



Singing Domesticity: Iranian Women's Work Songs and Lullabies as Emotional Archives

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ABSTRACT: Historically in Iran, household labor, including various unpaid works, from culinary tasks to producing commodities like carpets, was considered women's responsibility. As women had to carry out this labor inside their homes, these works acquired domestic attributes and labor seamlessly merged with their daily lives. This labor order formed part of a broader patriarchal system against which Iranian women have devised various strategies, among them singing while working. Bound by the confines of patriarchy, Iranian women found no place to express their innermost feelings but to sing at home during daily work/life. Accordingly, studying these songs as women's emotional archives offers a clearer understanding of women's domestic life and their inner anxieties. The present study explores four categories of these songs, including lullabies, work songs for weaving carpets, work songs for milking livestock, and work songs for *mashkazani*, with the objective of portraying how Iranian women utilize singing as a form of resistance.

Keywords: Domesticity, Iranian Women, Lullaby, Work Song.

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Introduction

Entities like artworks, popular culture, and religious practices are "fabrication of expressive-symbol elements of a culture" (Peterson, 1976), and each culture, with its distinct characteristics, produces its own fabrications that reflect its unique expressions and symbols. In this sense, work songs as popular songs that are associated with physical and productive work (Farhadi, 2000, p. 113), and Lullabies as part of literary works for children rooted in popular culture (Shajari, 1992, p. 29) can be understood as expressions unique to their respective cultures.

The nature of labor and labor culture may vary across contexts, and while lullabies are found in nearly every culture globally (Evered, 2020, p. 2), the relationships between mothers and children and the concepts surrounding them can differ depending on cultural contexts. Despite these differences, there are significant similarities between lullabies and work songs, which justify grouping them together under a single name. For instance, many scholars have mentioned that lullabies are one of the literary works "that we should consider them completely feminine texts" (Tarzjani & Zolfaghari, 2021). Or, as Gely (2009) argues one of the reasons for singing work songs is to increase efficiency in terms of "production."

At the heart of a culture, what unites work songs and lullabies as a shared category is the symbolic meaning and values they carry. Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's critique of symbolic goods (Bourdieu, 1985), we can argue that both work songs and lullabies, as forms of cultural production, represent "art-as-pure-signification." They are created with a purely symbolic intent, for symbolic appropriation, as they ultimately cannot be reduced to material possession.

This symbolic characteristic has led many scholars working on lullabies and work songs to overlook other critical aspects of these forms, or at most, to merely mention them without thorough exploration. This is especially true of studies focused on the context of Iran. Among such studies, we find attempts to collect lullabies from various regions of Iran, such as Javid & Jorjani (2007), Javid (1991), Jafari (2008), and

Najjarian and Zarifian (2015). There are also studies that, in a more formalistic manner, analyze the structure of narration or the construction of poetry within these songs, like Fazaeli (2013) and Jalali Pendary & Pakzami (2012). Additionally, some research attempts to link lullabies to Islamic thought, as seen in the works of Ahmadpanahi (2004) and Dastanpoor (2018)

Beyond these, some studies offer a more rigorous examination, focusing on the content, themes, or approaches in lullabies. For example, Darvishi & Akbari (2016) focus on the city of Shiraz, analyzing the implicit topics conveyed in lullabies. Additionally, Saghiri's (2018) study, from an anti-feminist perspective, argues that lullabies are more about the wife's appreciation of her husband than about women's expressions of dissatisfaction with their situation.

In the case of work songs in Iran, not so many works have been done, and it is somehow a new field for research. However, in comparison to lullabies, we will find more rigorous studies. Other than works like Aboubakri's (2020), Farhadi's (2000), and Zareh's (2010) that aim more to collect different work songs than analyzing or criticizing them, I can mention studies like Anizadeh's (2012) that focus on themes and implications in women's work songs, Mohammadzadeh (2017) that aims to have a look at types and content in Kurdistan Province's Work songs in Iran, and Mohammad Hanif & Ali Anizadeh (2012) that is studying themes of work songs separating works for men and works for women.

