

Democracy, diversity and Disability and Iranian culture.

Paper presented at Democracy, diversity and disability, Canada,
Wennipeg

Adib-Sereshki, N., Salehpour, Y., (2011).

Abstract

Iran is a relatively large country with the area of 636,296 square miles in the Middle East region of the southwestern Asia. Its current population is about 68 million, approximately 60% of which live in urban areas and the remaining 40% in rural regions. The population of people with disabilities is currently estimated to be about 3 million.

Iran is one of the world's oldest countries. It has a history of over 5000 years, which includes the days of the great Persian Empire. Over its long history, foreign powers have occupied Iran time and again. In the mid-600's Muslim Arabs conquered Iran and Muslim Caliphs (religious leaders) governed this country for about 200 years. During their rule, the Iranian and Arab cultures greatly impacted each other and the Muslim faith spread throughout Iran. Today, 99% of Iranians are Muslims.

Having given an overview of the country itself, we would like to now turn to the concept of disability and how people with disability are viewed in our culture. What will be presented is the result of our preliminary study on this topic. We have planned to develop this work into a more systematic research project in the near future. We approached this question in two different ways:

- 1) We reviewed previous research studies which have specifically dealt with Iranian people's attitudes towards disability during the past decade in this culture ; and 2) Based on the well recognized importance of language as a significant aspect of culture and also as a means of acquiring the content of culture, we have studied and analyzed a sample of our Farsi folklore i.e. proverbs, poems, and short stories with the goal of identifying some of the attitudes embedded in and communicated through this medium.