



Evaluating the knowledge of citizenship rights (Case Study: Zahedan)

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ABSTRACT

Citizenship rights can be considered as one of the connection points of citizens and urban management. Issues such as negligence of urban management in the cities for informing the citizenship rights and their transparency and lack of knowledge in citizens, public organizations, and even their representatives to intricacies have increased the troubles and challenges of this scope. In this regard, the present study aimed to assess Zahedan citizens' knowledge of citizenship rights using field studies. The research follows a descriptive-analytic method and data collection is based on library documents and field surveying using questionnaires. One-sample T-test and Pearson coefficient were used to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that the public knowledge of Zahedan citizens is at a low level in the field of citizenship rights. In addition, the citizens who are aware of rights have been introduced on an experimental basis during dealing with legal affairs in various municipal departments or in activities related to urban affairs.

Keywords: citizenship rights, public knowledge, citizens, Zahedan

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INTRODUCTION

The intensive requirement for urbanization and urbanism and population growth in the late 21st century have given a variety of aspects to urban issues and topics such as citizen training and participation have gained particular importance. People with different tastes and motivation work in urban communities. Social life requires the existence of legal relations between individuals and different groups in society. These social relations must be under some regulations otherwise, force, threats, and hypocrisy govern the relations between individuals and this will lead to chaos and disorder. Therefore, public governments and institutions have adopted specific policies to regulate these relationships by setting out the related rules and regulations (Ghasemi and Jianpour, 2007:76). Citizenship rights are a combination of duties and responsibilities of citizens for each other, city, and government (military ruler). Rights and privileges that the ruling government or power is responsible for providing. The concept of citizenship is one of the longest-serving political, social, legal, and urban concepts that thinkers in different fields have considered it from ancient Greece until the present. Acquiring citizenship skills or in other words becoming an efficient citizen requires knowledge of citizenship rights and duties. Knowledge of citizenship rights is one of the important aspects of human and social relations and a fundamental factor for the continuation of collective life in the

risky modern world. Citizen knowledge makes the people know their duties and rights. This recognition in the one hand is a factor for citizens to do their works efficiently and on the other hand, it reaches them to the rules that the community is intended for them. Currently, raising the knowledge and general information in various communities in all aspects such as individual rights and municipal laws is one of the important government functions or duties towards society. It should be noted that citizens' knowledge is not created itself and due to the accumulation of them together, but also urban institutions are responsible for creating it. It is clear that knowledge is the first and most important step in this way, but in developing countries, including Iran, is lagging behind in this area. The results of recent research conducted in this case showed that the general information of Americans in San Francisco is relatively ten times higher than residents of Jakarta in Indonesia, which of course shows a direct correlation with the level of Training (Webber, 87: 1997). Therefore, it can be easily found that policies, programs, and legal regulations in the gap of public knowledge would not achieve any considerable result and the citizens will be faced with many difficulties in addition to disrupting the management of their cities. There are many tactics and strategies in many countries around the world to increase knowledge of citizenship rights. For example, El Salvador government has provided the necessary cooperate in the field of public participation in citizenship and political rights with NGOs. Public knowledge can be considered as a way for government empowerment. Although more than a hundred

