



Examining the Effective Factors in Citizen Participation in Management of New Towns

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Abstract. This article aimed at assessing the factors effective in citizenship participation in management of new towns. A descriptive-analytic method based on desk and field studies was employed here. A statistical population size of 18518 individuals and 5840 families was estimated. Therefore, the statistical population size was determined as 330 individuals using Cochran's formula. Sampling method of the statistical population was based on a random method and SPSS was used for data analysis. Research results indicate that the more citizens' satisfaction of an urban management is, the more they are willing to participate in management. On the other hand, in case citizens do not have necessary information on the plans and decision-makings of a new urban management, they have no tendency to participate. Meanwhile, most citizens believed that profitability of a participatory activity was effective in their participation and if a reward were considered for their participatory support, they would further participate in the activities of a new town. The studies and observations indicate that participations' education level in Sahand New Town is considered as the factors effective in citizens' participation rate in management structure of a new town. A direct relationship was proved between education level and citizens' participation in an urban management. Meanwhile, the stronger the economic base of individuals is, the more they participate in an urban management, vice versa. Employment centers for citizens make people assume further responsibility and they enhance citizens' sense of belonging.

Keywords: Participation, new town, urban management, citizen

1. INTRODUCTION

Creation of new cities is traced back to the beginning of history. However, it has been selected as a basis for organizing and purging big cities since the mid-twentieth century, especially in recent decades. The cities were planned and constructed in different satellite, individual, reconstructed, stable, and administrative-political models in Europe, America, Australia, and Africa (Ziari,2006).

In fact, creation of new towns has been a strategy in response to the excessive density of population and activity in big cities (Eddie and Hui, 2005). Creation of big cities in Iran – as a strategy to control growth of big cities and an incentive for development – has been developed increasingly. Meanwhile, most cities in Iran - especially metropolises - created new town(s) within far and short distances as per their place and time requirements.

Although new town in Iran has been designed in order to decentralize metropolises, it seems that most of them failed to have a considerable success in realization of their objectives. Among the different reasons mentioned for such a failure, “insufficient attention to the issue of citizens' participation” is considered as the major and effective factor (Qerklhu,2009).

Today, participation is one of the major concepts of a sustainable development. *Participation* has been considered as a very important issue since fifty years ago, which had a particular attraction for all the fields of social sciences as more than thousand basic and applied studies were conducted in America and Europe in 60s-70s. With the development of participation concept and its inclusion in all fields of life, some conditions are discussed today that all people have informed

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and real involvement in determining their own fate. Intellectuals believe that citizens - as the major suppliers of urban costs (taxpayers) and urban law executors - should cooperate with authorities on their city's future. However, people's participation aspect in urban management process encounters a new and serious challenge and lack of people's participation in the issues related to city management and lack of their interest to participate in the affairs related to them face urban management with a great problem (Sharifzadeh & Sedghi, 2009).

Since peoples' participation in city affairs, especially in new towns, is one of the objectives of contemporary societies, it is necessary to use real tools to facilitate this participation through distinguishing the real condition of citizens' participation. This way, we may take advantage of citizens' participation in new town affairs, which is undoubtedly the most vital factor in developing them through recognizing the factors and emphasizing them. Therefore, this research attempts to analyze the factors effective in citizenship participation in managing Sahand New Town.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Major objectives of the research are as follows:

- Measuring the factors effective in citizens' participation of new towns in urban management
- Presenting recommendations and approaches on improving citizens' participation in new town management

Research Hypothesis

This research was intended to study the following hypotheses.

- ❖ There seems to be a relationship between education level of new town citizens and their participation in urban management.
- ❖ Citizens' participation rate in urban management is related to their economic base.
- ❖ It seems that citizens' participation rate in urban management increases with their satisfaction from urban management performance improving.
- ❖ Apparently, knowledge of citizens on the plans and decision-makings of new town management is related to their participation rate.
- ❖ Profitability of a participatory activity is effective in citizens' participation rate in handling town affairs.
- ❖ There seems to be a relationship between existence of employment centers and citizens' participation in managing a new city.

