Public participation for sustainable urban planning In Case of Iran

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Abstract

Sustainable design and sustainable urban planning is in need of social sustainability, and social sustainability is in need of citizen’s participation. Therefore public participation plays a crucial role in the way to achieve sustainability. Meanwhile 8th Goal of United Nation in Millennium Development Goals is: “Develop a global partnership for development” and city managers has been taken into consideration participation in recent years. Based on the research theoretical framework, the design process can be summarized in to four stages, thus the participation process should be in four stages too, ranging from: 1-Schematic design 2- Design 3- Construction 4- Operation.

The goal of this paper is to study the situation of public participation in urban planning and renovation projects of Iran which has been fulfilled in recent years. The main question is about determining the phase of people’s participations in the design process of renovation projects. Relying upon the research data analyses, the achieved results would be considered as the suggested principles for the future people's participation and to achieve sustainable urban planning. It seems that the efforts to attract the people’s participation would be more efficient when the participation process is executed at the project appropriate time and phase, in which peoples' participation may result in social sustainability in order to meet suitability in urban planning projects.

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1. Introduction

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8th Goal of United Nation in Millennium Development Goals is: "Develop a global partnership for development". That means: Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system. Meanwhile Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality and involves a greater degree of economic egalitarianism and social justice has been identified as one of the most important goals of social progress. Consequently participation is part of social justice, and this is required in all of developing countries such as Iran, strongly. Especially when, developing countries try to approach to Millennium Development Goals.

Distressed areas as historical and cultural heritage of community for providing community development goals are considered by government and city managers in recent years. Meanwhile some managers aware of spiritual values of these areas and know having the standard house is right of all people. Sociologists more than anyone else attract to urban reconstruction of social effects on the public, increase of jobs and improve the quality of life, impact on residents and cultural revitalize of environment. The subject of revitalizing of distressed areas directly relates to local residents and usage of people participation is effective in presentation and approval of the projects. Therefore people participation is necessary for reach to Millennium Development Goals and social justice.

2. Participation for Sustainable Design

2-1 Sustainability & Sustainable in design

Environmental problems have become a worldwide concern for economists, as is witnessed by the development of many theories and policies aimed at driving the economy towards a 'sustainable economy'. As recognized in many studies, a high percentage of the world population lives in cities, where quality of life and environmental concerns undermine all advantages associated with agglomeration economies. The city is in fact by definition an 'artifact environment', where well-established concepts of 'environmental economics' (such as natural capital stock, natural environment) can hardly be transferred and applied, in the way they are theoretically formulated. (Camagni & Capello & Nijkamp, 1998) Meanwhile the possible intervention policies which may be developed to achieve a balanced 'sustainable development' in terms of new policy principles that should govern the 'sustainable city'.

2-2 Parties to Be Involved in Participation and Goals of Participation

Individuals or interest groups who will or should be involved in the participation activity being planned must be identified. Generally, people who will be affected by design and planning decisions
should be involved in the process of making those decisions. (Sanoff, 2000:9) In addition people and designers and other parties that can involve in participation are investors and legislators who each play a particular role in design process.

With people participation, residents are actively involved in the development process therefore there will be a better maintained physical environment, greater public spirit, more users satisfaction, significant financial saving, incensement of their trust and confidence in organizations. Thus they will accept decisions and plans and corporate within the projects executed or seeking solutions for problems.

3. Inference Mechanism

3-1 Theoretical Framework

Design process is a useful way to analyze the participation of people. Different ideas are available about design process that sometimes are similar and sometimes are complementary. Below we refer to the samples:

Miller (1995) believes that design process may be categorized in three sections .i.e.
1- Basic step (basics, research, programming etc.) 2- Design step (concepts, pre-design summery, sketching, modelling completion etc.) 3- Post design steps.

From Edith Cherry (1999) view point this process includes three steps:
1- Preparing for programming: In this step are done general studies about how to design and its methods by considering the subject. In this section design group check the main points and base on it evaluate question analysis method and problem relation with site plan. (Cherry, 1999: 3-46) 2- Architectural design: In this step, studies which were done in previous section, converted into architectural design documents and proposed appropriate response for each of the questions and presented architectural process for each of design needs. Result of this step is production of documents that based on these can be implemented the project. (Cherry, 1999: 81-264) 3- Construction implementation: In this step design documents will be implemented by construction group(s) in given site. Construction implementation includes in site preparation, plan implementation and building operation. (Cherry, 1999: 277-290)

And according to the viewpoints that cited in above we believe that design process consists of four sections that they include: 1- Schematic design (phase 0) 2- Design (phase 1&2) 3- Construction (phase 3) 4- Operation: maintenance, repair (phase 4)

3.1. Scope of Research

Scope of this research is the explanation of citizen’s participation position in urban renovation projects in Iran experience. To obtain this goal, two important actions should be taken place: 1. Identification of the position of citizen’s participation in design process and urban renovation projects implementation. 2. Analysis of the strength and weakness of each projects based on citizen’s participation status in projects.

