

## **Social Factors Affecting Women's Political Participation in Hamadan province of I. R. Iran A Case study on Nahavand**

**Masoud Darabi<sup>1</sup>, Zohreh Roghanian<sup>2</sup>, Dariush Ahmadian<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch, Iran.

<sup>2</sup> Farhangian University, Shahid Maghsoudi Pardis, Hamedan, Iran.

<sup>3</sup> Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch, Iran.

---

### **ABSTRACT**

Political participation is one of the important issues drawn to the special attention of various fields of social science and politics. Today, women as an effective group in participation and political participation especially, have an important role in political decision-making. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine social factors affecting women's political participation in the city of Nahavand. In this study, the survey method was employed and the data have been obtained using a questionnaire. The sample of the research consisted of Nahavandi women of 18 years of age and older out of which 400 women were selected based on Cochran formula and multi-stage cluster sampling method. The results of the research show that there is a significant relationship between women's political participation and social capital variables, social class positions, mass media, political participation experience and political efficacy; however, there is not a significant relationship between the variable of membership in civil organization and access to political figures and women's political participation. Results obtained from regression analysis suggest that the variables of social capital, social class position, mass media, political participation experience and political efficacy explain totally 12% of variations in women's political participation. Path analysis diagram also showed that social capital variable has a greater impact on women's political participation than the other variables.

**KEYWORDS:** Political Participation, Social Class Position, Social Capital, Mass Media, Political Participation Experience, Political Efficacy.

---

### **INTRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEM**

Political participation is a component of social behavior, firstly because it is considered as one of the major pillars and indicators of political development. Secondly, it is closely related to the legitimacy of political systems, and thirdly it largely reflects the type of political system each community has. Therefore, the study of political participation of each society makes it easy to better understand the people's political behavior of the society and it determines the factors influencing political participation in various social contexts [1].

Women's political participation, as half of the population, is important because it facilitates achieving real development, excellence in life and reduced inequities [2].

According to late leader of Iran Imam Khomeini's political line of thought, religion and politics are two interconnected and inseparable components of a whole. Thus, it is a religious necessity for Muslims to get involved in politics. It is also a religious duty for women to be active in the political scene. Imam Khomeini calls Iranian women for furthering their political activities during consolidation and development of Islamic system, as they have actively participated in previous anti-regime campaigns: "Politics is not just for a special social class of people ... women also need to be involved and keep the society. Women must be alongside men in political and social activities [3].

Political participation is a global phenomenon. It does not necessarily mean that all people are engaged in political activities. It is not in one similar shape or equal size in all societies either. Rather, it means that "Political Participation" can be found in all societies [4]. and provides the terms for accepting changes. However, different definitions have been provided for political participation based on different approaches. Giddens, in discussion of political participation, has referred to participatory democracy [5]. Weiner believes that "political participation" is every voluntary act, successful or unsuccessful, organized or disorganized, periodical or continuous, including legitimate or illegitimate practices for influencing election of leaders, policies and public affairs management at any level of local and national government [6]. In encyclopedia of social sciences, "Political Participation" is defined as

---

\*Corresponding Author: Masoud Darabi, Islamic Azad University, Dehaghan Branch, Iran.

\*Responsible for Coordinating: Zohreh Roghanian, Farhangian University, Shahid Maghsoudi Pardis, Hamedan, Iran.  
Email:Z\_rogghanian@yahoo.com

a voluntary activity done, directly or indirectly, by members of a society in choosing governors and in shaping public policies [7]. In this study, “Political Participation” has been defined as “any voluntary political activity which is in connection with selecting or being selected for political posts, influencing public policies, programs, institution and political system of the society [8].

Examining women’s political behaviors in different eras and the way it is done is of high importance; because, as a potentially effective force, it can change political equations especially at the time of elections. Therefore, the study of different social factors, which affect Nahavandi women’s political behavior and guide them to participate or not to participate, is very important. The main objective of this study is to examine social factors affecting women’s political participation in the city of Nahavand. Therefore, the present study is to answer these questions: What is the status of women’s political participation in the city of Nahavand or what is the level of women’s political participation in Nahavand.