years have passed from the modern urban planning life, but most of developments and changes were focused on the physical conditions and facilities such as the construction of highways, buildings, etc. Specific application-oriented thinking about the knowledge of the citizens was less considered. Without any exaggeration of all the many influencing factors, knowledge of citizens is more sustainable and more serious because the citizenship knowledge of people in terms of rights and responsibilities has promoted urban living skills training, which is one of the workloads of each urban management. In other words, the overall path that leads to today's urban management to urban citizens is able to convert (right to live in the city) to (right to the city). In other words, the urban citizenship originally means tying urban identities to citizenship and municipal identities, which remembers the citizenship's return to the city and official recognition of the citizens' rights to the city and their duties towards the city and urbanization. Although nowadays, urbanites are so-called citizens-users i.e. they reproduce the city through the experience and consume in everyday life, but the concept of urban citizen is more than that. This means that in the urban citizenship, a combination of the ratio between the Right to the City (right of citizens to City) and duty for city (the duty of citizens in the city) can be seen (Oscher, 2004). It can be realized that this lack of public knowledge of citizenship rights and urban management policies and programs has faced the cities with some kind of disorder. Given this, it is clear that the successful management of urban affairs requires attention to many and varied facts in the urban life. In addition, the views of citizens about city management system and their knowledge of their rights and responsibilities and assignments in the urban management system are very important (Pourezat et al., 2009: 9) and encourage citizens to work with city agencies to better perform their duties (Barakpour et al., 2010: 204). Since Zahedan is located in a deprived area and its citizens proportionally have the low percentage of literacy, the knowledge and participation in citizenship issues are one of the basic gaps for better management and maintaining its origins. In this regard, the present paper aimed to measure the knowledge level of Zahedan citizens about citizenship rights and urban laws by content analysis of a selection of laws. Therefore, the main question of the present paper is that how much Zahedan citizens are aware of their citizenship rights. In this regard, the following hypotheses can be expected for the research:

1. Zahedan citizens are not aware of their citizenship rights.
2. Their knowledge of citizenship rights increases by increasing the educational level.
3. There is a significant relationship between people's job and their knowledge of citizenship rights.

Literature

Citizenship rights in recent decades have attracted the attention of many people in the world and many studies have been allocated to this topic. In recent years, this topic has been raised

in our country by many organizations; especially the urban management institutions and studies have been conducted in this regard:

Ziari et al. (2012) have conducted a study entitled assessment of Piranshahr citizens' public knowledge of citizenship rights and urban laws. They concluded that the knowledge of Piranshahr urban society in the field of citizenship rights and urban laws is low.

Lotfi et al. (2009) in a paper entitled urban management and its position in promoting the citizenship rights discussed the urban and citizenship rights. They concluded that urban management can play a role in promoting the citizenship rights by training citizenship rights and encouraging citizens to pursue their rights, adopting citizen-oriented approach and creating conversation between citizens and city managers, administrative reform and respect for citizenship rights, inclusiveness and non-discrimination among citizens, rule of law, accountability for citizens, efficiency and effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.

Pourezat et al. (2009) in a paper entitled the relationship between knowledge of citizen from citizenship rights with accountability and transparency of organizations evaluated the citizenship rights in District 3 in Tehran as well as the relationship between active citizenship and accountability and transparency of municipalities. The findings show that increasing the knowledge leads them to have greater participation in urban affairs and active citizenship development and development of participatory and active citizenship increases the transparency and accountability in the functioning of the municipality (or at least the formation of such a perception among citizens).

Shiani (2009) in a paper entitled the analysis of citizens in Tehran in urban management provided a historical overview of the concept of citizenship and addressed the status of citizens in Tehran. The results show that citizenship is not meaningful and understandable for a significant proportion of people and knowledge of the rights, duties, and enjoying the feeling of citizenship is faced with deterrent factors in the community.

Sarafi et al. (2008) in a paper entitled the analysis of the concept of citizenship and evaluation of their status in the laws, regulations and urban management analyzed the background and origin of citizenship and its place in urban regulations of the country and their relationship with the urban management.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research method is descriptive-analytic. According to the research, collection of questionnaires is one of the things that can be useful to some extent. Regarding the topic, theoretical approaches, and empirical considerations, the data collection method was survey-based using questionnaires and interviewing techniques and the type of sampling is random. In order to determine the sample size, Cochran formula has been used with the standard error of 5% with a confidence level of 95%. Thus, SPSS software has been used to analyze the data. The applied indicators in the study are as follows.