3-3 Research Questions
1- In which stages of design process are taking place people participation in urban renovation projects?
2- Is the current situation of public participation in urban renovation projects of Iran in desirable trend which lead us to a social sustainability?

3.2. Research Method

This research have been done by the "case studies and combined strategies" research method. After the introduction of theoretical framework, the case studies have been studied through the comparative analysis, and the weak and strong points of this kind of people participation in the projects will be discussed. (Groat&Wang, 2002: 341-372)

3.3. Case Study Selection

In order to answer the research questions, 100 cases selected from the most important cases of urban renovation projects which enjoyed the people participation in design or implementation process. These cases are selected from the most famous projects of urban renovation projects in Iran; therefore those could possibly show the characteristics of participation in case of Iran. Addition to this amount of cases has enough validity and reliability.

4. 4- Sample Analysis

4-1- Sample Selection

There is not enough opportunity to present the results of all 100 cases, therefore two projects selected from above projects to show the way those are analyzed. It is very important to notice that the conclusion is based on the achievements of all 100 cases, however the result of 20 important cases mentioned in the paper directly. These samples are selected from different cities of to show the diversity of the samples. In each of these two projects used one of the ways of participation that can show some of participation methods which may be used in Iran.

4-2 Nawab project, Tehran, Iran

Nawab highway design ideas were introduced as the main axis that connected Chamran highway in the north of Tehran to the south of Tehran since 1966. Tehran municipality was considering highway construction on its agenda since 1991.

Nawab highway implementation began from 1995. Approximate length of this route is 6 kms and minimum useful width of this is 50m. Occupied surfaces for highway & junctions construction is 336317 m², green and residential spaces around the highway 252855 m² and service centers and proposal users is 88400 m² that occupied 667572 m² of ground eventually. Nawab highway implementation was required huge investment therefore was introduced selling the participation bonds in this project for the first time and municipality could construct about 6kms. According to the listed cases as design process can be concluded that in Nawab project people’s participation is in third stage of design process and only was been for financing. (Bahreini, Aminzadeh, 2006:19)

4.4 Joobareh project, Isfahan, Iran

Joobareh neighbourhood is from Isfahan old neighbourhoods that located in historical context. This
neighbourhood is adjacent atiq square and Isfahan Jame mosque. In this site, long life buildings, irregularly shaped land and narrow routes are such problems. In renovating distressed areas goal, Central Housing and Development Corporation introduced a project as Joobareh cooperative housing model. Due to attract the people’s participation importance in investment in distressed areas renovation for the first time, first renovation services office (public participation office) was founded in Isfahan and Joobareh in 2007. Feasibility studies communicate with people for optimum use of resident's ability, promote people awareness and providing people’s participation fields and providing rehabilitation services are some of this project goals.

![Fig. 3. Nawab highway project in Iran (Authors)](image)

![Fig. 4. Joobareh neighbourhood project in Iran (Authors)](image)

5. Discussion

The quantitative analyses of renovation projects with participation approach in Iran have led to some meaningful results and conclusions. In related tables a considerable number of famous and controversial urban renovation projects are listed, which have been done in recent years. The layer and situation of people participation, and its status marked (table 2).
Table 1. Projects condition review in Iran (Authors)

| Project name | Steps | Fields of Participation | Problems | Proposed Solution |
|--------------|-------|--------------------------|----------|-------------------|
| Nawab        | -     | 1. Building construction 1. Budget shortage | Neighbourhood recognition & revitalization by providing the questionnaire |
|              | -     | 2. Accommodate residents 2. Residents immigration |          |
| Joobareh     | *     | 1. Historical context 1. Building construction | People participation in schematic design and design |
|              | -     | 2. Indigenous culture 2. Accommodate residents |          |