### **Theoretical Fundamentals of the Study**

What is addressed further in explaining political participation is who participates and why? In other words, what factors contribute to citizens’ participation? To answer these questions, scholars have proposed many theories and each one of them have considered certain factors. This has eventually led to developing special independent approaches in explaining political participation:

#### **Social Approach in Explaining Political Participation**

For Marx, political power is always rooted in economic power. He believes that, in every society, the economic ruling class is the political ruling class as well. In manifest of communist party”, he has explicitly declared that a modern state is nothing but the executive committee of the bourgeois class [9]. In fact, in Marx’s analysis, economy is the infrastructure and determiner of the politics, which is in the social super structure. According to this view, the individual’s socio-economic class determines the level of his/her political participation. Lipset believes that the pattern of participating in elections in different countries (Germany, Sweden, America, Norway, Finland and other countries about which the information is available) is the same. Men more than women, the better-educated more than the less-educated, urban people more than rural people, the middle-aged more than the young and the elderly , married people more than singles , high-status people more than the with low-status people and members more than non-members tend to participate. However, this difference is going to fade in many countries like Sweden in which the difference, in age and gender especially, is decreasing [10]. George Herbert Mead puts special emphasis on self-conception and individual’s assumption of the facts. According to this view, interaction patterns or ways of dealing with facts are neither dependent upon outer nor upon inner inclinations; but are dependent upon the assumption which they make of the facts in the form of institutions. These assumptions are formed through interaction with each other and they are dynamic and vary. They can be interpreted in terms of the situation which arises [11]. According to this view, social and political participation of women and their cooperation with civil and political institutions is dependent upon the assumption which they make about themselves and other affairs in the process of socialization. And it is an interpretation which women make according to any status of civic and political institutions and issues concern of participation and expectation of others and the relevant roles, they play.

#### **Psychological Approaches to Political Participation**

Based on these theories, what reduce or increase the social and political participation are beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts that make up the individuals’ personalities. In other words, in these theories, different mental characteristics are considered as the determinants of individuals’ participation in activities.

That is to say, individuals have different personal and psychological characteristics, some of which make the individuals enabled to or interested in political participation and some other make them discouraged or reluctant. For example, in Jung classification, extroverted people are more interested in political participation [12]. Theories of political efficacy and political confidence are among psychological theories. Political efficacy is an attitude by which the individual feels his/her political participation can affect and control political processes and this way he can satisfy their needs. On political efficacy, Robert Dahl writes:” When people think what they do has no significant political consequences, they get less involved in politics; therefore, the less the person’s sense of political efficacy, the less his political participation. He also calls this feeling “political self-confidence” and says whether this judgment on “the individual’s political inefficiency” is realistic or not, it induces the citizens with the idea that the authorities do not care about people like them and they cannot influence political process [13].

According to “Value Proposition”, Homans believes the more valuable the outcome of a person’s act, the more his interest will be in continuing the act. Change in the value might be either positive or negative. Therefore, the

increase in the positive value or reward increases the likelihood of doing a particular act by a person. Conversely, the increase in negative value (punishment) decreases the likelihood of doing the act [14].

Another theory is the rational or political participation of utility theory. According to this theory, peoples' acts are based on profit and loss. Before engaging in any political participation, people logically consider whether their political participation will benefit them or not. If there is no benefit from that kind of participation or there is likelihood of loss, then they will refrain from such a political participation. Otherwise, they will enter political participation [15].

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is a relationship between women's social class status and their political participation.
2. There is a relationship between social capital and political participation of women.
3. There is a relationship between women's use of mass communication devices and their political participation.
4. Women's membership in civil societies and their relationship with political figures affect their political participation; so that the better their relationship and membership, the greater their political participation.
5. Positive and negative political experiences of women affect their political participation accordingly.
6. There is a relationship between women's political efficacy (political confidence) and their political participation.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The data and required information in the present study has been collected based on quantitative approach using survey method. The questionnaire has been used as the data-gathering technique or tool in this study. It is a micro-level analysis and the unit of analysis is individuals (women). Considering the purpose and features of the study, the sample consisted of all Nahavandi women of 18 years of age and older. At this age, some political contributions like candidacy in the election are not possible. However, the population is justifiable. According to the Population and Housing Census in 1385, total population has been considered as being 27,127. Of this number, 378 women were selected based on Cochran formula using cluster sampling method. To increase accuracy, the number was increased to 400 cases and finally 400 questionnaires were distributed among the population.

### **Theoretical and operational definition of variables**

#### **political participation (dependent variable).**

Mil Brath believes that "political participation is a political behavior which affects or has the intention of affecting the government's results [16]. To Panahi, political participation is any kind of voluntary political activity of women in connection with obtaining, choosing, and being chosen for political posts, influencing in shaping public programs and political institutions and system of the society [17].

