

A HISTORY OF ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF BALUCHWOMEN IN IRANIAN SOCIETY: BEFORE AND AFTER THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is investigating the historical procedure of the active presence of Baluch women in social and political arenas before and after Islamic revolution. The research method is review) documentary- library(. Due to the fact that Baluch women in Iran have been less studied, this research is innovative. The results of this study show that, although Baluchwomen has had a more active presence in social and political arenas after the Islamic revolution of Iran but there are barriers on their way including ethnical and cultural obligations of families, patriarchal and some of the political rules and factors, today, the capacity of Baluch women participation in political and social arenas in region level has increased due to the increasing number of educated Baluchwomen. But this participation is subdominant and traditional. It is recommended that politicians and planners pay attention to these obstacles to develop social and political participation of Baluchwomen and provide a context for their active participation in these fields more than the past.

KEYWORDS : Baluch Women, Baluch, Political Participation, Social Participation

More than half of the population of the society are women and political and social rights of women in Iran is discussed seriously with a political and religious nature. In legislative institutions, we observe that the enactment of law about women leads to negotiations with high tensions and sometimes leads to argument and the opposite points of views are obvious. Undoubtedly, the development of our country is not possible without creating the necessary context for providing ability maker opportunities for the general public) both male and female (and different ethnic groups. The center of this development is an aware, creative and free human and human capital have a unique role in this development. Development of the country requires attention to the fact that creating equal opportunities in all fields, will lead to the participation of different groups of people in the social, political, cultural and economic development of the country without discrimination and gender inequality. The mutual interaction between development of the countries and women participation is not unknown today and it is a causal relationship. On one hand, utilization of all human resources and not make half of the human resources wait in the development route and not simply relying on the natural resources of society, leads the countries toward development. On the other hand, the development of societies leads to the increase of political participation of women and improvement of their social status (Rash, Translated by Saburi, 2008). In addition to gender, ethnicity factor which is used by elites, political

parties and ethnic identity seekers are considered as effective variables on the participation rate and political behavior in ethnic areas such as Baluchistan region and the gaps between political participation and public participation in ethnic areas is considered a damage. Baluch society which is located in south east of Iran country is one of the complex population of the country which have had a prominent and determinant role in the political and social destiny of the country, but, the role of Baluch women who constitute the majority of population in that region is not significant (Afshar Sistani, 1991). What really prevented the Baluch women to enter easily to different social scenes and get their normal rights without discrimination? What is clear is that Baluch women have had especial limitations or deprivation and have confronted with many obstacles for their political, social and cultural improvement and they don't have much power to take their social and political rights.

The situation of women is paradoxical, the foundation of such contradictions rooted in the dominant structures in the society and social, economic, cultural and political affairs. This research aims to investigate the active presence of Baluch women in social and political fields before and after the Islamic revolution in Iran. It is hoped that this research be able to present solutions for enhancement of the social and political participation of Baluchwomen in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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The Research Questions

Before the Islamic Revolution, how had been the condition of political and social participation of Baluch women in Iran?

After the Islamic Revolution, how has been the condition of political and social participation of Baluch women in Iran?

Which factors are affective on the social-political participation of Baluchwomen in Iran?

The Concept of Social and Political Participation

Multiplicity and extent of local and non-governmental organizations in a society indicates the existence of social participation in that society, so that the civil society is defined based on the development and expansion of social participations and civic organizations (Daneshmandi, 1997). So, the social participation can be considered as an organized process which is conducted by the members of society, consciously, voluntarily and with a specific purpose. Based on the features of Iran society, it seems that the most important and powerful institution in the formation of social participation can be religion. Because, in Islam, religious teachings emphasize on behaviors which provides the formation context of social participations. Social participation is a factor which enhances solidarity in social networks and the rate of people's social participation shows the development level of the society.

Also, the political participation can be defined as the increase of demands for contributing in power and political decisions by people. The purpose of participation is activating groups and individuals who were indifferent (Ghavam, 1994).

Huntington and Nelson said in the first critique of the development liberal theories which considers the political participation as the certain product of economic and social development "the economic and social development does not lead necessarily to political expansion and development, and only in very long periods) based on the experience of western developed countries (an acceptable relationship between higher levels of social and economic development and higher levels of political participation can be observed, but in general, factors such as immigration, external wars, religious and ideological

interests act completely independent of economic development, and enhance the collective awareness, involve in the organizations and intensifies the government activities which is likely to increase the political participation (Rezaee, 1996). In conclusion it can be said that political participation is the organized efforts of citizens to choose their leaders and involve effectively in social and political affairs and also influence the formation of government policies and conduce them (Agha Bakhshi and Afshari Rad, 1995).