Materials and Methods

A descriptive-analytic method based on desk and field studies was employed here. The statistical population size in 2010 was 18518 individuals and 5840 families (Hosseinzadeh Dalir & et al., 60:2012). Therefore, the statistical sample of this population was determined as 316 individuals using Cochran's formula with the standard error and confidence level of 5% and 95%, respectively. Later, the statistical samples were increased to 330 individuals to improve accuracy. Sampling method was based on a random method. A questionnaire was prepared using desk studies and the references on research subject to determine validity of questions. Questions' content was then evaluated by the experts. Reliability of data collection tools was calculated as 0.86 using internal reliability and the data were then analyzed using SPSS.

Research Theoretical Foundations

“A new town is a self-reliant society with certain population and area, a certain distance from a metropolis, a predetermined plan, determined objectives, and all the required facilities for an independent environment.” Creation of a new town is an intentional action, which assumes a power source or an organization that provides space and resources for developing a town and controls it continuously to allow it to become as large as a favorable size. New towns are classified into some patterns according to area, distance, population, type and level of economic activities: independent new towns, satellite new towns, and joined new towns. Satellite new towns are the planned societies, which maintain strong functional links with a metropolis. The most common types of new towns in Iran are *satellite new towns*. These towns are created due to the increasing problems of big cities. They aim to absorb the population overflows of large cities (Ziari, 2009).

Construction of new towns in Iran has four certain periods (Ma'soumi,1991). Period (I) was between the two world wars during which the cities were constructed with specific purposes. They were divided into three groups:

- A) The cities formed due to political and military purposes,
- B) The cities created due to economic purposes,
- C) District of state employees, which was in the neighborhood of big cities and developed based on a rural core, as the new town texture integrated the rural core.

Period (II) was after World War II to mid 40's. Development of oil-dependent industries and other developing industries allowed the new towns to be formed based on the industries dependent on oil and district of state employees. Period (III) was from the second half of the 40's to victory of the Islamic Revolution. During this period, oil incomes increased, country's urban population increased considerably, and new towns were constructed at appropriate distances from urban textures without any dependency to the initial rural core. Period (IV) was after the Islamic Revolution. Following the imposed war, construction of new towns stopped. Major differences are seen between the modern new towns and the ones of Period (III) as far as their function is concerned. In the past years, construction of new cities was based on single-based economic functionalism; however, it is considered as the residence of the overflow population of large cities and it turns them into satellite forms. On the other hand, one of the major factors in socio-economic growth and development trend, especially in urban and rural societies, is the active role and presence of people in managing their society. Any step toward development should be accompanied with people, as increasing human resource in an environment and improving efficiency toward satisfying needs and local planning are considered as the most important conditions for realization of real development.

Development problems have gained attentions of world residents during recent decades. In 1975, the United Nations Economic and Social Council recommended employment of people's participation as a fundamental policy in national development strategy because participation helps efficiency of economic policies and clarifies economic decision-making process. This way, everybody may collaborate in the efficiency of economic institutions.(World Bank Report1997)

“Participation” means collaboration and cooperation in an affair or an activity and presence in a group, an assembly, and an organization to discuss and make decisions in an active or a passive manner’. Participation is a mental and emotional engagement of individuals in groups, which motivate them to help one another in order to achieve the goals of other group and share responsibilities (Alavi Tabar,2003). Skeffington Commission defines participation as sharing of people and formulation of policies and recommendations. Participation encompasses dialog and action equally. A perfect participation is realized when people may assume an active role in a

plan preparation process. Samuel Paul (2001) believed that local participation is an active process in which the beneficiaries affect orientation and execution of development projects instead of receiving a share of project's advantages. Paul considered the following objectives for participation:

- 1) Participating in costs of a project
- 2) Improving efficiency and effectiveness of a project
- 3) Empowering beneficiaries through formal and informal trainings and awareness-building activities
- 4) Enhancing authorities

Citizens' participation has a fundamental role in creating healthy societies through providing powerful fields, which are capable of making possible equal access to the resources (Pennie & etal, 2009).

While governments and firms assume participation from a tool or developmental perspective, people take it increasingly as a right or an opportunity (Momeni & etal, 2011) . They argue that participation in the decisions that affect their life and work conditions in their homes and area is not only a "good development" but also their most essential right. Over time, these types of participations accompanied different conceptual and structural changes, which is due to their increasing importance in structure of towns. For instance, differences of participation between traditional and strategic planning can be presented as the following table (Salehifard & Alizadeh,2011).

Table 1. Differences of participation between traditional and strategic planning.

