



The role of citizens' participation in the reconstruction and modernization of the urban decay of Babol

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ABSTRACT

Today, participation is the main key of successful urban management. In our country, since the beginning of urbanization, the participation of people has not been taken seriously and various urban plans and programs have been developed without the participation of the people. The purpose of this article is to investigate the role of citizens' participation in the reconstruction and modernization of the urban decay of Babol. Required data was collected through field studies, field surveys, and completed questionnaire by a Cochran formula with a sample size of over 340 citizens in a simple random sampling method and was analyzed by using Chi-square tests. The results show that there is a significant relationship between citizens' participation and the organization and reconstruction of the urban decay of Babol. The participation of citizens in organizing and reconstructing of the urban decay of Babol is not desirable, and the promotion of the economic and social base of citizens in the old context has contributed to the effective organization of the urban decay.

Keywords: Citizen's Participation, Reconstruction, Modernization, Urban Decay, Urban Management, Babol Town.

1. Introduction

The existence of urban decay in different parts of the city has caused the debates are raised related to development and modernization in various aspects of physical, cultural and social issues. Reconstruction and urban regeneration are often referred to as a process through which the urban environment undergoes a change. At present, the three criteria presented by the Supreme Council for Urbanism and Architecture of Iran - micro ethnic, instability and impenetrability - are considered as a common and approved definition of urban decay in various executive organizations. Citizen's participation in modernization and reconstruction projects will play a very important role in their advancement, while the lack of coordination between the demands and needs of the people and their executive plans is a factor in the formation of successive problems. The citizen's participation in their various fields is one of the important signs of the citizen's culture. The old urban decay is not limited to its physical organization, but its inhabitants also form an important part of their cultural and historical identity and richness; Therefore, attention to human factors along with the physical factors creates new ways to improve and reconstruct urban tissues, including the need to use the participation of residents in the process of intervention in the tissue, such as reconstruction, renovation and strengthening. Therefore, proper recognition of participation, its methods, as well as the level of participation, benefits and limitations, as well as the necessary basis for increasing participation before any action on urban tissues is necessary.

2. Literature Review

Today, with the increasing of urbanization, urban problems have become more and more commonplace in the cities of the country. These problems have undermined the logical relations of urbanization and have greatly reduced the overall quality and livelihoods of them and provided them with instability by affecting all aspects of urbanization (Arabshahi, 28: 2003). The old urban decay is one of the major issues in all the cities of the country, each of them requires intervention and correction conforms to human and natural conditions.

Interference in the old textures of Iranian cities began with the coming of Reza Khan. Babol is one of the cities that has been affected by this move. Most of the implemented projects have a damaging effect on the texture and its inhabitants, which requires more attention from planners in this regard. The most important activities and researches in this field are as the following:

Narimani, Masoud (2000), in his book titled "Improvement of Historical Texture", has presented a systematic way of organizing the old urban decay and has raised the experiences of some countries in restoring the old urban decay.

Abbasalizadeh (2005) concluded that the city of Boshehr has two separate structures that have been constructed in spite of the city's climatic conditions and caused the city to have a disturbed map. On the other hand, the imposed war has destroyed this texture.

Kuchaki, Gholam (2007), in his thesis, identified the spatial-physical structure and identified the destructive and limiting factors of old urban decay in the city of Khorramabad, and concluded that the reason of the urban decay was environmental and physical development factors.

In 2007, Abozar Vafa'i concluded that in addition to the fact that the city of Kashan is known as the historical city, what changed the old texture of Kashan and caused urban decay was the general structure of the city changed from single-core to multi core.

Yousefi, Leila (2008) in her thesis, addresses the changes in the Reyhan and Imam Street districts of in Qazvin city and concluded that the environmental factors of the physical development of the city and the migration of residents have led to the transformation of these two neighborhoods.

The overseas studies also suggests valuable resources, so that kayak in a study of the causes of instability of urban decay in the city of Venice, Italy, also points out that strengthening the positive aspects of old texture increases the durability and integrity In the urban space organization (Kayak, 2005,78).

In 2008, Smit recognized the importance of developing a set of measures, such as drafting laws, attracting popular support and contributions in the stability of these kinds of textures (Smit, 2008, 66).

In 2010, Alvino at the Institute of Urban and Regional Studies in the United States of New Jersey indicated that improving the city's usage and activities for safety, concentration, and adaptability are the approaches to sustainability of urban decay (Alvino, 2010, 50).

