

**Evaluating the Role of Education and the Economic Base of Women in  
Promoting the Culture of Environmental Protection in  
Gilane Gharb**

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***Abstract***

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of education and economic status of women in promoting the culture of environmental protection (Case study of employed and unemployed women between 30-45 years old in Gilane Gharb). The statistical population includes all employed and unemployed women. A simple random sampling method and a sample size of 352 people were obtained based on Cochran's formula with the help of a researcher-made questionnaire, which included 100 questions. The necessary information was added to the data. The results show that as the women's age increases, their participation in promoting the culture of environmental preservation decreases and the relationship between women's economic status and their promoting of environmental preservation culture is more meaningful. In other words, the higher economic status of women, the more attention is to the environment.

***Keywords:*** Women's participation, Environment, Promoting environmental culture, Women's role, Education.

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## 1. Introduction

Nowadays the importance of a healthy environment and the necessity of trying to maintain are not overlooked. Protecting the earth's environment without the participation of all countries and nations is impossible. In international legal instruments such as Rio Declaration, Agenda and so on. The main emphasis is on the principles of public participation in environmental protection. By studying these documents, three components are required for public participation. These three components are: the right to access environmental information, public participation in the decision-making process, the access to administrative and judicial authorities in the field of the environment.

The process of human life over the last few centuries shows that development, especially sustainable development, cannot be taken into account regardless of the role of women. Studies in a large number of societies have shown that women are an important factor for growth and development. Their ability to saving and investing in the family is well demonstrated. Women fight with hunger and malnutrition as they care the family. Their great and unwritten role in agriculture explains the survival of societies in marginal lands. But in general, this role of women is ignored in local and regional planning, and women's daily activities are routine and without the specific structural effect. In fact, women have been seen as passive activists in the process of human development. Meanwhile, women's participation with men in all fields represents the recognition of the equality of human values of all walks in life.

The United Nations Summit on Development and the Environment in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 was an important event for women all over the world because it recognized the crucial role of women in achieving a different type of development that is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable, and emphasized their major contribution to environmental management and development.

In most developing countries, cities face a lot of environmental problems and challenges such as lack of proper collection and disposal of waste, the problem of providing safe drinking water, collecting and storing wastewater networks, inaccurate deployment of intrusive activities and pollution caused by traffic jams, etc. Samples are one of the most common environmental problems

in the city; one can endanger the health of the urban population. Because of considering the extent and complexity of environmental issues and the lack of methods and tools for coping with it, the best option is to use public participation. On the other hand, half of the urban population is made up of women, which, according to their direct relationship with other groups (men and children), are among the most effective social groups in the cities.

We see that half of the world's population, due to their type of duties, are inextricably linked with their natural resources and environments and also are more closely related to nature. But the basic point is that women have made progress in their centuries and their method of changing the attitude of others towards accepting their power and abilities (Rahmani, 2009, p. 3).

Women are always in close contact to the environment. They benefit directly or indirectly from it. Women can change the course in many risky behaviors against the environment. If women are aware of environmental problems and methods of coping with them, they will have a great impact on children, family members and others around them. They can play the role of the environmental guardian in addition to taking care of children and working at home and out of the home. Unfortunately, the importance of the work of women and their different practices, especially in the field of the environment, has not yet been acknowledged in many countries.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

The history of human life is the history of cooperation and participation. When it first came to man that it could overcome the difficulties by combining its power. Athens's Democracy crystallized the citizens' desire to determine their own destiny. From the accumulation of the historical experience of humanity, participation in its modern concept has become crystallized. Today, participation is based on a democratic and civil society. In civil society, organizations that are independent of the state in equal conditions and with the same information and facilities provide the basis for the participation of individuals in their own affairs.

Max Weber's Understanding School Participation is associated with the concept of chance or likelihood. The meaning of these words is that the

participation of individuals in social life does not necessarily have an unstable and temporary character, but it means that it is possible to reduce the amount of this chance in different circumstances due to different factors. So, as long as the expectations of individuals are attained socially, the participation of people who are based on the same belief in the order will continue (Tavasoli, 2003, p. 40).

Lerner Empathy considers people to strengthen social participation and believes that urbanization, literacy, media participation, and electoral participation are mutually interactive. The expansion of social institutions increases the activity of individuals in the society, and psychologically, modern personality is more involved in comparison with traditional personality (Khorasani et al., 2012). One of the sociological and theoretical frameworks that can be linked to social participation is the theory of rational choice. Also, humans act based on the rational calculations, although the consequences may not be rational.

Collins considers participation as an opportunity for interacting among individuals (Ritzer, 2010, p. 609). According to Collins, people have more power than others who have more resources in the market for mutual interactions. Also, they have cultural capital and emotional energy, which causes a kind of motivational power and forces them to talk to some who interact with others (Lbid, p. 361).