#### **Social capital (independent variable).**

For Putnam, social capital is the existence of different social organizations such as confidence, norms and networks that improve the society's efficiency by facilitating coordinated activities [18].

#### **Media (independent variable).**

The media in this study consists of newspapers, magazines (media), Iranian radio, Iranian television, foreign radios, foreign televisions, satellite and internet.

#### **Membership in civic organizations access to political figures (the independent variable).**

In the present study, "membership in civic organizations" means the individual's participation and activity in an accredited and officially-licensed union and social organization [19].

Political figure also includes all the issues addressed in operational definition of "political participation".

#### **Political Participation Experience (independent variable).**

It can be defined as the individual's evaluation of different results obtained from his/her political activity [20]. To measure this variable, the individual's overall evaluation of past political participation was questioned using Likert scale.

#### **Political Efficacy (independent variable).**

It can be defined as the individual's perception of the effectiveness of his/her political participation in the community [21]. Indicators of people's voting in elections and efficacy of women's political activities have been used through likert scale in order to measure five variable.

**Research Findings**

**Descriptive Findings**

Based on the information obtained, it can be understood that in this study, average age of women was 32 and approximately 75 percent were married and 5/18 were single. Literacy level of 75/2 % of female respondents was higher than guidance school, 52/2 % were housewives and 27/3 % were employed full-time or part-time. Average income of their families was 2/040/000 Rials and 75% of them were considered lower middle classes. In terms of political participation, 75/2 percent of the sample women had voted in different elections held in recent four years. As for political activities, most of them had little interest in politics and had little participation in political dialogues. 47/8 percent of them had not participated in any demonstrations or rallies and only 2 percent of them were active members of a political organization.

**ANALYTICAL RESULTS**

**The Relationship between Political Participation and Social-Class Position**

The first hypothesis examined the relationship between social Position of the respondents with their political participation and it was mentioned that social-class /position directly correlates with the women’s level of political participation. To test the hypothesis, the relationship between index of political participation and that of social-class status is taken into consideration. A mere look at the percentages shown in the first row of the table clearly confirms a clear relationship between the two factors.

Table 1: Relationship between political participation and social Position (social class).

| Class Political Participation   | Social | Very low class | Low class | middle low class | Middle class high | Upper class | Upper upper class | Total |
|---------------------------------|--------|----------------|-----------|------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|
| Low political Participation     |        | 37/5           | 64/7      | 31/9             | 20/3              | 18/9        | 25                | 31/3  |
| Average Political Participation |        | 62/5           | 29/4      | 65/5             | 73                | 70/3        | 75                | 64/5  |
| High Political Participation    |        | ---            | 5/9       | 2/6              | 6/8               | 10/8        | ---               | 4/3   |
| Total                           |        | 2              | 8/5       | 58/8             | 18/5              | 9/3         | 3                 | 100 % |
|                                 |        | 8              | 34        | 235              | 74                | 37          | 12                | 400   |

Kendall Tau C = 161%  
Square = 32/36

Significance level=000%  
Significance level=000%

Gamma = 358% Chi

Figures of the above table indicate that the higher we go from the low level, the more the percentage (lower political participation) decreases. But the existing fluctuations decrease the intensity of the relationship; and when it comes to the ‘low social class’, the intensity increases.

An accurate look into the rows of the Table shows that as we go from the lower class to the higher class, we will see an increase in both the average participation and high participation. The Chi-square coefficient, which equals to 32/36, indicates that the difference between dependent and independent variables cannot be random. Therefore, there is a definite relationship between these two variables. Kendall Tau correlation coefficient C indicates its correlation intensity and its direction. Since the coefficient is positive, the relationship between the two variables is direct; and the higher the social class, the higher the political participation. Significance level of zero suggests that the possibility of error correlation between these two variables is zero in the population; although the correlation intensity is not high. Gamma coefficient was calculated as being 358% and it indicates that prediction error for political participation can be reduced up to 36% using the independent of social class. If we assume that there is a relationship between social class and political participation in Nahavandi women, the calculated Gama coefficient would show a moderate intensity of this relationship; that is to say, the social class can reduce up to 36% of the error in predicting political participation of Nahavandi women. Therefore, the first hypothesis of the study, which had been proposed based on various studies and theoretical fundamentals, is ratified at this stage.

**The Relationship between Political Participation and Social Capital**

In the second hypothesis, the relationship between social capital of the respondents and their political participation was examined. We assumed that there is a direct relationship between women’s social capital and their political participation.