Although these studies are valuable and contribute to the field, there is a need for more critical research on both lullabies and work songs, avoiding romanticized interpretations based solely on their symbolic value. Moreover, no studies have yet compared these two types of songs, particularly in relation to women's inner emotions. This paper seeks to fill that gap by examining lullabies and the songs sung by Iranian women during domestic labor as emotional archives, revealing a silenced aspect of domestic life. I will focus on lullabies and songs sung during activities such as milking livestock, shaking mashks (a liquid-carrying bag made from sheep or goat skins and is used to produce dairies like butter by shaking or rocking dairies like milk), and weaving carpets as foundations of this emotional archive. I have three reasons for choosing these four kinds of songs: first, they were primarily sung within the confines of the home; second, they required more time than other domestic labors; and third, these songs were being sung usually when no men were around, and the space was utterly "feminine." While these songs encompass a wide range of themes depending on the singers' intentions, this study will concentrate on those that express grief or complaints, as these align with my paper's focus on "women's main anxieties." The lullabies and work songs selected for analysis come from different regions and languages across Iran, allowing for broader generalizations about shared themes. The study will demonstrate that, despite linguistic and regional differences, these songs reflect common themes shaped by the cultural homogeneity imposed on domestic life across the region.

1. Lover/ "Husband"

While many of these songs express admiration and deep affection for the singer's lover,¹ some also convey complaints. A common source of such discontent is the prolonged absence of the singer's husband due to travel:

mo qaali baf-om az bara-ye-yar-om	مو قالی باقم از برای یارم
ta ru-s nesina gol-e bi xar-om	تا روش (رویش) نشینه (بنشیند) گل بی-خارم
.....	
bi to del-e zar-on ceqad tan-a	بی تو دل زارم چقدر تنگه
zudi biyo mage del-et sang-a	زودی بیو (بیا) مگه دلت سنگه

¹ See: Saghiri, 2018.

Zinat-e jazi arusi-mun

زینت جازی (جهیزیه) عروسیمون

qali qasang-e gol-e sad ranq-a

قالی قشنگ گل صد رنگه

I weave the carpet for my beloved/ So that he sits on that, my thornless flower²

.....

You are not here and my desperate heart misses you/ Come back quick if your hearth is not hard as stone

The shining part of our Marriage *Jahaz*³/ Is the beautiful carpet with hundred colors

One green, Maroon next to that, one green.

(Heshmati Razavi, 2003)

babat az khuneh ghahr kardeh

بابات از خونه قهر کرده

delam az das oo khuneh

دلم از دس او خونه

Your father has left us and gone/ I am bloody angry from him

(Moayedmohseni, 2007: 182)

The first song is sung while weaving a carpet, and the second is a lullaby sung to infants. Both share a common theme: the husband's prolonged absence due to travel. This theme is especially prevalent in carpet-weaving songs, as the task itself is time-consuming and labor-intensive. In these songs, women express their love and longing for their absent husbands while simultaneously voicing frustration at the extended separation. Exploring similar songs reveals a deeper understanding of why women are so troubled by these lengthy travels:

lala lala gol-e zire

لالا لالا گل زیره

babat rafteh zani gireh

بابات رفته زنی گیره

Lalalala cumin flower/ Your father has gone to get married

(Jamali, 2008)

The primary source of anxiety, as evident in these songs, is the fear that the husband might marry another woman during his prolonged absence. This theme recurs frequently across different regions of Iran, often expressed in nearly identical words, underscoring the significance of this concern. However, societal norms and constraints mean that women cannot always openly voice such fears.

qali o qalicheh doo gol leh bani

قالی و قالچه دوو گل له بانی

nazdar danishi o chavochan leh shani

نازدار دانیسی و چاوچان له شانی

deh sere kehye dehst bu goli le ti

ده سرمکھی دهست بو گولی لی تی

binireh bu lam she bourim pi ti

بینیره بو لام سه بووریم پی تی

On the carpet and rug two beautiful flower are embedded/ Nazanin sits on that and the blackeye next to

² The author has translated all the lullabies and work songs in this paper from Farsi into English. As different ethnicities in Iran have their own language or accent, some of these songs are not originally in Farsi; In these cases, the author of cited texts had translated them into Farsi. English translations do not aim to convey these songs' whole rhetoric and literary points, but their primary focus is on the content.

³ *Jahaz* is a collection of all the furniture that the couple need for starting their life together. They usually buy that before the wedding ceremony and in most parts of Iran it was presumed as the responsibility of the girl's father to pay for them.

him

Your handkerchief smells like a flower / Send that to me that it brings peace for me

(Mohammadzadeh, 2017)

In this context, “Nazanin,” a Persian term meaning both “dear” and a personal name, clearly refers to the beloved. Meanwhile, the term “blackeye,” often used metaphorically to describe beauty, likely alludes to a potential rival—the woman the beloved might marry. This reflects one of the central anxieties of women: fear of their lover’s or husband’s disloyalty and betrayal, a concern rooted in the legal and cultural acceptance of polygamy in Iran (Esmaeili et al., 2019). As this behavior has historically been socially sanctioned and considered a male right (Haeri, 2013), women often lack socially acceptable outlets to voice their grievances. Consequently, they turn to lullabies and feminine work songs as subtle and indirect mediums to express their frustrations and address this sensitive issue.

