

Investigating the Impact of Women's Social Base on their Political Participation: a Case Study on Women in Tehran District 2 (Shahrara)

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ABSTRACT

Objective: The connection of human in social and political groups suggests the significance of social participation of people and determines the responsibility, performance and real or ideal situation of him/her. Social human requires social participation for his/her favorite government system; therefore, without active presence in politics, he/she does not her desired position. Political participation of women is also one of the important issues that are attracting attention in various fields of social and political sciences. This study aims to investigate the impact of women's social base on their political participation.

Methodology: This research has been done using the descriptive method in a survey manner. The statistical population in this study includes 18 to 50 years old women in the region between Tehran District 2, according to its purpose. The sample size calculated by Cochran formula was 384 women selected randomly. Data were gathered using e-questionnaire and analyzed by parametric and non-parametric statistical methods using SPSS software. **Results:** Findings of this research based on regression and correlation tests and analysis of variance indicate that there is a significant political participation, women, and positive relationship between independent variables (marital status, economic base, social base, age, social base, religion educations, occupational status and level of religious adherence) with political participation of women. **Conclusion:** The results of this research based on other researches and based on the research's hypothesis and influence of independent variables on dependent variable.

1. Introduction

For the first time, political participation was introduced through voting right only for men in western societies about two hundred years ago, but political participation of women was began with a delay of about hundred years. Identifying the factors influencing on political activities of women, is an essential issue, because they constitute half of our country population and at the same proportion, they should be in politics and by their participation, accelerate the development process. It is a fact that women regardless of their social and cultural environment in which they live, have many common problems. Self-confidence limitation and negative self-perception and other psychological factors that are the result of social conditions, also form part of the women problems in political participation. To identify and eliminate the barriers of women's participation, the most suitable ones for solving the related problems, is women. Accordingly, human resources planners should utilize the maximum talents and abilities of women, by involving them in various society affairs (Abraks et al., 1988). Hence the necessity of strengthen the women's political participation, is a decisive issue for social development of our country which whatever moving towards that is slower and more defective, the history of the country's development is delayed. So that perhaps by loss of golden time, it can never be achieved. Anyway, ignoring the needs, wants and demands of women, will not beneficiary for our society development. Due to the growing presence of women in higher education and scientific communities, contexts should be provided for their presence in politics, economics and social fields. This research, sought to investigate the social factors influencing on political participation of women in Tehran District 2. There was an intermediate class of women between the westernized and traditional patterns, who did not want the westernization, but it was educated and employed. This new class was

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completely political, had anti-west feelings, and knew the modernization process of during Shah, as imperial. Fight against the westernization was a part of their struggles. Here the participation was employment of women in Tudeh party (Mosaffa, 1996). Theoretical importance: Any study is necessarily associated with understanding concept. Any widespread research will increase our information towards the various aspects of the considered subject. This research theoretically introduce us, the concept of political participation as a core component of political development, so we can see the relationship between this concept and other specific concepts and raise our analyzing power through a relationship between this concept and other concepts in terms of political participation. To state theoretical importance of this issue, it can be said that there are four separable levels; one of them includes the political participation. Three other levels include political conflicts and struggles between governments, i.e. sociology of international relations for the nature and role of government within societies and organization of movements and political parties (Abraks, 1988). The empirical and practical importance of any research is of important aspects of any research. Because by an exact understanding of any problem and being aware of the weaknesses and the importance of resolve them, the way for detailed planning to achieve the desired objectives will be provided for the relevant authorities. This issue is highlighted when we know well, the importance and benefits of political participation and disadvantages of decreasing political participation.