Table 2: The Relationship between Political Participation and Social Capital of Respondents

| Political Participation Level    | Social Capital |         |      | Total |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------|------|-------|
|                                  | Low            | Average | High |       |
| Low Political Participation      | 46             | 26/4    | 13/5 | 31/3  |
| Moderate political participation | 50/8           | 69      | 81/8 | 64/5  |
| High Political Participation     | 3/2            | 4/6     | 5/4  | 4/3   |
| Total                            | 31             | 59/8    | 9/3  | 100%  |
|                                  | 124            | 239     | 37   | 400   |

Kendall Tau C = 159%  
Chi Square= 59/20

Significance level = 000/0  
Significance level = 000/0

Gamma = 393%

The percentages shown in the first row of the table clearly confirms the relationship between the variables. As we move from ‘low social capital’ toward ‘high social capital’ the percentage of ‘low political participation’ decreases. The percentage of ‘low political participation’ is 46 for ‘low social capital’ and it is 26/4 for ‘average social capital’ and 13/5 for ‘high social capital’.

An accurate look into the other two rows indicates that the ‘moderate and high political participation’ increase as we move from ‘low social capital’ toward ‘high social capital’ and Chi square coefficient clearly shows the significance in the relationship (P = 0/000). Kendall Tau coefficient C with the value of 159% which shows the significance level of 000% and Gamma index of 393% indicate a very strong relationship. That is to say, social capital can decrease the error in predicting political participation of Nahavandi women up to 40%. However, examining the relationship between various components of social capital, and the relationship between the major index of social capital variable and political participation indicate that , with a very little probability of error, the more the social capital of Nahavandi women, the more the probability of their political participation. Therefore, our hypothesis, which had been proposed based on different studies and theoretical fundamentals, is confirmed at this stage. In other words, based on the data obtained in this study, the hypothesis of a direct and positive relationship between social capital and women’s political participation cannot be rejected.

### The Relationship between Political Participation and Using the Media

The third hypothesis was about the relationship between using mass media and political participation. Based on theoretical issues, it was hypothesized that the more the women’s use of different mass media, the more their political participation. Since domestic mass media include radio, television and the press; we tried to measure respondents’ usage of mass media. Foreign mass media used today, including foreign radio, television and social network were also examined. The index of media usage was created by combining indicators of each group of domestic and foreign media so that its relationship with Nahavani women’s political participation can be examined.

A: The Relationship between Women’s Political Participation and Their usage of Domestic Media.

Table 3: The Relationship between Political Participation and Use of Domestic Media(In Percent)

| Level of Political Participation | Hours of Using Domestic Media |               |              |                   | Total         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|--------------|-------------------|---------------|
|                                  | 0 to 2 Hours                  | 2 to 4 Hours  | 4 to 6 Hours | More than 6 Hours |               |
| Low Political Participation      | 37/4                          | 31/4          | 20           | 10                | 31/3          |
| Moderate political participation | 57                            | 65/7          | 72/5         | 80                | 64/5          |
| High Political Participation     | 5/6                           | 2/9           | 7/5          | 10                | 4/3           |
| Total                            | 26/8<br>(107)                 | 60/5<br>(242) | 10<br>(40)   | 2/7<br>(11)       | 100%<br>(400) |

Kendall Tau C = 079%  
Pearson coefficient = 117%

Significance level = 032/0  
Significance level = 020%

Gamma = 196%

C Kendall tau correlation coefficient, which was calculated to examine the relationship between these two variables, is 079% and has the significance level of 03%. It indicates that such a relationship holds true in the sample. Pearson correlation coefficient is also equal to 117% and has the significance level of 020%. As it is clear, both coefficients show a significant direct relationship between two variables of ‘political participation’ and ‘use of domestic media’. Gamma coefficient of 196% also indicates its moderate intensity of the relationship. It means that the more the usage of domestic media, the more the women’s political participation. Therefore, the proposed hypothesis is confirmed.

The percentages shown in the table also confirm this relationship. For example in the first row of the table, as we move from ‘low use of media’ (zero to 2 hours) toward greater use, the low participation decreases. Conversely, in the second row, as we move from ‘low use of media’ toward ‘high use of media’, political participation in the moderate/medium level increases.