Table 1: Criteria and sub-criteria of knowledge of citizenship rights

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Participation | Citizen participation for more effective urban decision-making mechanisms |
| | Participation in the formulation of municipal budgets |
| | Involvement in municipal elections |
| | Supervising the rules and regulations related to urban life |
| | Participation in the preparation and implementation of urban projects |
| Information | Knowledge of updated information on city government |
| | Access to written and published policies by urban management in the field of knowledge and guidance of citizens |
| | Informing about the preparation and implementation of urban projects |

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Services and facilities | Socio-cultural and environmental operation of public and private spaces for citizens |
| | Equal enjoyment of public services for citizens |
| | Having a healthy environment |
| Training | Promoting vocational training for citizens |
| Accountability | Access to city managers |
| | Proper care of the needs and legitimate demands of citizens |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

The study area

Zahedan is the capital of Sistan and Baluchestan as the largest province in the country. Zahedan is limited to Sistan from the north, Kerman from the west, Pakistan from the east and Khash city from the south (Ebrahimzadeh *et al*, 2004: 129). According to the 2011 census, it has 575,116 inhabitants. The area of Zahedan is 8123 of which, about 20 percent i.e. 1325

hectares are old texture back more than 30 years. The south and southwest of the city are tall while its height is reduced by moving to the north. The city has five urban districts. The following figure has shown the geographical location of Zahedan city.

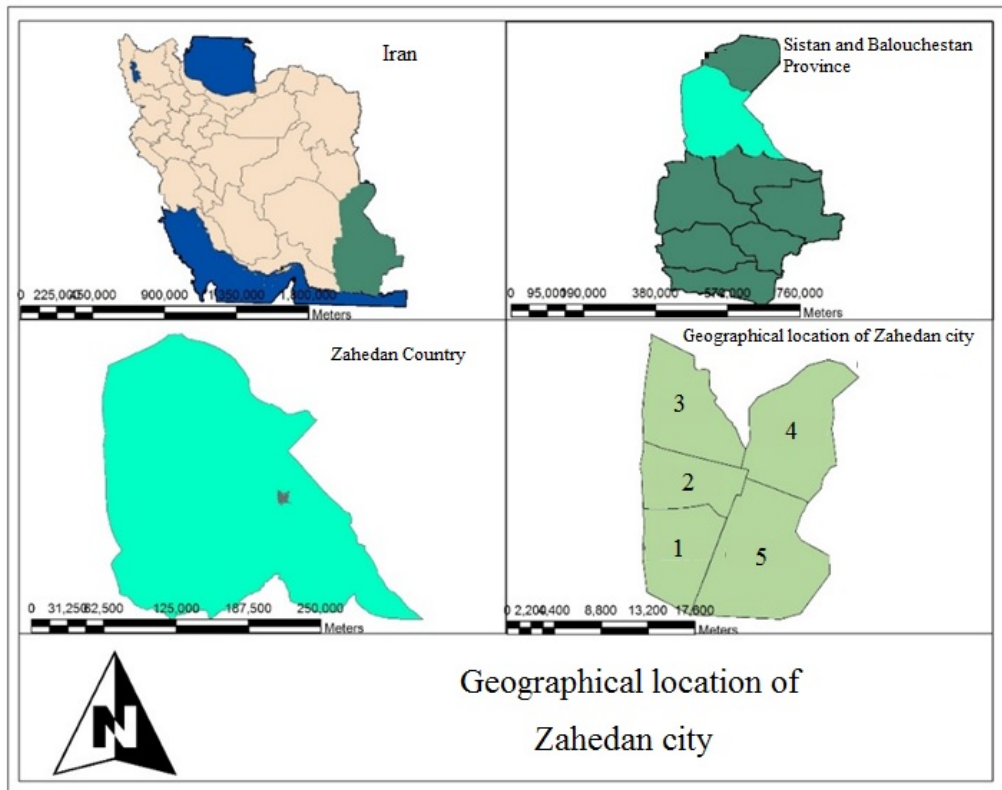


Figure 1: Geographical location of Zahedan

Theoretical Foundations

Citizenship rights are a common discussion among all people in the city. In fact, citizenship rights are a common standard for freedom and justice for all people of the city. It is obvious that urban decision-making process will attract public and urban management interest when citizens show the highest participation in decision-making. Therefore, this process helps to regulate the urban management and citizen participation in the decision-making (Hiraskar, 202: 1997). Urban right is a branch of public law, which regulates the relations between

citizens and city managers. In a more specific definition, the term is related to a set of rule and regulations that adjust the relations with city departments and in the local and municipal organs and regulates rights and duties of governing councils, municipalities and other municipal governments (Lotfi *et al*

