondary data*

### 4.9 Summary

Tehran as a city located in the northern part of Iran has recently developed tremendously. As a metropolitan city, it has attracted so many people all around the country, and has been the center of trade and education. The high density of population, accompanied with the high traffic jam, made the city as the most polluted city in the country. However, advancement in communication technology has been done well in the city compared to other cities and it has formulated a 20-year long term plant to become the role model in the area, although it has a long way ahead to achieve that.