Context	Traditional Planning (Comprehensive Pattern)	Strategic Planning
Participation of Beneficiary Groups in Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Disregarding people's participation and non-state institutions in planning process 2. Government is responsible for planning and designing. 3. Disregarding people's demands and role in forming towns 4. People's participation is time-consuming and it is hinders plans preparation. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It emphasizes executive management and public participation 2. All of its processes are based on consensus and participation. 3. One of the essential and effective factors is to consider people in a strategic planning process. 4. People's participation provides conditions for developing creative solutions.

We notice that the importance and role of participation in planning and managing towns are emphasized over time and after the traditional period, as paying attention to participation issue will lead to success of planning and successful management of towns.

Urban participation has various functions for an urban management and urban development system. Increasing access to urban information, determining priorities and needs of citizens, and having a collaborative attempt to execute urban development projects are among the functions. Based on this, the major consequences of urban participation are people's awareness of their skills and abilities, strengthening sense of trust and confidence toward urban managers, strengthening sense of cooperation between citizens and urban management, developing creativities of citizens and proposing plans and recommendations, solving urban problems through citizens, and further sense of belonging to an urban society (Chakrabarty,2001).

Basic principles of urban management are observance of correct principles of utilization, social responsiveness, and flexibility, which are executable equally. Urban management should act optimally to be responsive and overcome urban constraints and problems.

The major objective of an urban management can be promotion of work and life conditions of residents within different social and economic groups, protection of citizens' rights, encouragement to a sustainable economic and social development, and protection of architectural environment. Therefore, when a city has some problems and insufficiencies in its affairs process, it may be concluded that its urban management is experiencing some constraints and shortages. In this case, the urban management should have a plan to improve town conditions, overcome its problems, and formulate some plans for future of the town. It should provide an ideal future based on realities and temporal and spatial conditions. In this concern, the urban management should protect towns and people's interests (Shieh, 2005).

Scope of the Study

Sahand new town is a newly established town in Western Azarbaijan, which was constructed about two decades ago in order to control the overexpansion of Tabriz city and satisfy population overflow of the city. It is 20 km southwest of Tabriz, east of Tabriz-Azarshahr road in the southern hillside of Mount Sahand. Sahand new town was established in 1989 by Ministry of Housing and Urban Development through applying the law of establishment of new town with affiliation to the central part of Osku city in Eastern Azarbaijan. The land allocated to the town is about 12650 hectares in the hillside of Mount Sahand. The town is in the 46°-3' and 46°-15' longitudes and 37°-53' and 37°-59' latitudes.

Research Findings

-Examining Participants in Terms of Gender

Studying gender combination of the participants shows that 206 out of 330 participants (62.42%) are males and 124 participants (37.58%) are females.

-Examining Participants in Terms of Age

Out of all the participants, 13.2% are below 20, 21.6% are in the age group of 20-30, 46.1% are in the age group of 30-40, 9.1% are in the age group of 40-50, and 10% are above 50. Based on this, maximum and minimum numbers of individuals are within the age group of 30-40 and 40-50, respectively.

-Examining Participants in Terms of Education

Examining the participants' education level indicates that 49% have diploma and associate degrees. Thirty-four percent have BS/BA degrees, 10.2% have the degrees higher than BS/BA, and 6.8% had the degrees below diploma. Therefore, the maximum percentage of education level belongs to the citizens holding diploma and associate degrees and the minimum percentage belongs to the individuals holding the degrees below diploma.

-Examining Participants in Terms of Occupation

Out of 330 participants, 312 individuals (94.5%) were employed, 243 participants (77.8%) were working in public sector, 45 people (14.4%) were working in private sector, 24 individuals (7.8%) were self-employed, and 5.5% were unemployed.

-Examining Participants in Terms of their Salary

Among the participants, (44.8)% had low income, (50.9)% had average income, and (4.3)% had high-income.

-Examining Participants in Terms of being *Native* or Non-native

Based on the data, (85.8)% of the participants are native and(14.2)% non-native.

Analysis of the Relationship between Education Level of New Town Citizens and their Participation in Urban Management

Table 2 shows the relationship between the education level of new town citizens and their participation in urban management. Chi-square test was used for measuring variables and testing the above hypothesis. The calculated significance level is equal to sig = (0.00006) and less than the relevant significance level ($\alpha=0.05$).Therefore, it confirms the relationship between education level of new town citizens and their participation in urban management.