2009: 106). Some basic legal rights challenges of municipalities, especially in relation to citizenship are failure to scrutinize the mutual rights and duties of citizens and municipalities, the absence of citizens in the procurement process, review and approval of urban development plans (Master Plans, details, etc.), lack of citizen participation strategies, and lack of urban management organizations (Hashemi 48: 1997). The content of the constitution of citizenship in the constitution in relation to the citizenship rights content is divided into 3 categories.

- First category: unconditional legal that are considered as the right of all people, which include highest principles (16 Articles) for citizenship rights such as providing legal protection of citizens, housing, job selection.

- Second category: rules that are limited in the main context of the law, which have been determined by indicating the law (Article 7) of "Exile is prohibited, except as provided by law"

- Third category: the laws that govern the (conditional rights) of citizens that the conditions are set down in law. In modern systems from social and economic systems to the cultural and political, Rules and regulations determine the relationships, interactions, functional levels and the status of each institutional sector.

Urban rights have the same performance in the urban complex system (Gharakhlou and Omranzadeh, 1384: 49). Urban rights are known as one of the different branches of fundamental rights and the subset of internal law (Lotfi et al., 2009: 101). The term is related to a set of rule and regulations that adjust the relations with city departments and in the local and municipal organs (Kamyar, 1387: 21), especially sets the relations between people of the city with the municipality, rights and obligations to each other and the principles and goals (Lotfi et al., 2009: 101). It seems the first response we hear from a lawyer about the definition of urban rights is that urban law is a branch of public law, which regulates the relations between citizens and urban managers (ibid. 106). Urban law stems from the society a social phenomenon and the source of legal rules is the social requirements of urban life. The urban management system (municipalities) and citizens are on both sides of it (Daneshmand, 2009: 9). Despite the diversity of definitions, there is a single theme in all of them, which emphasizes on rights and obligations (Mohammadi and Tabriz, 2006: 179).

- Law is the guarantee of tight (Razaghpour, 2011:90). Therefore, urban laws form urban rights. On the one hand, they are a guide for citizens and on the other hand, they are a guide for other agencies and organizations in urban issues (Gharakhlou and Omranzadeh, 1384: 50). These laws form the urban rights, urban management system (municipal) and citizens on both sides with a reciprocal relationship, including the rights and duties of citizens on the one hand and the rights and duties of municipal management on the other.

Urban Laws and Regulations:

Urban laws and regulations can be one of the most important connections between urban management and citizens. In other words, the basic elements of urban management in the light of the rules and regulations are citizens to participate in the management of the city (Seyedsadr, 2008: 13).

Citizenship:

It is one of the new concepts, which particularly focuses on equality and justice and it has found a special place in the social, political, and legal theories. The concept of "citizenship" realizes when all people enjoy all citizenship and political rights and access all economic and social opportunities in life (GuideBens, 1998: 64). In the end, it should be declared that a city goes beyond the brick and cement structure and finds its real identity when it forms of citizenship (Tvakilo 14: 2001). Citizen is an individual who participates in the social, political, cultural, and economic structure of the society and affects the decision-making and shaping it directly or indirectly, in the shadow of coexistence, voluntary engagement and efforts to achieve prosperity and spiritual and worldly happiness (Ahmadzade, 2005: 96). Alternatively, the individuals who have the citizenship of a country and take advantage of the rights approved in that country (Mohseni, 2010: 118). In political and legal theory, citizenship is a set of rights and duties for the members of a nation-state or city (Marshall, 1998: 61). Since citizenship is about human relationships, there cannot be a simple and static definition for all communities and times (Falks, 1381: 17).

