

Demographic Determinants of Civic Participation in Pakistani Society

Saif-ur-Rehman Saif Abbasi*, Muhammad Babar Akram, Qamar Abbas Jafri.

Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology,

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan,

*Corresponding Author** :

Abstract: *Civic participation encourages people to devote their time, energy and money for the welfare of others. Engagement of people in civic issues is substantive for a society. In civic involvement people become able to solve their problems by their own. The study in hand aimed to know the Demographic determinants of civic participation in Pakistani society. Proportionate sampling method was employed to collect data of 528 respondents from three main cities of Pakistan i.e., Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The data was analyzed by using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS-21 version). The study concluded that civic participation of people varied with demographic factors. The results generalized that gender, age, education, family, and income greatly determine the tendency of people to participate in civic affairs of the society. However, civic engagement of people can be increased through awareness campaigns by media and civic associations.*

Key words: civic, demographic, Pakistan, participation, society, gender

1. Introduction

Civic participation generally includes the activities in which citizens become more involved and informed about society. For example, in political participation people take part in election campaigns, contact public officials, attend political rallies and protests to persuade government for fulfilling their collective needs (Perri *et al.*, 1998).

The human in an individual capacity is helpless in society. However, when he involves himself socially with his neighbourhood, his social needs may be satisfied and living conditions of whole community may also be improved (Hanifan, 1920). The expected reward of each person becomes proportional to his or her investment e.g., time, help & care

for others. The investment and net reward of each actor is according to his or her investment in civic matters (Treviño, 2009).

Nevertheless, civic engagement creates exclusiveness, and exclusive participation generates boundaries for membership in cross cultural relations. Therefore, distrust develops when civic involvement becomes sole property of few who do not allow diverse membership in their civic networks (Nan, 2008).

According to Putnam (2002) civic participation brings individuals into direct interaction with their neighbours and this interaction consequently reinforces civic participation. Civic participation is important because involvement of citizens in civic affairs makes them more self confident and they care about other

humans (Tocqueville, 1945; Putnam, 2000). Nonetheless, all civic involvement is good (Tocqueville, 1945), however, not true universally. Sometimes more aware and active citizens may take part in specific types of civic affairs. For instance, Mussolini's fascist movement grew out of highly civic involvement of Italian citizens (Field, 2008). Hence, sometimes more civic participation generates negative ends and mostly it may be due to a structural inequality in demographic characteristics (ibid). In civic participation, people cooperate with one another; either directly or indirectly, and major advantage of cooperation is social harmony (Field, 2008). Thus, an 'accumulated stock of civic networks' sustains a significant social cohesion (Putnam, 2002) in society. Nevertheless, civic participation has been on the decline (Putnam, 2000) and it greatly depends on demographic factors in determining the civic life of communities (Stahly, 2007).

1.1 Demographic Determinants

i. **Gender** Gender is considered as a significant determinant of civic participation (Lewis & Noguchi, 2006). However, Putnam (2000) argued that women become more involved in civic activities than men but civic engagement of men is supported by women in their lives. Marschall (2001) also found that women take part more in civic activities than men. Female youth generally participate more in civic services than males (Gibson, 2008). However, men are more likely to participate in political activities (e.g., voting) than women

(Verba *et al.*, 1995). Nonetheless, civic participation of individuals is highly gendered (Adkins, 2005) due to 'public/private' division of male and female roles in traditional societies (Lowndes, 2000).

ii. **Age**

Age is an important factor in determining civic engagement of different generations. The younger generation participates more in civic affairs of their community than older one (Putnam 2000). This 'civic generation' develops cooperative behaviours and values thus replacing less civic minded generation (ibid). Henceforth, civic participation increases significantly with age, which rises from an individual's teen age and twenties to the highest in the age of forties and fifties (Putnam, 1995).

iii. **Education**

Education also enhances civic participation (Almond & Verba, 1963; Brehm & Rahn, 1997) as more educated people show high participation in civic activities than the less educated (van der Meer & Scheepers, 2008). Putnam (1995, p. 169) argued that "education is by far the strongest correlate that I have discovered of civic engagement in all its forms". Thus "education has been recognized for its role in preparing youth to be socially engaged citizens" (Giroux, 2009, p. 4).