2. Children

While many of these songs express admiration and deep affection for the singer’s lover,⁴ some also convey complaints. A common source of such discontent is the prolonged absence of the singer’s husband due to travel:

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dalam az das oo khuneh	دلم از دس او خونه

Your father has left us and gone/ I am bloody angry from him

(Moayedmohseni, 2007: 182)

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babat rafteh zani gireh	بابات رفته زنی گیره

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The primary source of anxiety, as evident in these songs, is the fear that the husband might marry another woman during his prolonged absence. This theme recurs frequently across different regions of Iran, often expressed in nearly identical words, underscoring the significance of this concern. However, societal norms and constraints mean that women cannot always openly voice such fears.

qali o qalicheh doo gol leh bani	قالی و قالیچه دوو گل له بانی
nazdar danishi o chavochan leh shani	نازدار دانیسی و چاوچوان له شانی
deh sere kehye dehst bu goli le ti	ده سرمکه‌ی دهست بو گولی لی تی
binireh bu lam she bourim pi ti	بینیره بو لام سه بووریم پی تی

On the carpet and rug two beautiful flower are embedded/ Nazanin sits on that and the blackeye next to him

⁴ See: Saghiri, 2018.

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3. Gender Discrimination

Another recurring theme in these songs is the discrimination women face in various forms. One of the most prominent examples revolves around labor and economic struggles. In these songs, women often voice their grievances about the overwhelming amount of work they are expected to do, contrasted with the little or no income they receive in return:

qali kashum bebam rishe rishe	قالی کاشون ببافم ریشه ریشه
ke harchi mibafam tamum nemishe	که هر چه میبافم تموم نمیشه
mibafam qali o qali	میبافم قالی و قالی
nadaram zir tan nali	ندارم زیر تن نالی
zir pam farsh sadeh	زیر پام فرش ساده
madaram az baram bafteh	مادرم از برام بافته
nadarm digar az oo yadegari	ندارم دیگر از او یادگاری
be joz yek janamaz karbalayee	به جز یک جانماز کربلایی

I am weaving the Kashan carpet one knot by knot/ And it seems it will never end

I weave the carpet and carpet/ I do not have any rug beneath myself

Beneath myself, I have only a plain carpet/ That my mother has weaved for me

I do not have any other thing in memory of her/ But a prayer mat from Karbala

(Mazraati, 2004: 22)

bebam qali kashi rizeh	ببافم قالی کاشی ریزه
age khun az sar angosh berizeh	اگه خون از سر انگش بریزه
ba in hal qalibafam qalibaf	با این حال قالیبافم قالیباف
shab bi lahafam qalibaf	شب بیلحافم قالیباف
ma kea z mozd qali haq nadarim qalibaf	ما که از مزد قالی حق نداریم قالیباف
ma ke joz takht qali farsh nadarim qalibaf	ما که جز تخت قالی فرش نداریم قالیباف
qalibafam qalibaf	قالیبافم قالیباف
rah miram ba sad qashangi qalibaf	راه میرم با صد قشنگی قالیباف
otaqam narufteh basheh qalibaf	اتاقم نروفته باشه قالیباف

I am weaving Kashan carpet little by little/ Even if my fingers start to bleed

Anyway, I am a carpet weaver/ And at night I do not have a warm blanket

We do not have any share from price of the carpet, carpet weaver/ We do not have a carpet but “Takhte qali”⁵

I am a carpet weaver, a carpet weaver/ I walk so beautifully, carpet weaver

Even if my room is not clean, carpet weaver/ Even if my dishes are not washed, carpet weaver

(Jahani, 1976: 161)