Baluch Race

The ancient background of this race and its establishment time in this natural and deprived geographical region, and what impelled Baluch people to live in this arid triangle, is not clear. The main home of Baluch people is Baluchistan, which is called "Makran" in old historical books. This name changed to "Baluchistan" in Nader Shah era. Baluch people live in Pakistan, Iran and Afghanistan and speak Baluchi language which is one of the Iranian languages. Baluch is one of the most civilized tribes which lives in Iran plateau which had migrated in three era along with its culture, customs, manners, morals and humanity from the North West and had selected Baluchistan to be settled. Baluch tribe is organized in the form of tens of large and small tribes. Baluch race have 150 small and large tribes. Although, in different historical eras, the central government tried to control its tribes and commanders, but in the times that the central government was weak, Baluch commanders started to expand their territory (Zarghami and Ansarizadeh, 2012).

The existence of semi-feudal structure in the south of Baluchistan and commander structure in the north of Baluchistan, had been effective on the type of socio-political relations and economic relations with other tribes which settled in this area, and with the other neighboring tribes. It means that the militancy spirit in the north tribes and tribes in the border of Iran- Baluchistan is more than the south tribes; because the south tribes depended on agriculture and the north tribes depended on the movements caused by Shepherding and animal husbandry. The commander and tribal structure had changed basically by the emergence of the modern government.

Commander system in Baluchistan and the tribal constitution was changed with the emergence of the modern state. In Pahlavi era, this structure was broken more (AssarianNezhad, 2004). When the Islamic Republic of Iran won, the traditional commander structure was weakened, but restarted its activity in new templates such as Molaviha (PishgahiFard and OmidiAvaj, 2009).

Baluchorigin

There is no consensus about the origin of Baluch tribe. The main argument in this field is based on two theories, Iranian origin (Aryan) and Arab origin. The second theory believes that the origin of Baluch ethnic is the descendants of Hamze the uncle of the prophet. But, the first theory states that Baluch ethnic has an Iranian origin and considers that the second theory doesn't have any historical documentation. The majority of writers and sociologists agree that the race of Baluch ethnic is Aryan. Due to the geographical location of the region, Baluch ethnic has kept its race very well. National Commission of UNESCO said about Baluch, ethnic "without doubt, Baluch ethnic separated from Aryans tribes and had passed the north regions and had come to the south regions and similarity of Baluch language with ancient language confirms this issue".

Ataullah Mingel, one of the Baluch political leaders in Pakistan, said, "We are like Aryan Kurds, we are not Semitic, If we leave Baluchi language as they (the Arabs) want, how can we call ourselves Baluch? We can't leave our language and identity" (Ahmadi, 2010).

Women and Elections in Sistan&Baluchistan Province

After the Islamic Revolution, women's participation in decision-making process was developed in the province. This participation is conducted in two levels of public participation such as participation in the revolution, participation in the periodic elections and participation in groups and forums, participation in administrative affairs. In different periods of the Islamic parliament in Sistan & Baluchistan Province, the number of female candidates was very low, so that during the first four periods of the Islamic parliament, no women became candidate and just in the fifth and sixth periods of the Islamic parliament women had activity, although their activity was very pale but it can be a conjunction point for further civic and decision making participation of women in the future.

But in the ninth parliamentary elections, political participation of women became more obvious by the presence of a Baluch woman in Parliament. "HalimeAali" was a physician and the first woman from Sistan&Baluchistan in the legislative arena. She achieved one of 293 green chairs of the parliament by 70000 votes of 115428 votes of Zabul, Zahakand Hirmand people in the second phase of the ninth parliamentary election, while the prevailing atmosphere of this region was reluctant about the entrance of women to the managerial arena.

The route which reached from the ninth parliamentary elections in Sistan-Baluchistan to Baharestan had been the result of the first term of city and village council's elections in 1990. Before this female doctor, the first glimmer of hope for women's participation in managerial and decision-making levels in deprived province of Sistan&Baluchistan was kindled in seventh and eighth government by the entrance of women like "ZeinabKhosravi" to Iranshahr council and also her election as the president of Iranshahr council.