Education increases knowledge, and social skills (e.g., cognitive, communicative skills) which facilitate civic participation. These social skills minimize the costs and difficulties linked with participation (Hauser, 2000). Henceforth, colleges and

universities highly motivate students to take part in some form of volunteer activities and this participation positively influences students' long-term civic learning (Checkoway, 2001; Johnson, 2004). According to Putnam (1995) higher education is associated with more income and occupational position which is linked with higher civic participation. Thus education, particularly formal, is a strong determinant of civic participation (Flanagan *et al.*, 2007).

iv. **Income**

Income is an essential determinant of civic participation of people. Higher level of income gives higher social status to individuals and status greatly increases civic participation of citizens (Brand, 2010). Some people may take part in civic activities with the hope of gaining career mobility as a result of civic connections. Therefore, people having higher income may possess generally greater civic networks (Field, 2008).

Civic involvement is more likely among individuals whose family has higher income (Hart & Atkins, 2002). However, higher income people may colonise civic associations and influence of such civic networks may not be generalized. In this way, higher income generally gives rise to social division (Li *et al.*, 2002). Theory of Neoclassical Economics says that people spend leisure time without expecting return in the form of a salary or wage. This school of thought considers civic activities as leisure, and generally leisure becomes like a good purchased from a commercial place (e.g., car, home, etc.).

Neoclassical Economics also believe that civic activity is a "normal good". The demand for normal good rises as income increases (Mas-Collel, Whinston, & Green, 1995). Thus, leisure in civic participation becomes a normal good which explains positive relationship between income and civic participation of people.

v. **Family**

According to Coleman (1991) civic involvement becomes weak in nuclear family due to disruption (e.g., divorce, separation, and or migration) in kinship ties. After migration from rural settings, families leave behind their networks of relatives and friends, so in urban areas their civic engagement decreases (Durkheim, 1897). Communitarians also view the 'parenting deficit' (Etzioni, 1993) as main source of family disruption in modern society. The high rate of divorce and separation in urban society deprives children of care and security they need in childhood. Thus, a family breakdown lowers children's self-esteem, and they may not develop skills of civic involvement (Field, 2008).

On the other hand, non-nuclear families give children access to a broad network of social support which increases their confidence and civic skills (Miształ, 1996). Emigration devalues civic networks of people, for most of one's social connections must be left behind' (Putnam, 2000). Nonetheless, Putnam (2000) argued that disruption in traditional family has little effect on levels of civic participation. According to

socialization theory, family is the most essential socializing factor particularly, during early age. Individuals learn not only the norms of social life but good, right and purposeful values which are practiced at adulthood (Arnett, 1995)

3. Material and Methods

A sample of 528 respondents using proportionate sampling technique was taken from three big cities of Pakistan namely; Lahore, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The sample of each city was proportional to the relative proportion of

the target population in which every element of the population possessed an equal chance to be part of the study (Table 1). A self administrated questionnaire was used for collection of the required information from respondents. The self-administered questionnaire took about ten minutes to be filled. The responses were analyzed by using mean differences (independent sample t-test and One way ANOVA for comparing means).

Table 1: Sampling technique used in the study

Study area	Proportionate stratified sampling		
	Frequency	Frequency	Percent
i. Islamabad	83, 2000* (N1)	47	9%
ii. Lahore	71, 32000(N2)	375	71%
iii. Rawalpindi	20, 26000(N3)	105	20%
Total	99, 9 00, 00(N)	528	100%

*World Factbook, 2013

Dependent variables

The research variables had two parts, i.e., demographic factors and civic participation. Demographic factors were fixed as predicting variables while civic participation construct was dependent variable. Civic participation was measured through a modified form of civic actions

item scale of Paldam, & Svendsen (2002) with five point Likert scale i.e. 'never' (one), 'rarely' (two), 'sometimes' (three), 'very often' (four) and 'always' (five). The reliability test for the construct of civic participation was computed as $\alpha = 0.753$.