A prominent issue highlighted in these songs is the problem of cheap labor. Women often lament the unfairness of their wages, which are disproportionately low compared to the value and effort their work entails. This inequity stems from pervasive gender discrimination in the Iranian labor market. As studies such as Razavi and Hibibi (2014) demonstrate, this disparity is particularly evident jobs that do not require much skill. Part of this wage discrimination is rooted in traditional patriarchal ideologies that emphasize women’s primary role as caregivers, responsible for domestic duties and raising children. This perspective is reflected in legal arguments, such as Alikarimi’s (2019) assertion that if legislators did not prioritize women’s familial roles as wives and mothers, it would result in harm by placing additional responsibilities on them (p. 95). Consequently, women’s work outside the home is often dismissed as not being “real” work and is compensated inadequately. The theme of economic injustice also emerges in other work-related contexts. For instance, in the songs sung by women while shaking *mashks* (*mashkzani*), similar grievances about unfair wages and labor inequality can be found:

du zi bezan ke direme	دو زی بزن که دیرمه
kar ka ali, va irme	کر کجلی و شیرمه
say ta sevar mehmune	صد تا سوار مهمونه
say towy deya va juneme	صد توی دیه و جونمه

Hey, yogurt, get prepared quickly as I am in a rush/ and I have a son that I should feed him with milk.

A hundred horse riders would be my guests very soon/ and in addition to that, I shall host another hundred people, too.

(Jamalian et al, 2015)

avi sipi kaniya	ئاوی سپی کانیه
vazim la mama shkaye niya	وازم له مه شکهای نیه
che yeranim mal niya	حه یرانم له مال نیه

What I have poured into the *mashk*/ is as crystalized as the white fountain’s water

It does not give me any butter/ I am not in the mood of doing *mashk*. My lover is not at home.

(Aboubakri, 2020)

⁵ *Takht qali* is the structure that carpet is hanging on that while being weaved. It is consisted of a metal or wooden frame and a place for carpet weavers to seat on. Here the singers are saying that they spend all the day here and this is the only place that they can seat on.

shir zayne dam sahar kara gerune	شیر زینه دم سحر کرش گرونه
nerxesh ar si kakam bu, chi zaferuneh	نرخشه ار سی ککام بو، چی زعفرونه
duma izanom, duma izanom, hey sheri xunom	دومه‌ای زنم، دومه‌ای زنم هی شعر ای خونم
mo zan ashayerom ya ja nimunom	مو زن عشایرم، یه جا نی مونم
vowlat mal izannom ye mashk dui	وولت مال ای زنم یه مشک دویی
kara sheim si jahaz dovar men tuyi	کره شه اییم سی جهاز دور من تویی

The butter that is produced early in the morning is so precious/ If this butter is for my brother, it is as precious as Saffron.

Meanwhile, singing this song/ I am preparing the yogurt

As I am a nomad/I do not have any settled place.

(Jamalian et al, 2015)

qonshulara yaq borjluyam	قونشولارا یاغ بور جلویم
urman bostan, baq borjluyam	اورمان، بوستان باغ بورجلویم
cixar mani qizim yaza	چیخار منی قزیم یازا
toy toyluaq kor niyaza	توی تویلقور نیازا

I owe some cooking oil to the neighbors/ I owe them garden, bush, and farmland ...

Hey, my daughter! help me to the spring/ then I will hold a wedding ceremony [for you]

(shahanqhi, 2009: 208-9)

Having to nurse a son, hosting numerous guests, rising early to prepare precious butter for the men of the family, all while struggling with debts owed to neighbors—these are all demonstrative examples of labor and wage discrimination faced by women. Despite these inequities being normalized in their society, women are keenly aware of their plight and rights. Through their songs, sung within the domestic space of the home, they voice their grievances, using this creative channel to challenge the unfair labor expectations imposed on them. However, their complaints about discrimination extend beyond economic and labor issues. Often subtly, and sometimes with a touch of irony, these songs also address the broader issue of gender discrimination, particularly in relation to the societal status of women:

lala lala gol-e hasti, barat vamestoonom asbi	لالا لالا گل هستی، برات وامستونم اسبی
hamu asbi bodu bashe, hamisheh d jelo bashe	همو اسبی بدو باشه، همیشه د جلو باشه
ke baba jelodares, amoyesh ham rekabdares	که بابا جلودارس، عمویش هم رکاب دارس

Lala Lala! The flower of life, I will get you a horse/ A horse that is runner, and always is at front

Your father is at forefront and your uncle beside him

(Gharbi et al, 2019)

lala lala gole pooneh, geday omad dame khuneh	لالا لالا گل پونه، گدای اومد دم خونه
noonish midam nemishineh, hamash migh sabkhunh	نونش می‌دم نمی‌شین، هاش می‌گه صابخونه