Research findings

This section entitled as research findings is related to hypotheses test regarding the results of the questionnaire by citizens. Accordingly, in the first hypothesis, each component evaluated with the one-sample independent t-test. Then, the citizens' knowledge of the citizenship rights was measured with an adaptive combination of all components. Pearson correlation coefficient was used in the second and third hypothesis test.

Participation

The purpose of the participation is the power to influence decision-making and participation of the citizen in power (Ebrahimzadeh and Asadi, 2012: 17). To assess this indicator, the 5 criteria of citizen participation on more effectiveness on urban decision-making mechanisms, participation in the formulation of urban budgets, involvement in municipal elections, supervising the rules and regulations related to urban life, and participation in the preparation and implementation of urban projects were included in the questionnaire.

Table 1: Results of one-sample T-test for participation indicator

| Variable | t | df | Average | level of significance (sig) |
|---------------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------------------|
| Participation | -0.60 | 382 | 2.95 | 0.549 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

According to the results of the above table obtained from the responses of citizens and considering the average in terms of statistics at the reliability level of 95%, it can be found that the average of all components of the test is smaller than the test amount. Therefore, it indicates that citizens are not aware of participation component as one of the criteria of citizenship rights.

Accountability

This measure covers two points. Municipal officials must understand and accept the needs and demands of citizens and show an appropriate response to them. The alignment of the demands of citizens and the authorities' actions are necessary. In order to assess this indicator in Zahedan city, the two questions of accountability and accessibility of urban managers and proper handling of demands of citizens were used.

Table 3: Results of one-sample T-test for accountability indicator

| Variable | t | df | Average | level of significance (sig) |
|----------------|---------|-----|---------|-----------------------------|
| Accountability | -47.043 | 382 | 1.86 | 0.000 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

To determine the accountability indicator, four criteria were discussed. As shown in the above table, the p value is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis based on the equality of the average with the number 3 will not be accepted. This shows that citizens have complained about the accountability of indicators.

Information

To determine the information indicator, three components of knowledge of updated information on city management, access to compiled and published regulations by municipal management in the field of citizen's advice and knowledge, and knowledge of the preparation and implementation of urban projects.

Table 4: Results of one-sample T-test for information indicator

| Variable | t | df | Average | level of significance (sig) |
|-------------|--------|-----|---------|-----------------------------|
| Information | -10.97 | 382 | 2.18 | 0.000 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

The results of the above tables show that the information item has an average as much as 2.18 and significance coefficient of 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05 and the t statistic (-10.97) is smaller than the desired value. This indicates that citizens are not aware and satisfied with information as another component of the citizens' rights.

Services and facilities

Indicators used to assess this criterion include socio-cultural and environmental operation of public and private spaces for citizens, equal enjoyment of public services for citizens and having a healthy environment.

Table 5: Results of one-sample T-test for services and facilities indicator

| Variable | t | df | Average | level of significance (sig) |
|-------------------------|---------|-----|---------|-----------------------------|
| Services and facilities | -15.216 | 382 | 2.39 | 0.000 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

According to the results obtained from the citizens' responses according to the intended average, inferential statistics at the reliability level of 95%, it can be indicated that the significance level of all components of services and facilities is smaller than 0.05 i.e. sig=0.000 and negative upper and lower limit components and the average of is smaller tested value, thus, citizens are not well enough informed and satisfied with the components of services and facilities.

Training

inferential statistics inferential statistics obtained from the test, according to the average, and the reliability level of 95%, and the significance level (Sig=0.000), which is lower than 0.05 and the negative up and down bound, it can be said that training is not satisfied by the citizens.

Table 6: Results of one-sample T-test for training indicator

| Variable | t | df | Average | level of significance (sig) |
|----------|-------|-----|---------|-----------------------------|
| Training | -5.34 | 382 | 2.63 | 0.000 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

During questioning from the citizens of Zahedan, it was clearly showed that most of the citizens are not aware of their rights in relation to urban management and municipality so that aware people only cover 22% of the citizens. Table (7) clearly indicates the issue.