According to Huntington and Nelson, political and social participation follows the process of economic and social development. Through social mobility and higher social status, this process strengthens the individual's ability to feel and reinforces the attitude of the individual towards making decisions. Also, the development process affects the participation through the organization. Membership in organizations increases the likelihood of participation in social and political activities in societies where social mobility is limited. Huntington also emphasized education and income as two important factors in social participation (Alavi, 2001, p. 46).

Giddens emphasizes the rules and resources of actors in mutual action. Individuals use daily principles; they use them as tools to achieve the goal.

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Resources can be income, occupation, housing or marital status and age (Giddens, 2003).

Based on Blau (1998), social participation should be examined based on the system of social relationships and behavioral rules. He seeks to find out what are the criteria that individuals consider as beneficial for cooperation and participation in the public domain? What behavior is supposed to violate social rules and norms? (Ghafari & Neyazi, 2007, p. 50).

Incels in the framework of the modernization theory, referring to nine criteria for modern man, believes that variables such as urbanization, education, media communication, industrialization, politics, and ideological, value affect modern humans (Mohseni Tabrizi, 1990, p. 12).

The resources and skills that these individuals acquire in their private lives can easily facilitate political participation in those who are in charge of their duty or necessity (Almond & Paul, 2001, p. 138).

Sales explain the factors influencing participation. In his opinion, people are in the midst of social forces (dignity, education, education, religion, etc.). Sales believe that the three variables of social forces, personality differences and social environments are closely interrelated and interlinked (Mohseni Tabrizi, 1990, p. 12).

Colin believes that development is based on the structure of society. He emphasizes mental readiness and the existence of personal motives for the realization of participation and development. Effective participation requires personal incentives. In other words, participation is a mental phenomenon that should be sought in people's thoughts, beliefs, behavior, and culture. To internalize the culture of participation, many pre-fabricated forms must be transformed and this cannot be done without cultural work (Vatani, 2007, p. 32).

Yang, in her book, "Planning and Development with Women," sees women's engagement at all levels of thinking, planning and implementation of development. He points out that because women are valuable resources, they should not simply be seen as simple workers for other developmental plans designed by others. Participation in decision-making here refers to active

participation in the design, implementation and review of sustainable development activities at all levels (Shubhra, 2008).

Lucas (2001) believes that women's participation in the decision-making process is an empowerment process that provides opportunities for decision-making and collective thinking, increases the capacity for critical thinking and raises issues of social justice and collective action towards the goals that society benefits from it. When women are given opportunities, they continue to be able to adapt to adaptive conditions and external influences that shape their lives and their families (Lucas, 2001).

### **3. Hypotheses**

1. There is a meaningful relationship between the age of women and the promotion of a culture in environmental conservation.
2. There is a meaningful relationship between the economic base of women and the promotion of a culture in environmental conservation.
3. There is a significant relationship between the level of education of women and the promotion in environmental culture.

### **4. Methodology**

According to the research subject, the method of doing this research is in the theoretical, library and practical part of the survey. In this research, the unit of analysis is individuals, and considering that the purpose of this research is to examine the role of education and economic base of women in promoting the culture of environmental protection in Gilane Gharb. So this study can be considered applicable. In this research, the statistical society includes all employed and unemployed women (30-45 years old) in Gilane Gharb. The total number of women at this age is about 4746 persons. And the sample size is 352 women. Regarding the nature of the subject matter of the research, the statistical population of the study was simple random sampling. Independent variables are age, household income and education. Variable participation in promoting the culture of environmental preservation is an effort to protect the natural environment in order to maintain the health of the environment and humans at the personal, organizational or governmental levels.

To analyze the data, research questions and hypotheses in two levels of information are studied. Since the science of statistics provides a set of techniques to the researcher and considering that the purpose of processing the data from the questionnaire, which consists of two stages of data collection and analysis of data, at this stage is to decompose the statistical analysis of this study that will be done. This analysis is done in descriptive and analytical manner. So, the validity of the measurement tool is based on judgment of the experts. The Cronbach's alpha value is between 0.83 and indicates that the correlation and interconnection between the terms related to the variables which are appropriate and acceptable.

## **5. Descriptive Findings**

The status of respondents in terms of age indicates that 38% of women are in the age group of 30-35 years old, 42% in the age group of 36-40, and 20% in the age group of 41-45 years old. The data shows that the highest age group is for individuals aged 36-40 and the lowest age group is 41-45 years old. The status of respondents, on the basis of education, shows that 57% of respondents have completed their bachelor's degree, 29% master's degree and higher, 11% associate degree and 3% diploma. Also, the accountability situation in terms of monthly household income shows that 23 percent of the sample population has a household income of less than 1.5 million, 52 percent between one and a half to three millions, as well as 25 percent of households spending more than 3 million at a month.