In 2010, at the Italian Historical Preservation Society, Salvatore meanwhile the exploration of the valuable textures in the city of Rome stated that the combination of old and new plans in urban areas, preventing inappropriate usage, focusing on identity in urban planning, and balancing urban spaces, infrastructure actions of urban structures against earthquake, the method of economic feasibility, and the proper distribution of services, are among the most effective measures for the restoration and sustainability of urban decay (Salvatore, 2010, 43).

Since the old texture in most cities is the core of the city's formation, this would disrupt the formation of the relationship and the spatial unity between the central, the middle and the periphery (Shafaghi, 1: 1997). Unfortunately, the rule of engineering approaches in urban development changed the dimensions of urban renewal with one dimension and physical rearrangement. The domination of this view in Iran, due to the ease of introducing construction technology and the difficulty of working with local communities was more intense than western societies, only the technical aspects of the modernization of urban decay have prevailed, and technicians, became the main player in the construction scenes of urban texture (Andalib, 21: 2008). But in the present situation of society that the issue of people's participation in all social areas has been seriously addressed, urban analysis has been indisputable from the point of view of participation of the people.

Babol has played a significant role in the Safavid period as a religious center, and it is visible in the intensity and scope of space for this activity in this area. The old texture means the area in the primary and central texture of Babol, which has been designated by the Cultural Heritage Organization. The old texture of Babol has an area of approximately 122 hectares and a population of 10735 people. This texture consists of 38 neighborhoods. The old texture of Babol

is, in fact, the main core of the city's development in the contemporary era. Historical and ancient background behind Babol. Although the buildings of this area have been destroyed and renovated many times, but there are still works of old buildings related to the late Qajar era and the era of Reza Khan Pahlavi in this area. In this context, in terms of recreational, cultural, sporting and green spaces, there is a shortage and almost no cultural-entertainment space, and because of its commercial nature, the youth and other people have to hang out in the streets and business centers or other recreational and cultural centers in the leisure time. The increasing number of apartment building developments in recent years has led to the lack of public parking lots that have led to high traffic congestion in the main streets of texture. A remarkable problem in the old texture as the core of the city of Babol is the concentration and combination of various economic activities alongside each other, which gives the city a special quality and vitality (Haft Shahr of Arya Consulting Engineers, 2010, 149). Considering the above, the main issue of the present article is to study the extent of participation of citizens in the organization and reconstruction of the urban decay of Babol. Therefore, the research hypotheses are:

-The extent of participation of citizens in organizing and reconstruction of the urban decay of Babol is favorable.

-Promoting the economic and social base of citizens in the old texture is effective in contributing to the organization of urban decay.

-Establishing appropriate organizational structures and regulating the rules is effective in facilitating the implementation of old texture standards.

3. Methodology

The present article is an applied research in terms of purpose and analytical descriptive in terms of nature. In this paper, data and information were gathered from both libraries and fields. The statistical population are all citizens of the old texture of Babol which according to the statistics of 1385, consisted about 10735 persons who 340 people are obtained by the Cochran method as statistical societies. Also, in the field method, a questionnaire based on the Likert scale will be used to collect information by simple random sampling. In order to achieve the research objectives, using a survey method and descriptive analytical methods was used to analyze the obtained statistical data from the questionnaire by SPSS software and then inferential statistics were used for analysis.

4. Finding

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed through Cronbach's alpha. The reliability of the questionnaire was 0.72 which indicates the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire. A gender analysis reveals that 60 percent of respondents are men and 40 percent are women.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by sex

Index	Frequency	Percent
Male	204	60
Female	136	40
Total	340	100

Studying the status of education indicates that most of the respondents had undergraduate / M.A degrees (49.1%), and the lowest was P.H.D degrees with 0.8%.

Table 2: Frequency distribution of respondents according to educational status

Educational Status	Frequency	Percent
Lower than diploma	67	19.7
Diploma	86	25.2
Undergraduate / Bachelor	167	49.1
MA	17	5
P.H.D	3	0.8
Total	340	100

Also, according to the research findings, respondents with free occupation with 74.1% and respondents with other occupations with frequency of 0.5% had the highest and lowest frequency, respectively.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by job type

Job	Frequency	Percent
Employee	46	13.5
Free	252	74.1
Student	20	5.8
Housewife	12	3.5
Unemployed	8	2.3
Others	2	0.5
Total	340	100

According to the findings of the research, most of the subjects were owners with 56.4%, and at least those with a 4.4% ownership status were other.