Zahedan citizens' knowledge of citizenship rights

Table 7: Public knowledge of citizenship rights

| Amount / items | Unaware | Low | Medium | High | Aware |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|------|-------|
| Percent | 10 | 54 | 14 | 14 | 8 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

The importance of the issue becomes clear with a little investigation. The absence or lack of knowledge among the citizens of this citizenship rights predispose to serious problems in the cities of the country. Because the lack of knowledge leads to infringement cases, social problems, citizenship disobedience, etc. The losses not only for the urban management, but also for citizens and citizen participation will also be trimmed. Knowledge of citizenship rights with appropriate administrative support will reduce the problems of the urban society and it will lead to a democratic society.

This is achieved by creating programs in raising knowledge of citizenship rights by applying policies to control and more involvement.

The relationship between the knowledge of citizenship rights and education

According to the table, Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.630. This means that the correlation of knowledge of citizenship rights and their education is positive and direct. Knowledge of citizenship rights increases by increases the level of education. Since the sig is less than 0.5, so there is interoperability.

Table 8: Pearson correlation coefficient of satisfaction of citizens' knowledge of their citizenship rights and education

| The significance level (Sig) | satisfaction of citizens' knowledge of their citizenship rights and education |
|------------------------------|---|
| 0.01 | 0.630 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

The relationship between the people's job and the amount knowledge of citizenship rights

The correlation coefficient between satisfaction of citizens' job and amount knowledge of citizenship rights was calculated and presented in the table below.

Table 9: Pearson correlation coefficient of satisfaction of citizens' job and amount knowledge of citizenship rights

| The significance level (Sig) | satisfaction of citizens' job and amount knowledge of citizenship rights |
|------------------------------|--|
| 0.03 | 0.572 |

Source: Research Findings, 2016

According to the table, the Pearson's correlation coefficient is 0.572. This means that the correlation of knowledge of citizenship rights and their job is positive and direct. Checking the aware and relatively aware individuals' occupation determined that this group is mainly involved in urban affairs or their job is facing with the municipality and its institutions and laws in various forms. With a closer look in occupational and social activities, it becomes clear people with jobs such as municipal clerk, attorney, business and real estate transactions, land developer and building materials and brokering due to legal conflicts or experimental involvement in urban laws and the functional principles related to municipalities.

prevents them to achieve the principles of sustainable urban development.

The results indicate that the public knowledge of the citizens of Zahedan in the field of citizenship rights is at a low level. In addition, aware citizens are individuals who became familiar the rights and rules experimentally during dealing legal affairs with various municipal departments or in activities related to urban affairs. As expected, the knowledge of people with high educational level has been significance and individuals with academic education are more aware of their citizenship rights. On the other hand, people employed in urban activities (such as land developers, trading firms, etc.) in many cases are more aware of their rights and the mentioned laws.

Results

Citizenship rights can be considered as one of the connection points of citizens and urban management. Issues such as negligence of urban management in the cities for informing the citizenship rights and their transparency and lack of knowledge in citizens, public organizations, and even their representatives to intricacies have increased the troubles and challenges of this scope. Lack of knowledge of the citizens for the urban and citizenship rights not only is not beneficial to citizens, but it has disadvantages for urban management and municipality, which

Recommendations:

- Strengthening the sense of belonging to the urban community in Zahedan citizens through increasing the knowledge and participation in municipal affairs.
- Raising the knowledge of community, especially the youth in Zahedan about rights and urban regulations with the help of mass media.
- Adjusting schedules and content of educational activities, in terms of cultural and uncultured requirements

- Urban management policies' movement toward promoting the concepts of good citizenship and active and participatory citizenship.
- Logical improvements of regulations and the elimination of infringement laws.
- Family empowerment in connection with the culture of citizenship
- Creating an ethical legal basis for the actions of officials.
- Establishment of methods to promote, encourage and facilitate public participation in the implementation of laws.
- Studying, assessing, and adjusting up to date, efficient, and effective rules and regulations for city administration and municipal people's rights.

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