

Review Article

## The Role of Public Participation in Sustainable Urban Development

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**Abstract:** Sustainable development, on the one hand, helps preserve the environment, on the other hand, it helps to maintain the social and economic structures of the city. In the context of planning urban development, the economic, social, cultural and environmental objectives are at the top of their policies, and the realization of these goals requires interaction between people and the state, the presence and participation of people is necessary and inevitable in the sustainable development. Indeed, although participation in the sense of cooperation has a long history in Iran, it has not yet been institutionalized in our society, and the formation of city councils and people's representatives is one of the measures that reveals the necessity for people to participate in urban affairs with a focus on sustainable development to resolve many problems of the city and, by studying the experiences of most countries in the field of citizen participation in urban affairs, and the effect of this participation on sustainable urban development, one can consider the necessities of measures for the participation of people in urban affairs, which emphasizes that sustainable development is a fundamental concept and plays a vital role in sustainable urban development. Reflecting on the needs of the current generation and preserving resources and wealth for future generations, this paper addresses the challenges of citizen participation in city decision-making and urban governance and planning.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development, urban development, public participation, indigenous community.

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most important issues faced by most countries is sustainable development, as developing countries face serious problems, such as pollution, the unending expansion of housing, transportation problems, land use planning, solid waste management and health issues. In dealing with these issues, other problems in the field of urbanization and the environment, such as marginalization and slumming will be followed. In this regard, the government plays an important role in the implementation of policies that correct the disadvantages and serious problems of the city and improves urban infrastructure and services with the participation of citizens.

Management decentralization, the assignment of planning responsibilities from government to local institutions and, finally, the participation of people in urban development processes through the formulation of formal rules and processes for obtaining public opinion on urban planning and management in developed or developing countries is seriously raised. According to Marx Weber, being a citizen means the ability of people to participate in decision-making,

policy-making and participation in the electing leaders, and their special privileges include citizenship rights, including market monopolies, free trade rights, exchange rights, and the right to reduce competing trade, participation in judicial affairs and special situations for purposes like military purposes. From the point of view of economic rights, the most important civil privileges in the form of formal rights did not mean the right to have citizens' semi-free associations, but the guarantor of the mastery of the city. Thus Weber is more concerned with the political rights of citizens, such as the right to vote and the election of the deputies, and considers the participation of citizenship as an essential pillar in this regard [6].

A modern citizen, in terms of citizenship rights, has to meet commitments because citizenship has a wider concept than urbanization, and we consider passive citizens as lacking in civil personality. The foundation of participation that is raised in the process of civil society is based on the right and duty. Participation plays a decisive role in individual identity. Participation is the basis for transforming a person into a citizen. Participation has two active and passive aspects; active

participation is considered citizens' right and passive participation is their duty. The process of maturing the urbanization culture is formed in this continuum [3]. In Iran, there must be a mutual legal acceptance between the citizen and the city for the development and implementation of metropolitan management. The two institutions can create the main pillar of urban management: First, the City Council and second municipalities that are at the head of the executive pyramid.

In our country, with the emergence of new issues such as: legality, meritocracy, religious pluralism, people-centeredness, privatization, centrality of justice and conducting elections for the Islamic Consultative Assembly, it seems that authorities gradually move forward to practical participation. But it's a long way. Therefore, the paper seeks to present existing facts and effective strategies in urban affairs for the sake of excellence in metropolitan management.

#### **The concept of participation and the citizenship culture in the urban system**

Applying people participation in urban planning is possible when the system allows to use public opinion and be organized in such a way that enables people's involvement in the planning process. Therefore, it includes the most important change required in the methods of direct referral to the general vote in the review and approval of programs. On the other hand, promoting and introducing the program and objectives to people leads to better understanding of the urban planning system and will help the planner pay more attention to the public interest and broader participation of the people, and on the other hand people cooperate with the urban planner in implementing and realizing the participation program. Therefore, it will be necessary that the new urban planning system in the country, while leaving the tight planning framework behind the closed rooms and focusing on decision-making from top to bottom, regardless of the demands of the local people, has a popular concept and urban planning along to be in perfect coordination with crystallizing the views of people and translating the macro policies of the state. The concept of culture is referred to as a set of knowledge, norms, beliefs, traditions and history of a nation that is somehow inspired by their souls and represents their personality. The first step towards the success of participatory management is to explain the position and role of people in participatory planning processes, this process is accessible in three stages: organizing public institutions, training and equipping, and ultimately the presence and participation of people, which are preconditions for preparing people to be involved in this process. The public participation, which is a kind of decentralization in the administration of affairs,

promotes human development and is the factor of equality and realization of social-political justice [2].