The question which may arise here is “Which one of these three media is more effective in women’s political participation?” When correlation coefficient of each media is calculated separately with regard to women’s political participation, the results obtained will be interesting and not consistent with our expectations. The following table will clarify the issue:

Table 4: The Relationship between Political Participation and Different Kinds of Media

| The Media Used                    | Pearson Value | Significance Level |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Different Kinds of Domestic Radio | -213 %        | 000%               |
| Different Kinds of Domestic Press | 159%          | 000%               |
| Domestic Television Channels      | 198%          | 000%               |

According to the above-table, the lowest correlation is between ‘political participation’ and ‘use of domestic radio’. Two other media have a strong relationship with ‘political participation’. The correlation coefficient between ‘use of press’ and ‘political participation’ is 159%. The significance level is zero, which indicates a very strong relationship with political participation. In other words, we can conclude, with high confidence, that ‘use of domestic press’ is effective in women’s political participation.

The strongest correlation exists between ‘use of television’ and ‘women’s political participation’. It means that among the three kinds of mass media examined in the study, ‘use of television’ has the highest correlation and significance level with women’s political participation; so that it would be very unlikely to make wrong judgments on such a relationship in the sample population. The probability of making wrong judgments is below 5%. As noted above, if these conclusions hold true, the error probability of which is very low, they can be used in developing political campaign strategies for attracting more participation in different kinds of political participations. The reason is that these data show investment on television, for political campaigns, is more effective than any other medium.

**B- The Relationship between Women’s Political Participation and Use of Foreign Media**

On the other hand, the relationship between foreign media and women’s political participation was examined. The Pearson coefficient was 062% and the significance level was 21%. The correlation between these two variables was not considered as acceptable and important. In general, there is not any relationship between ‘the use of foreign media’ and ‘women’s political participation’ and if there is any, it is very weak.

**The Relationship between Political Participation and Membership in Organizations**

In the fourth hypothesis, ‘the effect of women’s membership in civic organizations’ as well as ‘their access to political figures’ were examined in terms of ‘political participation’. This variable consisted of two components, namely ‘membership in civic organization’ and ‘access to political figures’. By combining these two components, we came to the index of ‘membership in civic organizations and access to political figures’. Since the membership of Nahavandi women in civic organizations and their access to political figures, most of who were men, were very low; in the above-mentioned index, 82/5% of respondents did not have any kind of membership or access either.

Table 5: The Relationship between Political Participation and Access to Political Figures (In Percent)

| Level of Political Participation | Membership in Organizations |              | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|-------|
|                                  | No Membership               | Membership   |       |
| Low Political Participation      | 33/3                        | 21/4         | 31/2  |
| Moderate Political Participation | 63/6                        | 68/6         | 64/5  |
| High political Participation     | 3                           | 10           | 4/3   |
| Total                            | 82/5<br>(330)               | 17/5<br>(70) | 100%  |

The data obtained in the above table are very much similar to those obtained in table 6. The results suggest that there is a clear relationship between two indices.

The calculated Chi square coefficient with 44/9 at the 009% level is significant. That is, with error probability of 9 in 10000, we can say the political participation of those with ‘membership’ and ‘access’ is different from those without ‘membership’ and ‘access’. The obtained Cramer's V Coefficient (V) was also 154% which shows a good relationship between these two variables. According to these data and the coefficients, we cannot reject the

hypothesis and we have to admit that Nahavandi women who are members of civic organizations and have more access to political figures are more likely to participate in political activities.

**The Relationship between Political Participation and Political Participation Experience**

The fifth hypothesis of the study was about the effect of past political experiences of women on their current political activities. It means the individual who has had a positive evaluation of his past political participation is more likely to participate in political activities than the one who had a negative evaluation. Therefore, these two categories were combined and their relationship with political participation was assessed. The results are shown in the table below.

Table 6: The Relationship between Political Participation and Negative or Positive Evaluation of the Past Participations (In Percentage)

| Political Participation Level            | Assessment of political Activities |                     |            | Total |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|-------|
|  | Positive Assessment                | Negative Assessment | No Idea    |       |
| Low Political Participation              | 25/5                               | 43/8                | 36/1       | 31/2  |
| Moderate/Average Political Participation | 70/3                               | 51/4                | 61/1       | 64/5  |
| High Political Participation             | 4/2                                | 4/8                 | 2/8        | 4/3   |
| <b>Total</b>                             | 64/8<br>(259)                      | 26/2<br>(105)       | 9<br>(360) | 100%  |

Kendall Tau B 139%  
Chi Square = 76/12

Significance level = 0/004  
Significance level = 01%

Gamma = 265%

According to the above table, low participation percentage of those who had a positive assessment is less than those with negative assessment; however, percentage of those who had no idea is greater than those with positive assessment. In the second row, the percentage of moderate-participation in those with negative assessment is less than those with positive assessment; however, the percentage of individuals with no-idea is less than both groups. As for the third row, the percentage of high-participation in those with positive assessment is less than those with negative assessment; however, the percentage of individuals with no-idea is greater than both groups.