Table 2. Examining the relationship between education level of new town citizens and their participation in new town management.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	24.69	0.00006	4	Confirmed

So Somers' rank correlation coefficient) Samers' D =0.22) indicates a direct and average relationship between the two variables.

Analysis of the Relationship between Citizens' Participation in Urban Management and their Economic Base

Table (3) and the Chi-square value, which is at a complete significance level with 4 degrees of freedom; prove a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Somers' correlation coefficient (Samers' D = 0.42) shows a direct and relatively strong relationship between the two variables. It means that with the citizens' income increasing, their participation rate increases.

Table 3. Examining the relationship between the economic base of new town citizens and their participation in managing the new town.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	45.45	0.000	4	Confirmed

Analysis of the Relationship between Citizens' Satisfaction of Urban Management Performance and their Participation in New City Management

Table (4) shows that the significance level based on Chi square test between the above variables equals (0.01), which indicates a significant relationship between the variables.

Table 4. Examining the relationship between citizens' satisfaction of urban management performance and their participation in urban management.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	13.04	0.000	4	Confirmed

Somers' rank correlation coefficient equals (Samers' D = 0.25), which indicates a direct and an average correlation between the two variables.

Analysis of the Relationship between citizens' knowledge of the Plans and Decision-making of New Town Management and their Participation

Table (5) shows the relationship between citizens' knowledge of the plans and decision-making of new town management and their participation in urban management. Chi-square test was used for measuring the variables and testing the above hypothesis. As the calculated significance level sig= (0.000) is lower than the relevant significance level ($\alpha=0.05$), it is concluded that there is a systematic and significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 5. Examining the relationship between citizens' satisfaction of urban management and their participation in urban management.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	45.12	0.000	4	Confirmed

Somers' rank correlation coefficient) Samers' D = 0.34) indicates a direct and above-average relationship between the two variables.

Analysis of the Relationship between Profitability of Participatory Activity and Citizens' Participation in Handling Town Affairs

As shown by Table (6), the significance level based on Chi-square test between the above variables equals 0.011. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables.

Table 6. Examining the relationship between a participatory activity and their participation in urban management.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	13.04	0.000	4	Confirmed

Somers' rank correlation coefficient equals (0.16), which indicates a direct and relatively weak correlation between the two variables.

Analysis of the Relationship between Employment Centers and Citizens' Participation in New Town Management

The Chi-square test proves a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. Table (7) shows a relationship between employment centers and their participation in urban management. Chi-square test was used for measuring the variables and testing the above hypothesis. The calculated significance level sig= (0.000) is lower than the relevant one ($\alpha=0.05$). Therefore, a systematic and significant relationship is between the two variables.

Table 7. Examining the relationship between occupation centers and citizens' participation in new town management.

Name of Test	Test Value	Significance Level (Sig)	Degree of Freedom (df)	Result of Research Hypothesis
Chi-square Test	61.54	0.000	4	Confirmed

Somers' correlation coefficient (Samers' D = 0.37) shows a direct relationship and an above-average correlation between the two variables.

Hypotheses Examination, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Hypothesis (1): There seems to be a relationship between education level of new town citizens and their participation in urban management.

Research results indicate a direct and average relationship between the two variables. In other words, the higher the citizens' education level is, the higher their participation is. This shows a positive relationship between them. Therefore, the above hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis (2): Citizens' participation in urban management is related to their economic base.

Studies showed that the participants' income and economic base is considered as a relatively strong factor in increasing their participation. Therefore, hypothesis (2) is also confirmed.

Hypothesis (3): It seems that citizens' participation in urban management increases with their satisfaction increasing from urban management performance

Based on the results, it may be concluded that increasing citizens' satisfaction from urban management performance increases their participation. Therefore, the above hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis (4): There seems to be a relationship between citizens' knowledge of the plans and decision-making on new town management and their participation,

The results indicate that the more citizens' knowledge of the plans and decision-making of a new town management is, the more their participation will be. This shows the effectiveness of citizens' knowledge of the plans and decision-making of a new town management in improving their partnership. Therefore, the above hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis (5): Profitability of a participatory activity is effective in citizens' participation in handling town affairs.