#### **The effect of participation culture in sustainable urban development**

Sustainable development is part of development studies that relates to economic, political and sociological sciences. The concept of sustainable urban development as the most important center for human settlements, and where it is the most threat to destruction of resources, has been more than ever considered, as sustainability in the city is not consistent with the dominant trends seen in urban development. City in civil life consists of three main pillars: city, body of the city and urban management. Citizens and urban management have an objective nature and the body of the city is a passive nature. Man has a desire for citizenship because of his nature and needs civil life and urban management is required to organize and manage the body of the city [1].

Proper education of citizens and promotion of their citizenship culture can be the basis for creating a sustainable city for the future. On the other hand, enjoying citizen participation in this process can also play a significant role.

#### **Organizational techniques and models of urban participation**

According to Marshall, citizenship is a base that is given to all people who are a full-fledged member of the community. These people all have equal status, rights, duties, and assignments appropriate to this base. The rights and duties of citizenship are also protected by the law [5]. The a distinguishing feature of participatory techniques is the extent to which participants participate in decision making. Understanding this relationship is very important. Because managing the expectation of all those involved in the participation process is vital.

#### **Identification of citizen participation capacities to reach the utopia**

Today, the participation of all citizens in urban activities ensures the development of services in municipalities. This development must social behaviors confirms it. Urban participation is affected by a variety of factors that must be considered in the adoption of urban participatory approach and urban planning. necessarily be by people and not for the people. After the Renaissance, a stream of utopian thinkers have emerged who in following humanists believed that: humans have the ability to control their lives and give it whatever form they want. The ideas of thinkers such as Descartes on rationalizing

In this context, the main preconditions for the realization of urban participation are:

1. Existence of urban participation culture (cultural education and promotion)
2. The provision of economic, social, political, cultural and urban rights structures appropriate to and consistent with urban participation at the local (urban and rural), regional (provincial) and national (macro level) levels.
3. The existence of an urban management system (municipalities and city council), "participatory-willing, participatory-seeking and participatory-developing"

Article 100 of the Constitution focuses on the role of direct people's participation, along with council supervision, in promoting swift progress in social, economic, developmental, health, cultural, educational and other welfare programs [4]. On the other hand, the experience of councils shows that, despite the predictions made in the laws for the participation of citizens, this partnership did not yet take an objective and empirical form.

Another major bitter reality is the lack of adequate political and social growth in the citizens. This is especially true in relation to the deprived areas. Lack of education, age characteristics, constraints on women, especially in less developed regions, lack of recognition of citizens for the benefit of participation, etc. are among the factors that contribute to the failure to succeed. So, as citizens feel stronger for participatory activities, in the same degree, their participation will be added.

#### **Evaluation of strategies and proposals to strengthen citizen participation in metropolitan management**

Participatory planning focuses on the role of power and power holders (civilians and urban authorities) in the decision-making process and metropolitan management, to take steps to enhance the partnership, taking into account existing mechanisms. Societies that have the spirit of partnership and participation in the best position, will undoubtedly have more success in development and optimal use of their resources and facilities. In order to achieve this goal, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Changing the authoritarian attitude of urban authorities and empowering citizens
- Strengthening social trust to achieve the development and estimation of citizen participation in urban affairs
- Motivating collective activities and eliminating deprivation based on social justice standards in the city
- Providing a think tank to take advantage of citizen counseling and the formation of work groups related to urban affairs

- Encouraging group activities and sponsorship chants by municipalities, along with solid support from the private sector
- Focus on group training rather than individual training to promote the culture of citizenship
- Participation through civil society and more development of NGOs
- The presence of young specialist forces alongside experienced forces for coherent urban planning
- The possibility of criticizing the performance of city authorities and supporting the scholars
- Identifying the city's cross-cultural relationship to the citizens and the responsibilities they each have

In order to achieve sustainable urban development, conditions should be provided to enable the establishment of sustainable human development and improvement of social well-being of citizens. In this context, the establishment of social justice, climatic design coordinating with the human environment, strengthening social solidarity structures such as commitment and responsibility, strengthening social and family foundations and restoring the public environment and creating a structural order in urban space for aesthetic perception and improving the utilization of urban spaces and increasing citizenship satisfaction and integrating the visual structure of the urban environment and landscape can be referred

Sustainable design in urban structure is based on three basic principles:

Principle 1: Resource saving, which seeks to reduce the use of non-renewable resources in urban areas' function and structure by optimal use of resources.

Principle 2: Based on the life-cycle design that includes the environmental consequences and of the entire life cycle of urban construction resources from the stage of preparation to returning to nature.

Principle 3: Human design that is rooted in the need to preserve the chain elements of the biological system, and follows the continuity of human life and survival.