Chi square coefficient of 76/12 and significance level of 001% indicate a big difference in distribution of two variables. Kendall coefficient of 139%, significance level of 004% and Gamma coefficient of 265% indicate an acceptable significant relationship between the two variables. Therefore, if the significance level of 05% is required to confirm the hypothesis, then this hypothesis cannot be rejected. Thus, the more positive the individual's evaluation of her past political participation, the more her future political participation would be.

**The Relationship between Political Participation and Political Efficacy**

The sixth hypothesis was about the relationship between women's political participation and their perception about efficacy of their political activities. To examine this variable, two questions of the questionnaire were employed to create the index of political efficacy. Here is a review of the relationship between political efficacy and political participation. Table 8 illustrates this relationship.

Table 7: The Relationship between Political Participation and Respondents Opinions on Efficacy of Their Political Activities (In Percent)

| Political Participation                 | Efficacy of Political Activities |                 |              | Total        |
|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
|   | Low                              | Moderate/Medium | High         |              |
| Low Political Participation             | 48/6                             | 16/3            | 35/5         | 31/3         |
| Moderate/Medium Political Participation | 49/3                             | 77/9            | 59/7         | 64/5         |
| High Political Participation            | 2                                | 5/8             | 4/8          | 4/2          |
| <b>Total</b>                            | 37<br>(148)                      | 47/5<br>(190)   | 15/5<br>(62) | 100<br>(400) |

Kendall Tau B = 196%  
Chi Square = 41/87

000% level of significance  
000% level of significance

Gamma= 335%

The figures of the above-table suggest a direct and clear relationship between these two variables. In the first row of the table, as we move from 'Low Efficacy' toward 'High Efficacy', the 'low political participation' decreases. Conversely, in the second and third rows, as we move toward 'high efficacy', the percents of medium and high participation increase.

Thus, there is a clear relationship between the two variables; a mere look at the calculated coefficients also confirms such as relationship. The Chi square coefficient is 87/41 and it is significant at 000% level. It indicates that sampling error in the relationship is very unlikely and probability of error is zero. Kendall's tau coefficient B with the value of 196%, which is significant at the level of 000%, also proves the existence of such a relationship in the population. The coefficient indicates that the relationship is positive or direct and it has a moderate intensity.

Gamma coefficient of 335% also shows the moderate to severe intensity of the relationship. According to these data, the hypothesis is not rejected. In other words, the more the sense of political efficacy, the more the women's political participation.

**Multivariate Regression Analysis of the Factors Affecting Political Participation**

The regression analysis aims to determine the contribution and effect of major variables of the research on explaining and predicting the dependent variables (political participation). For multiple regression analysis, the independent variables were entered stepwise into the model. In this method, the variables having the highest R2 are first entered in the equation. With entering each new variable, all the variables in the equation are reassessed. If any of the variables does not have the necessary conditions, it will be taken out of the equation.

The table below illustrates the final result of this analysis in order of significance level, from the highest to the lowest.

Table 8: Table of Multivariate Regression Analysis Coefficients of Political Participation Index and other Variables

| Name of Independent Variable       | F Coefficient Value | Significance Level | Beta Coefficient Value | Significance Level | R Squared Value |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Social Capital                     | 18/247              | 000%               | 176%                   | 000%               | 044%            |
| Social Class                       | 15/433              | 000%               | 159%                   | 002%               | 072%            |
| Political Efficacy                 | 13/004              | 000%               | 137%                   | 005%               | 090%            |
| Political Participation Experience | 10/850              | 000%               | 112%                   | 021%               | 109%            |
| Mass Media                         | 12/098              | 000%               | 134%                   | 006%               | 121%            |
| Membership in Civic Organizations  | ---                 | 000%               | 087%                   | 081%               | ---             |

According to the table above, among the independent variables examined in this study, the social capital is the one which has the greatest impact on Nahavandi women's participation. Social capital includes network of relations (such as family members, friends, and neighbors), social confidence and social interaction. Since the other independent variables are controlled in this analysis, the resulting Beta coefficient is called 'Partial Regression', which is a standardized coefficient and its value is comparable to Beta coefficients of other variables. F coefficient value and social capital Beta are 247/18 and 176%, respectively. And its significance level is less than 0.0001. Yet again, the multivariable regression analysis also confirms the hypothesis that the higher the women's social capital, the higher their political participation.