What is important is that since 1997, the political participation of women in Sistan & Baluchistan province has increased, which the maximum participation was in the elections of city and village councils, which 296 women became candidate and finally 33 women were elected in the village and city councils (Karim Koshte et al., 2004).

Over time, the political participation of women in society has shown a growing procedure and in the third period of councils' elections, seven thousand and fifty three women enrolled as candidate and in 2006, twelve thousands and eighty seven candidates of Islamic council of city and village were women. Sistan& Baluchistan province has a growing procedure in this field and in 2013, 587 women became candidate for Islamic council of city and village in Sistan& Baluchistan province and the significant participation of women made Sistan& Baluchistan province the sixth province in the country in terms of the highest women participation. The below table shows the number of participants in the election of Islamic council of city and village in Sistan& Baluchistan province in 2014.

Province	The number of participants	The number of men	The number of women
Sistan and Baluchistan	15200	14663	587

Although Baluch people didn't have a significant and determinant role in struggling against Pahlavi regime due to their extreme deprivation in cultural and political fields, when the Islamic revolution of Iranian people became serious, Baluch people joined the revolution and moved along with the revolution processes until the revolution obtained victory and became stabilized and established; in holy defense era, they fought with the dictatorship regime of Iraq and dedicated hundreds of martyr and wounded soldiersto the Islamic Revolution to defend Iran borders, and in this way, they strenghtend and deepened their relation and linkage with the Islamic Revolution and its excellentgoals.

The Conducted Studies on the Women's Role in Sistan & Baluchistan Province

Taleb et al., 2004 has noted that differences in education level in the two ethnic groups (Baluch and non-Baluch) lead to the formation of two different points of views about women's role. Increase of education provides the context for accepting the change of women's role. So, those people who have more education, agree more with women's activity out of home and having a social role outside the family's frame. The dominant and central norm, which states that women are housekeepers and men have occupations and in sociological terms, gender segregation in private / public sector has been broken. Because non-Baluch people have higher educational levels, they agree more with the change of women's role, but Baluch people emphasize on the traditional aspects of women's identity and there is a significant difference between Baluch and non Baluch people about this issuein Sistan & Baluchistan province. Baluch and non-Baluch ethnic groups in Sistan&Baluchistan province have significant difference in educational levels, which it is intensified in higher educational levels. As education level increases, this inequality is intensified, which it can be due to the existence of obstacles)individual or collective(against education growth. In other words, the limitation of Baluchpeople accessto higher levels of education is more. Educational gap between men and women in Baloch and non-Baloch tribe in

Sistan& Baluchistan provinceis different. Rate of illiteracy among Baluchwomen is about twice of Baluchmen. While the rate of illiteracy among non- Baluch does not have significant difference with non Baluch men. Inequalities between Baluch men and women is intensified in higher educational levels, so that the ratio of Baluch women who have university degree to Baluch men who have university degree is 1/5. It means that Baluch women confront with more limitations for educational growth and access to higher educational levels. The interesting issue is that the ratio of educated persons is inversedin non -Baluch women and men, meaning that the educational gap between non -Baluchmen and women decreases at higher educational levels.

This means that Baluch women are the most deprived group in terms of access to education (Taleb et al, 2004). The obtained results from measurement of Iranianvalues and attitudes in 2000 shows that social acceptance of women's changing roles in Zahedan were lower. Based on these results, from the total respondents whom live in the province centers, 67 percent agreed with women's employment, while this value was 40 percent in Zahedan (Taleb et al., 2004).

The obtained information from survey in four cities ofSistan& Baluchistan province in 2001 showed that 57 percent wereagree with women'semployment. These data suggest two points. First, there is a polarized attitude about women's employment, this means that there are little hesitant responses about this matterand just 4% of respondents had doubts about it.

On the other hand, although there is not any longitudinal information available about the attitude towards the role of women in Sistan& Baluchistan, by comparing the data of the whole country in 1974 and also the attitude's change, we can judge that a serious change has been made in the attitudes of the residents of Sistan& Baluchistan province. In other words, the new norms about women has opened a new place for itself in relations and if the social conditions continues, it is expected that the social acceptance rate of this norm be increased. As the family

dimension increases, the rate of agreement with women's employment decreases. This somehow reflects the condition of the family. Smaller families are practically the products of modern attitudes and it is usual that they express more agreement about modern and novel thoughts (Taleb et al, 2004).