## **6. Data analysis**

H1: There is a meaningful relationship between the age of women and the promotion of a culture in environmental conservation.

According to the results of Table 1, since the test level is significant ( $\text{sig}=0.00$ ) and less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected and the directional hypothesis is accepted. The correlation coefficient between the two variables is equal to -0.555 and is significant at 1% of error level. And the correlation between the two variables is negative and reciprocal and is relatively good.

This table shows that as women grow older, their participation in promoting the culture of environmental preservation decreases.

**Table1. Pearson correlation test between two variables(promoting the culture of environmental protection and age)**

			The test value
		Pearson correlation	-0.555
The promotion of a culture of environmental conservation	age	Level of significance	0.000
			frequency
			352

H2: There is a meaningful relationship between the economic base of women and the promotion of a culture in environmental conservation.

According to the results of Table 2, with an emphasis on (sig= 0/000; F= 0.477), and less than 0.05, we can suggest a significant relationship between the economic base of women and the promotion of a culture of preservation in the environment has. Therefore, the hypothesis of the researcher is confirmed. In other words, the higher the economic base of women, the more their attention is to environmental protection.

**Table 2. One-way analysis of variance analysis of women's economic base and promoting an environmental conservation culture**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	1.409	6	0.699	0.477	0.000
Inside of whole groups	421.411	346	1.714	-	-
Total	422.820	352			

H3: There is a significant relationship between the level of education of women and the promotion of environmental culture.

According to the results of Table 3, one-way ANOVA, the difference between the promotion of environmental conservation culture and the degree of education is shown. The value of the test statistic is (sig= 0/000; F=22/164), which is less than 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the



research hypothesis is confirmed. There is a significant difference between the promotion of environmental preservation culture among the graduate students, undergraduate and postgraduate students.

**Table3. ANOVA table comparing the promotion of environmental conservation culture among the four groups**

Source of change	Sum of squares	Degrees of freedom	Average squares	F	Sig
Between whole groups	18304.898	5	3660.980	22.164	0.000
inside of whole groups	39147.185	347	165.178	-	-
total	57452.082	352			

## 7. Discussion and Conclusion

Huntington and Nelson (1979) argue that whatever individuals belong to a higher social class and base, they will have a higher degree of participation. The findings of this study indicate that these variables are not related to social participation. The explanation that can be made for this result is that the satisfaction of life and work, and in general, the satisfaction of the community of the place of residence, can be sustained in any positive social action, including the participation of citizens (women) to promote the culture of environmental protection. This is the same as the Grunebery theory (Rafipour, 1993). From their point of view, they pass the consent or dissatisfaction of a part of life to other parts.

Therefore, a citizen who is satisfied with his or her life will be more likely to participate in various social affairs. Husseinzadeh (2006) & Kousari (2005) showed that social satisfaction has a significant impact on increasing participation. Sociologically, when people feel that they have social inequalities, they are discriminated against in comparison with others or in comparison with other areas of their urban area; it is natural to not respond to the basic need of urban authorities, which is to participate in urban affair.

The efforts of countries that have a good economic situation, including Japan, South Korea, China, etc. to engage women in environmental decision-making and to provide government and private programs to raise awareness and education to women, reflects the fact that the economic situation in the

positive attitude towards the environment is superior to that of the social factors.

Economic welfare and high incomes mean more use of disposable containers, more use of detergents, etc. All of this damage to the environment results from a favorable economic situation. Now, if women are socially involved, such as participating in government environmental decision-making, they can go a step further.

According to the results obtained in this study, the F value obtained was 0.477. The significant level is 0, 000 and is smaller than 0.05, so there is a significant difference. Therefore, the hypothesis of the researcher is confirmed. In other words, the higher the economic base of women, the more they focus on environmental protection.

The results are consistent and confirmed by Lahsaiizadeh et al. (2008), Rahmani (2009) Najafian & Namdari (2012). Increasing the presence of women in environmental decision-making processes will not only increase their awareness of environmental issues, but can also boost their participation in more diverse programs through the transfer of knowledge and daily experiences, and, in general, enhances environmental protection.

It can be argued that having higher levels of social education and contributing to the protection of the environment has a positive impact on women's performance in environmental protection, as economic factors (including occupation and occupational skill levels) are effective.

Based on the results of this study, the variables of education and employment in the two groups were significantly different, meaning that the mean of this variable in educated women employed was 4.52 and indicates a significant difference. The results are identical with Taheri & Rahemi's research (2004).

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