Table 2. Urban renovation projects in Iran (Authors)

| Projects            | Step1 | Step2 | Step3 | Step4 | Description                                                                 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1- Sirous (2006-Tehran) | •     |       |       |       | Prepared the questionnaire for awareness of people requests.                |
| 2- Khoub bakht (2008-Tehran) | •     | •     |       |       | Integration several houses and create more infrastructure, setup local office for awareness of people requests. |
| 3- Nawab (1995-Tehran)   |       | •     |       |       | Sale participation bonds.                                                   |
| 4- Joobareh (2004- Isfahan) | •     |       |       |       | Establishment public participation Office.                                   |
| 5- Darb-e-kooshk (2005- Isfahan) |       | •     |       |       | Land providing by residents.                                                |
| 6- Joolan (2003-Hamedan)  |       | •     |       |       | Integration several houses and create more infrastructure.                 |
| 7- Astaneh (Shiraz)      | •     |       |       |       | Informing to people about project and investment.                          |
| 8- Central context (Mashhad) |       | •     |       |       | Sale national participation bonds.                                           |
| 9- Old context (Kermanshah) | •     | •     | •     |       | Participation in schematic design, design, construction and operation       |
| Projects                  | Step1 | Step2 | Step3 | Step4 | Description                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10- Torbat-e-Heydariyeh  | •     |       |       |       | Collecting data from people, people participated in regenerate places and changed these to local park, elected honorary mayors of people for close contact with them |
| (Khorasan)               |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 11- Feiz abad            |       | •     |       |       | School construction from public donation.                                                                                                    |
| (Kermanshah)            |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 12- Holy shrine context  |       |       | •     | •     | Sale participation bonds, investment in private buildings and public parking.                                                                |
| (Mashhad)               |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 13- Amar-e-Yasser        | •     |       | •     |       | Establishment cooperatives of design and construction, people helped in public places construction.                                           |
| (Qom)                   |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 14- Qale Abkooh          |       |       |       | •     | Create groups of people like healthy city institution and neighbourhood cultural house, people institution monitors the design project.         |
| (Mashhad)               |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 15- Oodlajan             | •     |       |       |       | Hold the meeting with individuals and interest groups and collecting data from them.                                                         |
| (Tehran)                |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 16- Saboon paz khaneh    |       | •     |       |       | Collected the initial data from people by questionnaire                                                                                     |
| (Tehran)                |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 17- Semnan               |       |       |       | •     | People invested in the project.                                                                                                             |
|                          |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 18- Doolab               | •     |       |       | •     | Give credit facilities to people, constitute the renovation headquarter.                                                                     |
| (Tehran)                |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 19- Shahre Kord          |       |       |       | •     | People invested in the project and participated in constructed some public spaces.                                                           |
|                          |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |
| 20- Bandar Abbass        |       |       | •     | •     | Construction the small park by people’s participation, Maintenance of park entrusted to people.                                              |
|                          |       |       |       |       |                                                                                                                                              |

Statistical study shows that in renovation project that have been done in Iran, in 56% of these projects people’s participation have been done in construction phase and especially in investment stage, in 27% of these projects participation have been taken place in schematic design stage, in 10% of those participation
have been done in operation stage and only in 6% of these cases participation have been in design step. According to these results, it can be concluded that real participation is not done in urban renovation projects in Iran.

6. Conclusion

Despite the achievement and recognition in participation field, a long road lies ahead. Main argument is that everything will lead to dead-end if actual participation does not happen and will encounter with problems in all of fields. In distressed areas participation is a main issue because participation is a way to meet social sustainability. Regarding to fundamentals of sustainable development, not only reconstruction is not enough, but also people’s participation is important too. Sometimes pseudo-participation may result in public satisfaction but it may not be fruitful to meet sustainable developments goals in urban planning projects.

Through perspective of urban planning projects, a real participation may be placed in four stage of design process in order to meet an influential participation which may result in decision making. By reviewing of the renovation projects in Iran, we can cite parameters for reach to better sustainable environment in the future that people participate greater in reconstruction projects:

- **1.** Participation in all stages from schematic design to operation when realized that codified programs will exist for this topic, and the full participation of influential groups and interest groups in this process are required these policies aim to achieve what developmental economists refer to as more equality of opportunity than may currently exist in some societies and suitable urbanism as human rights.
- **2.** Design in distressed areas should be for people and with people and distance that exist currently between participating groups in process design should be eliminated.
- **3.** In renovation projects special attention should be regarded in cultural context in the region and building fabric in the site. In distressed areas rehabilitation must be regarded in this point that future residents should be current residents to prevent people immigration to other distressed areas.
- **4-** People should be involved in a real participation paradigm to meet social sustainability and it means people should be a part of decision making process and should be involved in all parts of design process stages from schematic design till operation phase.

Fig. 5. The role of public participation in sustainable urban planning (Authors)
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