The second independent variable entered in the equation is 'women's social class position', Beta coefficient of which is 159% and less effective on Nahavandi women's political participation than the previous independent variable. As shown in the table, by controlling other independent variables, F coefficient and Beta coefficient value of this variable are 433/15 and 159% respectively. The significance level of this relationship is 002% and its determination coefficient was 72%. With this variable added to the regression equation, the multivariate determination coefficient was increased up to 028%. Finally, we can conclude that this hypothesis is also confirmed. That is, the higher the social class of women, the higher their political participation.

The third variable entered into the equation was 'Political Efficacy'. Considering the fact that Beta coefficient or standardized partial regression coefficient for this variable was 137% and the coefficient of the variable F was 004/13; the significance level of this relation is 005%. By adding this variable to the regression equation, the determination coefficient reached the value of 018%. Thus, these three variables together account for about 090% of changes in the dependent variables. Based on these data, the hypothesis, on the effect of using mass media on political participation of Nahavandi women, is confirmed.

The fourth variable entered into the multivariate regression equation was the 'political participation experience'. Its F and Beta coefficients were 850/10 and 112% respectively. And it has added 19% to the coefficient of determination. With the other variables controlled, this variable does not lose its impact on political participation. With a significance level of above 021%, it increases the explanatory power of women's political participation about 19 percents. In other words, the hypothesis, which proposes Nahvandi women with positive experience of political participation are more likely to get involved in political participation, is confirmed.



The last independent variable, which is entered into the equation with an acceptable significance level, is the women's use of mass media. This variable, with significance level of 006%, increases the coefficient of determination up to 12%. Therefore, this hypothesis, which proposes that increased use of mass media can lead to more participation of women in political participation, is also confirmed.

Thus, from all proposed hypotheses in multivariate regression analysis, 5 hypotheses are confirmed and one is rejected. And 5 independent variables of these hypotheses together account for 12% of the changes in the dependent variable, namely women's political participation. Obviously, this amount not accounted for women's political participation in Nahavand is dependent upon other factors which must be explained by the help of those factors

In any case, the multivariate regression equation resulted from this analysis using Beta coefficient is formed as follows:

Women's Political Participation= Fixed amount (899%) + Social Capital (176%) + Social Class (159%) + Political Efficacy (137%) + Use of Mass Media (134%) + Political Participation Experience (112%) + the remaining.

## **Conclusion**

As mentioned, 400 questionnaires finally met the necessary requirements for entering into the study. They were used as the basis for subsequent analyses. The mother respondents were the women with 18 years of age and older with the mean age of 32. Approximately 75% of them were married and 18/5 % single. The literacy level of 75/2 % of them was higher than guidance school. 52/2 % of them were households and 27/3% of them were employed whether full time or part time. The average income of the respondent families was 2040000 RLS and 75% of them were among the middle and lower class. In terms of electoral political participation, 75/2 % of our sample had voted in various elections in the past four years. As for political activities, most of them had little interest in politics and political discussions. 47/8% of them had not participated in any demonstrations or protests, only 2% of them had active membership in a political organization.

The vast majority of these women had a low political participation; relatively 31/2% of them had a low political participation, 64/5% had an average political participation and 4/3% had high participation.

Thus, it can be concluded that the political participation of women is often passive, and not stimulated by or at the level of political masses. That is why women's participation at the female elite level is not high. In other words, the numbers of women who are at the head of state, government or parliament are not high enough to be significant in the world of politics.

Since mass media can affect women's political knowledge and attitudes, they were also examined in this study. This study shows that women's use of three domestic media including radio, TV and the press is three hours and eight minutes per day. This figure for foreign media was one hour and 23 minutes or about an hour and a quarter per day. Women's membership in civic organizations was very low, about 23%. And about sixty percent of these women had a positive evaluation of their previous political experiences.

Political efficacy was another variable examined in this study. More than 57/2% of the respondents considered peoples' voting in elections as effective and about 57/5 % of them evaluated their political activities as being little or very effective.

Another variable examined in the study was 'social capital'. Social capital of 31% of the respondents was low, 59/7% was average and 9/3% was high. Thus, the respondents' social capital is moderate-to-low.