The studies show that profitability of a participatory activity will have a relatively weak impact on increasing their participation. If a reward is considered for participatory support of citizens, they will further participate in the activities of a new town. Based on this, the above hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis (6): There seems to be a relationship between employment centers and citizens' participation in managing a new town.

The results showed that citizens' participation increases with the employment centers increasing. In other words, employment centers are of the factors effective in increasing partnership. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed.

Nowadays, partnership was considered as one of the most genuine and acceptable approaches in planning systems toward planning objectives including stability and taking the successful route of a planning process depends on interfering and considering the role of all its beneficiaries. Therefore, paying attention to partnership in urban management plays a major role in solving most urban problems. Due to the long absence of partnership in management of big cities and consideration of partnership issues in big cities, the necessity to consider partnership in new towns is specified because new town are more prepared for citizen partnership.

The examination and observations in this research showed that education level of the participants was considered as one of effective factors in citizens' participation in the structure of Sahand new town management. A direct relationship was proved between education level and citizens' partnership in urban management. A relationship is also between citizens' economic conditions and their partnership in urban management. In other words, the stronger the individuals' economic base is, the higher is their partnership in urban management, vice versa.

In other words, the results show that the more the citizens' satisfaction of an urban management performance, the more willing they are to participate in management. Based on this an according to the test of data, it can be stated that in case a new town management system intends broader, informed, and continuous partnership of citizens in an urban management structure, it should

attempt to change its performance and activities in proportion to citizens' satisfaction. Moreover, studies proved that citizens' partnership in the planning process of a new town management system requires having sufficient information on the society-related issues. In fact, if citizens do not have required awareness of the plans and decision-making of new town management, they will have no tendency for partnership. Meanwhile, most citizens believed that profitability of participatory activities was effective in their partnership and in case a reward is considered for their participatory support, citizens would further participate in new town activities. Employment centers for citizens makes people accept further responsibility and may affect citizen's sense of social belonging and improve it.

Here are some recommendations for improving citizens' participation in urban activities:

- Society structure is one of the main reasons for lack of institutionalization of participation culture as it creates an obstacle to participation. Therefore, participation culture should be developed among individuals and those who have power in a society. They should accept that people have their own share and they have right to involve in decision-making and its results. At present, people only participate in the urban management of towns through councils and they have no participation in urban management and preparation and execution procedure of urban plans. Therefore, problems of the towns require formulation of effective policies in urban governance and organization in order to reduce new town problems and prevent recurrence of previous problems, and attention to further welfare of citizens.

- The second approach is the fair distribution of income and providing citizens with facilities, as lack of people's access to facilities and the required authorities for executing their specific plans will lead to lack of interest of participants. If we expect participation activities to have useful social function for both new town citizens and its authorities, some financial preparations should be provided.

- One of the basic ways to provide grounds for participation of people is that people should express their own needs. Therefore, all urban plans should be exposed to people in a general approach and their opinions should be sought. Of course, execution of this measure by a town management requires an urban management structure to necessitate a decentralizing system in a decision-making process and to believe bottom-up planning firmly and the use of people's opinions and non-state organizations. In fact, seeking opinions of people and non-state organizations will provide necessary feedbacks for correcting urban development plans and projects.

- Training is of the important issues through which citizens are thought how to participate. Training common concepts to citizens establishes grounds for empathy, which leads to facilitation of participation among them. The necessity of training is further considered because it is often seen that citizens do not have a sound understanding of the issues, problems, laws and resources around them. Training can be done through holding workshops, in-service trainings, short-term training courses, etc.

- To develop sensitivity among citizens on a particular issue, it is much effective to attract their attention to the point that they are subject to its consequences. In other words, whenever citizens feel that they take advantage of a particular thing, they would be sensitive to it.

- Municipalities face many legal challenges for an optimal use of participatory potential of new town citizens. However, one of the major constraints is lack of certain and targeted plans in municipalities and some approaches and strategies should be considered to solve the challenges. Some approaches are establishment of people's participation offices, preparation of investment albums in this field and prepare related trainings, formulation of accurate and clear code of practices, provision of information extensively, and public trust creation.

Generally, gaining citizens trust through realizing their opinions, seeking their opinion on execution of plans, providing conditions for citizens to contact with managers to express their problems and needs, and applying participatory management are among the approaches to enhance citizens' participation.

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