Non-Baluch women agree with women's employment more than Baluch women. Similarly, non-Baluchmen have expressed more agreement with the idea of women's employment. The gap between women and men is equal in both ethnic and religious groups. The relationship between ethnicity and religion and women's employment is significant in both sexes and its intensity is approximately equal. Non-Baluchwomen have shown greater acceptance toward the change of their role than Baluch women. Multivariable model confirms this difference. As education level increases, the agreement ratio with women's employment increases in both groups, but the remaining difference must be due to factors other than education. Perhaps, part of Sunni women's attitude is originated from cultural or religious values of Sunni group. The influence of education shows that the different of Sunni attitude is to some extent due to the low education level in this group. Education inequality is observed between men and women. Illiteracy rate in women is more than men. The inequality between men and women increases in higher educational levels. Women constitute more than half of the illiterates in the province while women constitute only 5 percent of people with university degree in the province. Based on the conducted studies in the field of educational, cultural and employment differences of women in Sistan and Baluchistan province and some of the national researches, it is recognized that Sunni women are the most deprived group. This group has a lower contribution in educational system than Sunni men or Shia women, so that the rate of illiteracy in this group is 2.5 times greater than Shia women. As we move to higher educational levels, the intensity of inequality increases sharply in this group. One percent of Baluch women has university education, while the proportion of non-Baluchwomen is 10 percent.

The comparison of women in two religious group shows that the educational inequalities is more for women than men in both groups. This means that deprivation from

education or not having access to education among Sunni women is more than other groups and this means access of different religious groups to educational system is not the same and Sunni women are the most deprived of other groups (Taleb et al, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Based on the studies, it seems that political participation of Baluchwomen has grown, but these participations are more related to vote, and in some cases to register for the elections. It is noteworthy that in 2013, women in Sistan & Baluchistan had a more active presence in the elections of City and Village Council than previous periods. So that Sistan & Baluchistan province was introduced as the sixth province in women presence level as candidate in the elections of City and Village Council and this is a strength point that women in this province have come to believe that they can have more social and political activities. But always, women in this province has confronted with obstacles for presence and participation in social and political activities.

Sometimes they face with families disagreement which these disagreements appear more for study in higher levels of education and supplementary education. Although Baluch women hope to get a suitable job and be employed in the future by attending university classes and increasing their education level because education can increase their participation in the society, but they face the disagreement of their friends and family, and many of the traditional Baluch families disagree with women's employment (Taleb, et al., 2004). The point which is noted in this research is that, as the education level of family increases they agree more with the women employment and accept the change of women's role in the society and prefer more social participation of women. Perhaps on this basis and according to the results of different researches, the lack of knowledge and awareness of Baluch families can be noted as an obstacle to social and political participation of Baluchwomen, which increasing their knowledge and awareness can reduce some of the obstacles. One point which is seen in Baluch society more than other tribes is that Baluch people focus on traditional aspects of women's

identity. Baloch women still suffer structural inequalities in this society and have less access to education than men. Baloch women have less university degree than Baluch men, and there are more limitations for them in Baloch society. And the social acceptance of the change of women's role in Sistan & Baluchistan, especially in Baluch tribe is low (Taleb et al., 2004), and it is noted as one of the challenges to women's social and political participation. Taleb et al., 2004 has pointed that the traditional attitude to the role of women in Zahedan city is more than this attitude level in the whole country, and there is still a traditional view about women's role in the society and women still confront with more obstacles and opponents for continuing their study at higher educational levels and employment than other women. Violence against Baluch women is one of the challenges which they face for political participation. Perhaps it could be said that the eradication of violence against women is a requirement for Baluch women's health and their social and political participation.