Five hypotheses of the study were reconfirmed by multivariate regression analysis; but one of the hypotheses was not confirmed. This is because the independent variables pertaining to the rejected hypotheses are highly correlated with the confirmed variables. By exerting part of their effects through stronger variables, these variables have lost their significance. However, hypotheses 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 were the five hypotheses which were confirmed in this way. That is, the hypotheses raised regarding the relationship between women's political participation and other independent variables including social capital, social status, political efficacy were confirmed.

The obtained multivariate regression equation indicates that the women's political participation is correlated with independent variables of social capital, social status, political efficacy and political participation experience in order of relationship intensity. In other words, the maximum direct and positive impact belongs to women's social capital with Beta of 176% and the minimum and acceptable impact belongs to the independent variable of political participation experience with Beta of 112%. However, elimination of some variables in the multivariate regression equation does not mean that they do not have any relationship with the dependent variable; it only means, in spite of the remaining variables, these variables do not have a linear significant relationship with the dependent variable. It should be mentioned that the obtained equation with cumulative coefficient of determination of 121% accounts for almost 12% of changes in dependent variables; and the rest of changes are due to the nonlinear relationship between these variables or other variables with political participation.

In the final analysis, the path analysis model for the remaining variables of the equation was drawn and the total direct and indirect relations of the independent variables on women's political participation were calculated. According to this study, social capital variable has the maximum direct and indirect impact on women's political participation. Other variables, in order of importance, included social status, political efficacy, mass media and political participation experience.

## REFERENCES

1. Panahi, M. H. (2004), the impact of mass media on political participation, *Journal of Communication Sciences*, Allameh Tabatabai University, No. 28-29, Winter - Spring Page 90-91
2. Lahsayizadeh A. A, Bavar ,y(2002), Student Attitudes Towards Women's Political Participation, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Allameh Tabatabai University, No.19, Page 138
3. Imam Khomeini, *Scriptures*, Volume 18, p. 403
4. Rush, M. (1998), *Community and Policy* , Translated by Manouchehr Saburi, Tehran, SAMT Publications, 1377, Page 123
5. Niazi, M. (2002), (Explanation of the barriers to social participation in Kashan), PhD Thesis in Sociology, Isfahan University, (2000).Page 32
6. Winer, M, & Huntington, S.p. (2000), *Understanding Political Development* Translated and Published by Institute for Strategic Studies, Tehran, Page 140
7. McClosky, E. (1993), 'Political Participation' *The International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, page 252).
8. Panahi, M. H.(2007), *Sociology of Women's Political Participation*, Allameh Tabatabai Publication, Tehran, Page 88
9. Marx,k & Engels, F.(1977), *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, Vol.10, Progress Publishers, Moscow, No. 110-111
10. Lipset,semour M, *political man*,anchor books, new york, 1960, page 184
11. Lipset,semour M, *political man*,anchor books, new york, 1960, page 184
12. Dowerje, M.(1982), *Political Sociology*, Translated by Abolfazl Ghazi, Second Edition, Tehran University Publication, 1, Page 217
13. Dahi, R,(1984), *Modern Political Analysis*, Fourth Edition (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Page 99).
14. Homans,G.C.the general proposition of exchange theory.in alin wells.contemporary sociological theories. goodyear publishingcompanyinc.california. 1978.pp.130-145
15. Rush, M. (1998), *Community and Policy* , Translated by Manouchehr Saburi, Tehran, SAMT Publications, 1377, Page 140
16. Mosaffa, N, 1996, *Women's Political Participation in Iran*, Foreign Ministry Publication, Page 21
17. Panahi, M. H.(2007), *Sociology of Women's Political Participation*, Allameh Tabatabai Publication, Tehran, Page 88
18. Putnam, R, (2001), *Democracy and Civil Traditions (Italian experience and lessons for countries in transition)* Translated by Mohammad Taghi Delfrouz, Tehran, Salam Magazine Publication, Page 285
19. Panahi, M. H, Yazdanpanah, L, (2007), Effects of Individual Characteristics and Social Participation, *Journal of Social Sciences*, Allameh Tabatabaee University, No.25, Summer, Page 96
20. Rush, M. (1998), *Community and Policy* , Translated by Manouchehr Saburi, Tehran, SAMT Publications, 1377, Page 108
21. Panahi, M. H.(2007), *Sociology of Women's Political Participation*, Allameh Tabatabai Publication, Tehran, Page 115