In general, the goal of a research is implicit in its subject. According to the subject of present study, we aim to investigate the impact of women's social base on their political participation, by reviewing related theoretical issues and gathering statistical data. Researchers have known different features for participation that these features are summarized in the following cases: 1- Participation is provided to the human equality and depends on their freedom. In a cooperative system, it is assumed that people should have the appropriate opportunity to influence on the public policies and to obtain the public jobs and the government should provide the competition based on individuals' competencies. (Nariman, 1994); 2- Political competition and participation, especially in their costly form, depend on the power. In this battle, individuals, groups and governments, may be the representative of a thing more than their egotistic interests and the competition and participation, mean to conflict between strong groups (Nariman, 1994) 3- Participation is a right for people and more than anything needs consciously actions by them. Participation is not a forced or invitational word, but is a type of rehabilitation to the weak groups along with giving them a comprehensive power (Abraks et al., 1988). 4- Participation is a process, not a fix and final product of development. Public participation makes sense, in connection with a political democracy as well as exploiting the processes of social changes and the growth that the term development refers to it (Abraks et al., 1988) 5- Participation is a quantitative and qualitative activity and has some degrees, and so, both its extent and depth is variable and important. The extent of participation without sufficient depth makes it superficial and vulnerable and depth without extent is not called the participation. Active participation, often inviting governments to undertake important reforms, which mean power and management distribution, and providing a democratic process at all levels of decision-making (Huntington, 1994); 6- Full participation entails many activities. Prior to the final decision, the participants operate in consultations that voting is only the final stage (Cohen, 1993); 7- Participation has consequences in both directions, because the real meaning of participation is that, not only the masses suffer, but also social committee is also being deprived from the potential resources that must be placed at the service. Various researches have been conducted in this regard; among them, we can refer the followings: Abraks et al., (1988) conducted a research entitled as "gender and political Participation; a comparative study on political participation of girl and boy students in Tehran by a descriptive-comparative method and its data gathered by a field method through a questionnaire (88 closed questions in a format of 43 main questions). The results of this study confirm the international findings related to political interests of women compared to men and indicate that women compared to men have less political interests and their political activities, is less actively. Fariman (1994) have performed a research aimed to study "the role of effective factors on political participation of political and technical sciences' students of the University of Tehran". This research was practical in terms of its purpose and was descriptive analytical in terms of its method and data collection has been done in a survey manner. The statistical population (N) of this research included 3920 students of political and technical sciences in University of Tehran, and in order to determine the sample size (n) based on Cochran formula, a sample of 352 students has been obtained. Based on the research findings, students of political sciences more than students of technical sciences had influenced by their political participation. On the other hand, students of technical sciences more than students of political sciences had influenced by the political climate of their faculty. In another study conducted by Stout & Rust (1993) using survey method, the impact of individual and family background of students on their political attitudes in USA, was examined. They conclude that boys compared with girls, have stated a greater tendency of participation (71% of boys and 45% of girls). In same study, there was not a significant relationship between their social classes and political knowledge (65% vs. 60%). Similarly, for middle-class boys compared with working class boys. None of the existing theories, alone is able to comprehensive investigation and analysis of the phenomenon in the present research. So a combination of popular ideas and opinions as a theoretical framework of the research is used for a more comprehensive study of the discussed phenomenon. From various ideas and opinions, the following variables are used for introducing the assumptions. Using theory of Mellers & McGraw (2001), cultural factors such as raising the educations and redistributing the wealth lead to political culture and system. Using theory of Mosaffa (1994), the theories regarding to social interaction were introduced. Using theory of Moon& Minor (2009), instrumental theories and evolutionary theories were introduced. He believes that people are the best referee of their interests. This research aims to response to these hypotheses: It seems that there is a relationship between women's social base and their political participation. Independent variables of the research are social base (social status), religious attitudes, educations, age and marital status. A division type of political participation is provided which more than the other types of participations, is matched with the situation of developing countries (especially Iran) (Mosaffa, 1995). This division is true especially in the case of Iran after the revolution. Of course, this division is not accurate and Iran society after the revolution has been involved in all three types of participation, simultaneously.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. *Dependent variables of the research Variable of social base*

In the present study, due to the nature of the subject, time limitation, the extent of statistical population and the necessity of generalizing the results to the entire statistical population (women), a survey method has been used. Therefore, in theoretical part of the research, in order to develop the theoretical principles and framework of research and regarding to literature review and previous researches, a library (documents) method has been used. Also in practical part of the research, by using field method, Quantitative survey has been performed. In a way that through a valid questionnaire (with necessary validity and reliability), basic information has been collected. In addition, the questionnaires have been completed face to face.

In this research, the statistical population according to its purpose, included 18 to 50 years old women in Tehran District 2, which according to the official statistics from the 2006 census, the number of them were 230244 people. The analysis unit is also the individuals informed of the issue, and the questionnaires have been completed through visiting and interviewing with people. Thus, the analysis unit is individual (women).

None of the existing theories, alone is able to comprehensive investigation and analysis of the phenomenon in the present research. So a combination of popular ideas and opinions as a theoretical framework of the research is used for a more comprehensive study of the discussed phenomenon. From various ideas and opinions, the following variables are used for introducing the assumptions. Using theory of Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, cultural factors such as raising the educations and redistributing the wealth lead to political culture and system. Using theory of Jin Light Lee, the theories regarding to social interaction were introduced. Using theory of Mosaffa (1993), instrumental theories and evolutionary theories were introduced. He believes that people are the best referee of their interests.