Violence against Baluch women means any violent action which is related to gender and can cause psychological- mental damage or suffering of Baluch women, and the contributing factors include family, and public society and governments. Considering these points, approval of new rules and implementing preventive ways to struggle with violence against Baluch women has significance importance and requires national intention and public efforts. In this case, several rules should be developed or revised in criminal matters to create perfect and professional standards. Rules related to violence should be focused on prevention of violence, while it should also emphasize on the rehabilitation of violence victims and making culture against violence can be very effective (Ketabi, 2008). Gender discrimination against Baluch women is another challenge which they confront for political and social participation. To some extent, reduction of gender discrimination among Baluch tribe can increase their social and political participation. Based on the last report of the World Economic Forum about reduction of gender discrimination in developing countries, it is identified that the economy plays an important role in gender discrimination in

countries, and countries must also use all the facilities for gender discrimination. This convention has defined five sections for investigation of women condition and countries has been classified on this basis. This classification includes labor rights, employment of women in managerial affairs, education, health services, which by reviewing the relevant rules and revising them, it is possible to give a new color to Baluch women's social and political participation. Baluch women's empowerment is one of the actions which can lead to increase their social and political participation. Teaching skills to Baluch women can improve their capabilities. Supportive organizations can increase women capabilities through women's entrepreneurship and support and more capabilities can lead to more social participation of Baluch women. Barriers of participation in all fields should be identified to enhance the social and political participation of Baluch women and therefore, if the barriers be identified better, then essential actions will be provided for the maximum presence of women in society and decisionmaking for society. Undoubtedly, this action will lead to further ethnic convergence and national cohesion. According to studies, it is seen that there are more limitations for women presence in the society, social and political participation of women among Baluch people in comparison with other ethnic groups in Sistan and Baluchistan province and even in the whole country, although based on the studies, these traditional limitations and attitudes towards women have improved, but up to 2004, these changes did not lead to a great change in political and social participation of Baluch women in society. Some believe that the families' disagreement and social control of acquaintances and prejudice prevented the strong presence of Baluch women in politics and social issues. Some has mentioned to the low awareness level and lack of the spontaneous communities and organizations among women and particularly Baluch women as an obstacle for the political and social presence and participation of Baluch women. It seems that some supportive institutions should be established to increase the social and political participation of Baluch women, and essential awareness should be given to Baluch people in this field and context for greater participation of women in Baloch society should be

provided. Maybe, lack of knowledge of some of the political administrators about women's desires and attitude is a preventive factor for women's participation. It seems in Baluchistan, some managers and administrators have a negative attitude towards women's participation and this attitude originates from the traditional beliefs which have rooted in them. The next conflict is among educated and non-educated people. Given the important effect of education in changing attitudes towards the role of women, higher levels of education have greater acceptance of this issue. The other conflict is between women and men. Men see women's role in the traditional frame, but women want to have more participation in the society. Increase of education level among young Sunni women more favorable background to accept attitude evolutions. Sunni women has accepted the new values more rapidly, but Sunni men show more resistance. In this context, conflicts of Sunni men and women is more than Shia men and women (Goodarzi, 2004). Challenges which young Sunni women confront from family, social values and Sunni religious leaders will be one of the most important evolutions of this society in next years (Goodarzi, 2004). In years after Islamic Revolution of Iran, attention to Baluch women, respect for their dignity and high position in society based on religious and prophetic teachings, development of supreme education was provided; proper efforts and activities of the revolutionary authorities including literacy movement in the field of educating women, and former construction jihad in the field of encouraging and improving the women skills and talents in the field of handicrafts and rural products and increasing the women participation were effective. Furthermore, in the development programs after the revolution, and also in the third development program (Article 158), has discussed women's issues. According to the present capabilities and opportunities in natural resources field in Baluchistan and increase of elite and educated women in this region, a systematic plan in the field of entrepreneurship should be made to help them to have an active participation in the sustainable development of Baluchistan. When rural life's special problems occurs, women in Baluchistan region tries alongside of men to solve the problems of their society. In the specific conditions of rural life which sometimes confronts with war with human

and natural enemies, Baluchistan women carries weapons on their shoulder to struggle against hardships, difficulties and nature, and have a continual presence in helping their spouses. In the world of communication and information and due to the increase of women's growth and awareness, it is obvious that their demands and expectations are expressed at a higher level. Today, women want to have active and serious participation in different stages of major strategic national planning and decision making, because the presence of women in society and increase of her social-political participation is an accepted fact. The presence of women and freedom of thought indicates the growth and rationality of communities. If the mentioned preconditions be fulfilled, we will see in the near future that women in Baluchistan have a strong, consistent and tremendous presence like Zagros Mountains in different social fields, and involve effectively in sustainable development and construction of Iran, and undoubtedly their presence will be significant; we should know that increasing the women participation and their empowerment in Baluchistan isn't incompatible with the development and improvement of living conditions in this region, and women should become an active force for sustainable development of Baluchistan region.

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