Lala Lala! My Oregano flower/ some beggar came to the door

And when I want to give her/him some food to eat/ s/he asked where is owner of the house

(ibid.)

lala lala asal bashi	لالا لالا اصل باشی
delam mikhast pesar bashi	دلَم میخواست پسر باشی
be har majles ke benshini	به هر مجلس که بنشینِی
to jadar pedar bashi	تو جادار پدر باشی

Lala Lala be honey/ I wish if you were a boy

And anywhere that you sit/ You keep your father's place

(Mohajeri, 2004: 75)

As Gharbi et al. (2019) demonstrate, lullabies like these reflect the pervasive discrimination women face in society. The first lullaby highlights the elevated status of men relative to children and women. The second underscores how even strangers undermine women's authority in the home, asserting that the house belongs to a male figure. The third reveals the societal pressure on women to bear sons instead of daughters and the deep-rooted discrimination that leads a mother to wish her daughter were a boy. These examples collectively challenge the narrative upheld by some scholars, politicians, and clerics that Iranian women passively accept discrimination. On the contrary, they actively criticize it. However, due to persistent oppression, women are often denied opportunities to voice their concerns publicly. Instead, they express their critiques and resistance within the domestic sphere, using spaces like lullabies as a platform for their opposition.

4. Coercion

On another level, women express through their songs the coercion and oppression imposed by forces outside the family. This theme appears in both lullabies and work songs. The coercion they reference can be attributed to bad luck or fate (*Taghdir* or *Sarnevesht*), reflecting a belief that their struggles are a result of forces beyond their control. This perspective reveals how women navigate societal challenges, often framing their hardships as part of a larger, inevitable fate, while still using their songs as a means to articulate their resistance and frustration with their conditions.

lala lala kabootar bache boodam, madaram mord	لالا لالا کبوتر بچه بودم، مادرم مرد
mara bar dayeh dadan, dayeh ham mord	مرا بر دایه دادن، دایه هم مرد
mara ba shir gav amokhteh kardan	مرا با شیر گاو آمخته کردن
ze bakht badom goosaleh ham mord	ز بخت بدم گوساله هم مرد

Lalala, I was a little bird when my mother died/ I was given to *Dayeh* (someone with responsibilities like a Nany), and she also died

They made me get used to the cow's milk/ but due to my bad luck, the cow also died

(Poornemat Roodsari, 2012)

be shab nalam, be shab-e shabgir nalam	به شب نالم به شب شبگیر نالم
gahi az bakht bitaghdird nalam	گاهی از بخت بی‌تقدیر نالم

I will complain to the night, to the dawn/ sometimes I complain for my unfortunate faith (Poornemat Roodsari, 2012)

ala lala ke dar basteh	آلا لالا که در بسته
zan baba daram basteh	زن بابا درم بسته

....

daram kardi daram basti	درم کردی درم بستی
manam raftam be ghabrestoon	منم رفتم به قبرستون
sar-e ghabr-e nane soltun	سر قبر ننه سلطون
do ta torki mena didan	دو تا ترکی منا دیدن
mena bordan be hendestun	منا بردن به هندستون
bozorgam kard fe sad nazi	بزرگم کرد به صد نازی
aaroosam kard be sad shahi	عاروسم کرد به صد شاهی

Alalala That she closed the door/ my father's wife closed the door/ / you kicked me out and closed the door/ so I went to the cemetery/ on my mother whose name was Soltun/two Turkish people saw me/ they brought me to Hindustan/ they raised me mollycoddling me/ and they arranged my marriage with a hundred Shahi (an old currency)/

(Tarzjani & Zolfaghari, 2021)

mashke bizhi se gardan	مه شکی بژی سی گه ردان
roni denim la bardan	رونی دینم له به ردان
pir bum la hayf u dardan	پیر بوم له ته یف وده ردان
hay mala babim mashke	هه ی ماله بابیم مه شکی

Every day, three times a day I shake the *mashk*/ (like) I should get butter from stone

The grieve for that has made me old/ Hey my *mashk*! ey my life, you are lovely just like the father's house.