#### **Principles and characteristics of sustainable development**

From Brent land's report, first two principles are known: intergenerational equality and cross-generational equality in the provision of needs, and then by developing these principles, principles such as, intergenerational equality, intra-generational equality, the protection of natural environment, the use of the least renewable resources, the economic survival and diversity of the self-dependence community, meeting the basic needs and individual well-being of the people

[12] Given these principles, it is seen that human beings and aspects of his life are considered the most and sustainable development tries to eliminate poverty, supply welfare and livelihoods of people, promote the protection of women's rights and the revival of the natural environment. In fact, the subject of sustainable human development is that human beings as the focal point of development, is not only the participant, but also a contributor to beneficiary of the development right [8]

Human beings have the fundamental right to liberty, equality and proper living conditions in an environment where its quality allows a decent and healthy life and is responsible for the protection and improvement of the environment for today and tomorrow generations. This is the first principle of Declaration of Stockholm, and following it, international organizations and governments, recognized the environmental rights as a human right [15]. Agenda 21 also mentions fourteen fundamental principles that include understanding the value of the environment, the centrality of human, the attention to the future, the principle of equality, participation, appropriate demographic policies, women and their role, peace and support for identity and culture [16].

#### **Dimensions of sustainable development**

Sustainable development, due to the broad theme, includes extensive aspects and its principles emphasize the following:

- Social and economic dimensions, including: accelerating sustainable development in developing countries, poverty alleviation, changing consumption pattern, demographic changes, providing health, providing adequate housing and integrating environmental planning and development
- Resources, including: atmospheric protection, proper land use, forest protection, desertification, mountain development, agriculture and sustainable development, biodiversity, sustainable biotechnology, ocean conservation, water conservation and management, toxic and hazardous waste management, solid waste and sewage and nuclear waste
- Popular participation, including: participation of all segments in the development process, attention to women, youth and children, indigenous people participation, nongovernmental organizations, the role of local authorities, workers and employees in different fields
- Executive methods, including: financial resources and their finance, technology transfer, science in development service, general education, capacity building of

required institutions, rules and regulations and information required [9]

Today, instability is spreading at different levels in human life, and humans and living beings have been affected by it and damaged [11].

It seems that the emphasis of futurists on the balance of four important factors, population, energy, resources and environmental pollution is neglected, and as a result of human effort for the development that is necessary for his life, we must speak of environmental crises and challenges [13]. When stressing on endless environmental accumulations, we cannot find an experience of environmental sustainability in the whole of the industrialized economies, and consider the term "sustainable development" as averbiage, we must redouble efforts and make the impossible possible to achieve the sustainability. It should be taken into account that human survival requires taking into account the current needs as well as the needs of future generations [15]

The need to acquire new knowledge to access new information resources and discover new perspectives and strategies with new tools, techniques and communications, for the comprehensive development and the need for accurate management for sustainability decision-making and processes are two basic arguments of the challenge of sustainability [14]

#### **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In the present day, participation in all territories plays a major role, and citizens, individually and collectively, want to rule their destinies. The most important aspects of participation are providing the necessary preconditions for using the potential financial, scientific, intellectual capacities and so on. The delivery of affairs to citizens requires a spirit of partnership and collective work that there were so far no proper ground for it in our society. The place of participation in urban planning laws in Iran is carried out in the framework of various laws and regulations. These laws and regulations are drafted and developed from the sources of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, the Government, the Supreme Council for Urban Development and Architecture and the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development. The regulations regarding the determination of the status of people and councils in the urban planning process include two groups of regulations regarding the determination of the scope of duties and authority of the councils and the provisions for determining the scope of urban planning, including the process of preparation and approval. In these two groups of laws, reference is made to the role of people and councils, and the requirements for interaction between the body of planning and approval of urban programs and popular institutions such as councils. The

results of this paper show that among the factors that prevent rapid expansion of participation is the lack of a program that provides a collaborative field and facilitates its understanding and results in facilitation of metropolitan management. If we want to look for an appropriate tool to create active participation of citizens, we can consider attracting citizens' trust by city officials as the most important tool. In fact, today, we cannot act based on past developmental approaches, urban issues reached a level of complexity of content and performance that require the use of all citizenship forces in the process of metropolitan management, and citizens' participation plays an important role at all stages of the plan (before, during and after the implementation). Also, all the experts and urban planners in this principle agree that the lack of sufficient expertise in the affairs of the city and the municipalities in the composition of council members is one of the most important urban planning and management challenges that the lack of realization of the citizen participation in the affairs of the city is among them. Indeed, the success of all participatory programs requires the beliefs of policymakers, planners and urban managers about the positive effect of citizen participation in solving problems and issues that improve the quality of their livelihoods.

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