Daniel Lerner's theory explains the macro participation, but builds upon his model primarily on the design of social mobilization of Karl Deutsch. Literacy and the use of mass media have been proposed. Theory of Huntington (1991), knows the political development as political participation. Through classification of systems and models, we can approach to the social and economic development

This theory introduces the elite attitudes, awareness level, growing the education level and community, dignity variables of education, employment, cultural, entertainment and even religion organizations. Theory of Lipset introduces the variable of education levels. Theory of Milbrer and Goel knows four important factors as influencing on the participation: political motivations, social status, personal characteristics, political environment, social class or better, economic and social bases. As it was observed, various ideas and theories, know different factors influencing on level of tendency to the political participation. In this research, a combination of theories and opinions has been used and theoretical framework of the research, in the form of a model of the relationship between variables has been provided and investigated. In the present research based on presented model, the relationships between independent variables such as class base and status, occupational status, marital status, age, educations, habitat and organizational relations with dependent variable, level of tendency to the political participation, have been investigated.

2.2. *Sample size and its estimation*

In this section, we will explain respectively how to calculate the sample size and how to select a sample of women from the statistical population.

In this section, Cochran's formula was used to calculate the sample size. Calculation of the sample size using this formula, required various statistics such as variance of the research's main variable (dependent variable), and we obtained this value through a previous research and the sampling method was of probabilistic classification type.

$$n = \frac{p.q.t^2.N}{Nd^2 + p.q.t^2}$$

t = probability of speech accuracy at level of 95% statistical precision equivalent to 1.96, S₂ = variance of research's dependent variable S₂ = or = s = 2 (0.20), d = confidence interval or sampling error equivalent to 0.05, N = number of members of statistical population equivalent to 230244 people (Abraks et al., 1988).

$$t = \frac{0.5 * 0.5 * 1.96^2 * 230244}{230244 * 0.5^2 + 0.5 * 0.5 * 1.96^2} = 384$$

2.3. *Data collecting tool*

The tool used in this research to collect information and data, is questionnaire. The validity and reliability of this questionnaire have been confirmed after performing pre-test. Establishing a sense of trust in respondents, indicating the confidentiality and preservation of their responses, seemed necessary. Therefore it is tried to explain the nature and purpose of the research in the form of an introduction at the beginning of the questionnaire and emphasizing that the responses only are used in scientific research, so their honesty as well as the results, were raised.

2.4. *Results of research's two-variable statistics Age and political participation*

To examine the relationship between individuals' age with political participation, Pearson's r test was used. This is due to the interval nature of the measured variables. Table 1 demonstrates the results of testing the relationship between individuals' age with political participation.

Table 1. The relationship between individuals' age with political participation

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Age
Political participation	Correlation coefficient	0.103
	Significance level	0.04
	Number of observations	384

2.5. Marital status and political status

To examine the relationship between a two-state nominal variable (marital status) and an interval variable (political participation) in situations that two states present in a variable, are independent of each other, the test of difference in means to t can be used with independent samples. To conduct this test, two stages are performed. The descriptive statistics of the variable of political participation is shown from table 2. Table 3 demonstrates the testing the means' difference.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the variable of political participation separately for each marital status.

Standard error	Standard deviation	Mean difference	mean	numbers	groups	Variable's statistic
1.35	15.7	5.09	44.42	135	single	Political participation
1.10	17.3		49.52	245	married	

Table 3. Testing the means' difference and homogeneity of the variable of political participation separately for each marital status.

Mean difference	Significance level	Degrees of freedom	Quantity	Significance level	Variable's statistic
5.09	0.005	378	2.8	4.2	Political participation

2.6. Education levels and political participation

To examine the relationship between a variable at level of multi states rank measuring (education) and a variable at level of interval measuring (political participation), the test of one-way analysis of variance (one-way A nova) can be used as can be seen from table 4.

Table 4. The results of test of one-way analysis of variance separately for each education level

Significance level	F Ratio	Mean of squares	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Source of variations
0.00	5.1	1409.94	5	7049.721	between Group
		271.36	374	101489.58	Within group
			379	108539.305	Total

2.7. Religious attitudes and political participation

To examine the relationship between individuals' religious attitudes with political participation, Pearson's r test was used as can be seen from table 5.