(Aboubakri, 2020)

The audience for these songs was typically the *mashk* (liquid-carrying bag made of livestock skin) or children, whom mothers would gently rock, much like swinging a *mashk*, to help them fall asleep. The movement of both the child and the *mashk* could be seen as a metaphor for the sky swinging over the Earth, hanging from a pivotal point. The sky, often symbolizing a higher power that rules over all beings and governs the world (Eskandari, 2021), also represents the force that controls fate. As such, these songs can be interpreted as expressions of lament directed towards the sky for bad luck or misfortune. Beyond these complaints about the harshness of fate (*Sarnevesht*), Iranian women in their songs also voice grievances about coercion in society, typically stemming from local power structures. In many of these songs, the target of cruelty is the woman's husband or lover. However, at times, the song addresses a broader, ongoing sense of injustice or cruelty in society.

khavar amad ke dar dashtestan bahar ast	خبر آمد که در دشتستان بهار است
zamin az khun-e vaez lalehzar ast	زمین از خون واعظ لالهزار است
khodavanda sabouri deh be vaez	خداوندا صبوری ده به واعظ
ke vaez yek tano doshman hezar ast	که واعظ یک تن و دشمن هزار است

It is announced that it is spring in Plain/ And the land, covered with preacher's blood, is like a tulip field

Oh lord, bestow tulip more patience to the preacher/ That the preacher is one and has thousand enemy
(Meghdari et al. 2018)

dar shahr qarib madare mxaya mara	در شهر غریب مادر مخوایه مرا
chun sina kabab xuare mxaye mara	چون سینه کباب خوائر مرا
onja ke sare qariba bala karda	اونجا که سر غریب بالا کردا
onja pedaro baradari mxaya mara	اونجا پدر و برادر مخوایه مرا

In the city of strangers, the mother calls me/ Because my sister is suffering from a deep pain, she calls me
The place where the stranger's head is hanged/ That is where my father and brother call me
(Shahroodi and Jahantigh, 2021)

agar zolfom bareh gisom grogoon	اگر زلفم بره گیسم گروگون
nemizarom bekhabi tooy-e zendoon	نمی‌ذارم بخوابی توی زندون

Even if I had to lose my hair/ I will not let you sleep in the jail
(Tarzjani & Zolfaghari, 2021)

However, there is a distinction between some of these songs and those that address fate. In these songs, traces of agency and resistance can be found, either from the singer or in opposition to the cruelty of local power. For instance, in the first lullaby, there is a depiction of a conflict between a preacher and his enemies. In the second lullaby, the singer responds to family calls in the face of injustice. The third lullaby speaks of the sacrifices the singer is willing to make to resist such cruelty. Aside from these few examples, most of the songs—many of which also address cruelty imposed by local power—do not demonstrate clear evidence of action or agency.

khan amaad khan amaad	خان آماد خان آماد (دو بار)
az heibat-e shamshirssh	از هیبت شمشیرش
az in mishay-e porshires	از این میشای پرشیرش
araghut be roghan amad	ارغوت به روغن آمد

"Khan" came, "Khan" came (2 times)/ Due to the awe of his sword
Due to his cows that are filled with milk/ Mashk started to produce oil
(Mohammad Hanif & Ali Anizadeh, 2012: 131)

mask-om zeyd-om kere dar-om	مشکم زیدم کره در آروم
va sir-es ke yam sela nadar-om	واسیرس که یام سلا ندارم

I shook my *mashk* and produced some butter/ But I am not allowed to come over my *mashk*
(Homayouni, 2007: 127)

lala lala gol anjir	لالا لالا گل انجیر
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Lalala Fig flower/ They have chained your father

(Ahmadpanahi, 2004: 226)

5. Conclusions

This study on lullabies and work songs sung in domestic spaces by Iranian women reveals that these songs serve as a means for women to express their inner critical feelings about issues they might not be able to discuss openly. Therefore, they can be considered Iranian women's emotional archives. The most common themes in these songs revolve around their children, their lover/husband, gender discrimination, and various forms of coercion. Regarding their children, the primary concerns of Iranian women in these songs are the future lives of their children and the fear of disloyalty. Regarding their lover or husband, anxiety often arises from feelings of betrayal and disloyalty. When addressing gender discrimination, women not only lament their low wages and the perception of themselves as wage-free laborers but also critique the broader societal discrimination that affects women's social status. On the matter of coercion, they first express frustrations with bad luck and fate—forces they see as beyond their control—before shifting to complaints about oppression from local powers. The examples discussed in this study suggest a shift in how we approach lullabies and work songs. Rather than merely appraising them from an aesthetic point of view or romanticizing them, we should reexamine these songs more critically, aiming to uncover their underlying messages and purposes that lie between the lines.

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Figure 1- Takht-e Qali and Room for weaving Carpet. Source: Author.



Figure 2- Weaving Carpet. Source: Author.