Table 4: Distribution of sample individuals based on ownership status

Property Status	Frequency	Percent
Owner	192	56.4
Tenant	104	30.5
Governmental	29	8.5
Others	15	4.4
Total	340	100

According to the findings of the study, most of the citizens with 45, the status of their ownership document were definitive, and at least the people with 1.4% stated otherwise.

Table 5: Index of status of ownership document in the study area

The status of the ownership document	Frequency	Percent
Definitive	153	45
Equity sharing	25	7.3
preliminary agreement	7	2.5
Original Document	46	13.5
cession	104	30.5
Others	5	1.4
Total	340	100

The test of hypotheses

1. It seems that the level of participation of citizens in organizing and reconstructing the urban decay of Babol is desirable.

Chi-square test was used to test the above hypothesis considering the abnormal variables. Based on chi-square test results, with a level of 189.694, a significant level of 0.30 and a degree of freedom, 20, the calculated significant level was meaningful regarding the rejection of the hypothesis, indicating that the participation of citizens in organizing and reconstructing the urban decay is not favorable.

Table 6: Calculating of the test statistic of the first hypothesis based on the views of citizens

Number of observations	Average	Standard Deviation	Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	Significance level
340	2.85	0.43	189.694	20	0.000

2. It seems that the promoting the economic and social base of citizens in the old texture is effective in contributing to the organization of urban decay.

Chi-square test was used to test the hypothesis based on citizen's viewpoint. Based on chi-square test results, with a level of 126.705, a significant level of 0.000 and a degree of freedom, 31, the calculated significant level for confirmation of the hypothesis was meaningful indicating that the promoting the economic and social base of citizens in the old texture is effective in contributing to the organization of urban decay.

Table 7: Calculation of the test statistic of the second hypothesis based on the views of citizens

Number of observations	Average	Standard Deviation	Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	Significance level
340	3.90	0.95	126.705	31	0.000

3. It seems that the establishing appropriate organizational structures and regulating the rules is effective in facilitating the implementation of old texture standards.

Chi-square test was used to test the above hypothesis considering the abnormal variables. Based on chi-square test results, with a significance level of 191.200, a significant level of 0/000, and a degree of freedom 15, the calculated significant level was meaningful in confirming the hypothesis.

Table 8: Calculation of the test statistic of the third hypothesis based on the views of citizens

Number of observations	Average	Standard Deviation	Chi-square	Degrees of Freedom	Significance level
340	366	0.85	191.200	15	0.000

5. Discussion & Conclusion

With the complexity of today's cities and the diversity of citizens' demands urban management seems cannot be unilateral, but a two-way relationship between citizens and the city's management system is needed. Humans create city and the conditions of cities affect their lives, and because citizens are an integral part of cities, the correction of this relationship necessarily requires their participation.

Today, participation is one of the main and most important issues of sustainable development. City managers and planners have always tried to achieve their goals of implementing projects and plans in the best possible way by attracting popular contributions. The more urban management provides a more economically-socially-service-cultural context for citizens, avoiding conservatism and secrecy, and proving its goodwill to value the people's opinions and provide an executive guarantee for their decisions, the motivation to attend citizens will become more and more efficient.

In this article, considering the subject and the research hypotheses, dimensions of citizen participation and urban management, as well as economic and social factors affecting citizens' participation and appropriate organizational structures in the studied city have been analyzed.

Among the solutions that can be used to increase citizen confidence in urban management for their effective participation include:

- Conduct continuous managerial meetings with people at specific times and places, or design review sites,
- Informing and providing facilities for construction and private sector participation in the development and extension of buildings and renovation of urban decay,
- Consideration of cash for the purchase of shops and real estate in the scheme of extension of the passageways,
- Media support for culture and education of citizens,
- Citizens' views on the implementation of urban plans and their prioritization based on the needs of citizens,
- Incentive policies to implement the plan of expansion and to create a participatory culture through economic activities and the reconciliation of social benefits,
- Neighborhood plans with particular participatory patterns in the neighborhoods with the strengthening and support of parties and charitable associations, NGOs and other civil institutions.

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