Table 5. The results of testing the relationship between individuals' religious attitudes with political participation.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Religious attitudes
Political participation	Correlation coefficient	0.461
	Significance level	0.00
	Number of observations	384

2.8. Social base and political participation

To examine the relationship between social base and political participation, Pearson's r test was used. This is due to the interval nature of the measured level of two variables. The results obtained of this test, are shown in table (6).

Table 6. The results of testing the relationship between social base and political participation.

Independent variable	Dependent variable	Social base
Political participation	Correlation coefficient	0.157
	Significance level	0.002
	Number of observations	384

2.9. Examining the hypothesis 1

It seems that there is a significant relationship between individual's age and political participation. Our implicit assumption in this study was that by increasing the age, individual's political participation is also increased. The existence of a significant relationship between these variables has been confirmed.

2.10. Examining the hypothesis 2

It seems that there is a significant relationship between marital status and political participation. Our implicit assumption in this study was that the existence of a significant relationship between these variables has been confirmed and this means that the assumption of means' difference, will be confirmed and it can be stated that there is a significant relationship between mean values of dependent variable separately for independent variables (marital status).

2.11. Examining the hypothesis 3

It seems that there is a significant relationship between education and political participation. Our implicit assumption in this study was that the existence of a significant relationship between these variables has been confirmed.

2.12. Examining the hypothesis 6

It seems that there is a significant relationship between religious attitudes and political participation. Our implicit assumption in this study was that the existence of a significant relationship between these variables has been confirmed. The sign is positive and the relationship direction is direct.

2.13. Examining the hypothesis 7

It seems that there is a significant relationship between social base and political participation. Our implicit assumption in this study was that the existence of a significant relationship between these variables has been confirmed. According to the absolute value of Pearson's correlation coefficient, the sign is positive and the relationship direction is direct. In other words, by increasing the social base, political participation is also increased.

3. Results and Discussion

The variables of marital status and education level do not show a significant difference regarding political interest. The students of political sciences are more than the students of technical sciences, influenced by their education field. But the students of technical sciences, are more influenced by political climate of their faculty. The relationship between education locations with political participation in both groups was not significant.

The motivations of the students in both groups for political participation were different.

On political participation of women and students with a Descriptive-analytical approach is presented. Although the components of political culture in Iran such as the directorate culture, nationality, tolerance and intolerance, violence and political aversion, have reduced the political participation of women and students throughout history, however, in specific historical periods, political participation has increased. Like in constitutional revolution that the practical political participation had dramatically increased and even women for the first time began participate in political activities.

The results of the present research show that most of these women have academic educations and belong to the nuclear families from urban areas.

The statistical population in this study includes 18 to 50 years old women in Tehran District 2 (Shahrara).

The research method in practical part was field method and quantitative survey and in theoretical part was library (documents) method.

The sample size calculated by Cochran formula was 384 women selected randomly. Data were gathered using a questionnaire and analysed by parametric and non-parametric statistical methods using SPSS software. Findings of this research based on regression and correlation tests and analysis of variance indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between independent variables (marital status, economic base, social base, age, educations, occupational status and level of religious adherence) with political participation of women.

Research method is questionnaire type and completed face to face. The sample size calculation was done by Cochran's formula and sampling was of probability-classification type.

4. Conclusion

Analyzing methods in this study have been conducted in two parts consist of descriptive statistics and inferential analysis methods and the results of research's multi-variables statistics (regression analysis). The results of this research based on other researches and based on the research's hypothesis and influence of independent variables on dependent variable. This method enters the variables into the model, one by one. Independent variables such as age, marital status, religious attitudes, social bases, education Because the significance level is equal to $\text{sig}=0.00$, and because the significance level is less than

0.05, then independent variables are influencing on dependent variable. Overall result: Age, education level, social base, sociability, civilization, religious attitudes, marital status are influencing on political participation. Practical suggestions:

- 1 - Creating a 20 to 40% quota for women presence in parliaments, ministries and agencies;
- 2 - Financial assistance to women candidates in electoral processes;
- 3 - Changing the traditional attitudes of families towards girls through continuing education to look equal to male and female children in egalitarian behavior between them;
- 4 - Equal rights for men and women in the social fields;
- 5 - Long-term cultural planning for empowerment and political participation of women in society;
- 6 – The public understanding of political system's actions and activities should be increased, it should be explained to people that what actions and how, the government and political system do and it should be resolved public misunderstandings regarding the political system, and it should be solved all problems of people in the political process.
- 7 – The fields of participation between the public and various organizations should be provided and the causes of depression and social isolation and alienation should be demolished.

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