

## **The Impact of Awareness of Urban Law on Active Citizenship (Case Study: Sabzevar)**

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### **Extended abstract**

#### **1. Introduction**

Citizenship represents a set of rights and obligations between people in the society and to the society administrators. Urban law, specifically, regulates the relationship between citizens and urban management. Awareness of this law causes the people to have better monitoring of urban management, to better claim their rights, and to know their tasks towards the others and urban management and to do them. Thus, awareness of the urban rights could lead to active citizenship. The aim of this study is to investigate and analyze the impact of urban right awareness on the active citizenship in Sabzevar. The hypothesis of the present study is that citizens' awareness of urban rights has a significant effect on their active citizenship.

#### **2. Methodology**

This study takes the descriptive-analytical approach. It is a correlational study in which the correlation between awareness of the urban law and active citizenship is concerned. Data collection is conducted through library and field. To collect the data a questionnaire was designed for the field study. The geographical scope of the research is Sabzevar in Khorasan Razavi province and the North East of Iran. The target population include the citizens of the city (about 243000 people) from which the sample size of 384 people were randomly

selected. The statistical test includes simple-sample t-test and Pearson correlation.

#### **3. Results**

To measure variables of awareness of urban law and active citizenship, items have been introduced to be asked from the residents in 5-point Likert scale. To test the levels of these variables, one-sample t-test has been used. The research revealed that awareness of urban law is low.

Citizens of Sabzevar have little awareness about the administrative structure of urban management, municipal revenue sources, electoral laws such as elections of city council, awareness of Article 100 of municipal act (related to urban constructions), rules of sidewalks, laws of maintenance, repair, and construction of public places, the responsibilities of urban management (municipality, city council) to the citizens and also the citizens' duties for urban management.

This research also revealed that, some of the components of active citizenship are at a low level and some of them have high level. In general the level of active citizenship is higher than average.

The main hypothesis of this study is related to the effect of legal awareness on active citizenship. According to Pearson analysis, the correlation coefficient between the effect of awareness of citizenship rights and active citizenship is about 0.409. The significance level (sig = .00) approves the significance of the relationship between the variables at a

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significance level of 99 percent. Accordingly, the people who have more knowledge of urban rights have more active intervention in the urban affairs.

#### 4. Conclusion

An important conclusion of the study is that the citizens' awareness of urban rights has significant impact on active citizenship, so, increasing this awareness can increase the active participation of the citizens and active citizenship. Therefore, it is suggested to municipalities and other urban management institutions to have massive effort to train citizens to improve their legal awareness. This increase in awareness makes people have a better understanding of the legal framework of the duties of municipality and the urban management institutions which can help them not to have high expectations.

Instead, with the correct understanding of the responsibilities of the institutions, they can better monitor their performance in case of violation or the failure of duty. Citizens who were aware of their responsibilities attempt to help the urban development. However, this active intervention cannot be achieved only through awareness and other criteria are required for the active participation. Including the fact that the structure of decision making and urban management must be participatory.

**Key words:** Active citizenship, Awareness of urban right, Citizenship, Sabzevar, Urban rights.

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