Table 2: Inter Item Correlations and reliability (alpha) of civic participation's item scale

Item scale	Correlation	(Alpha)
i. I participate in a protest against a law believed to be unjust.	0.473	0.726
ii. I participate in activities which benefit to people in the community.	0.688	0.648
iii. I take part in activities promoting human rights	0.670	0.650
iv. I take part in activities to protect the environment	0.637	0.665
v. I pay taxes honestly.	0.185	0.820

Independent variables

Independent variables which were controlled for the determination of civic participation were age, gender, family pattern, family income and educational attainment. Age was measured as total number of years completed of life period. Five categories were developed on a scale

Male was given the value one and female was coded as two. Family pattern was coded into three responses i.e., nuclear family (one), joint family pattern (two) and extended type of family (three). Income was defined as the monthly household income of the family of the respondent. Income was coded on a scale from one to five representing the following income ranges in Pakistani rupees (US\$1=PKR100): up to Rs20, 000 (one), Rs20, 001 to Rs30, 000 (two), Rs30, 001 to Rs40000 (three), Rs40, 001 to Rs50, 000 (four) and more than Rs50, 000 (five). Education was also fixed as control

with codes one to five namely; up to 20 years (one), 21-30 (two), 31-40 (three), 41-50 (four) and greater than 50 years (five). Gender was also an important controlled variable which was coded into two categories.

variable and was coded on a scale from one to seven. One indicated those respondents who had primary school certificate (5th grade), two represented middle school certificate (8th grade), three showed individuals with high school degree (10th grade or Matric), four represented respondents with an associate degree or a diploma from a technical and vocational college, five indicated those respondents who held a bachelors degree, six represented master degree and seven showed above master level education such as MS/MPhil and PhD.

4. Results and Discussion

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-21) was used to compute mean differences, standards deviation, and reliability test for dependent and

independent variables. Results of the study presented in tabulated form.

Table 3: Mean Differences of civic participation with gender, age and family pattern

Study variables	Mean	SD	p-value
Gender			
i. Male	16.74	4.83	
ii. Female	15.0	4.70	0.001*
Age			
i. Up to 20	16.73	5.03	
ii. 21-30	15.75	4.92	
iii. 31-40	16.72	5.08	
iv. 41-50	16.08	4.24	
v. Above 50	16.43	4.59	0.376
Family pattern			
i. Nuclear	15.35	4.88	
ii. Joint	17.03	4.69	
iii. Extended	16.75	4.71	0.001*

Table 3 presents the summary statistics of the study variables i.e., demographic factors and civic participation. The first determinant of civic participation was gender of the respondents. Therefore, the statistics in table 3 show that male had significantly higher means (Mean=16.74, S.D=4.87) as compared to female (Mean=15.0, S.D=4.70) which imply that male respondents participate more in civic activities than females. The mean differences may be existing due to separation of public and private roles of males and females (Lowndes, 2000) in patriarchal Pakistani society. Age is also important determinant of civic involvement as aging alters social roles, creates new opportunities and brings forth new life obstacles. Thus people of diverse ages and generations hold different views about life which also changes their attitude towards civic engagement

(Wilson, 2000). The statistics about age in table 3 show that there existed no significant differences of civic involvement on the basis of age group. Findings depict that individuals within the age group of 21-30 had comparatively lower means (Mean=15.75, S.D=4.92) as compared to other four categories of the demographic variable. There was noted a steady decline in civic participation among respondents from 41 to 50 and greater than 50 years (Mean=16.43). However age has been considered as one of the essential variables in determining civic sense of the people. The extent of civic involvement tends to decrease during the reconfiguration from adolescence to young adulthood because the school and college related activities provide social freedom to single and childless period of life. However civic participation reaches to its peak at middle

level of age (Herzog *et al.*, 1989). Rational choice theory explains that there is a rise in civic involvement at old age particularly after retirement due to availability of more free time from work. Exchange theory also determinant that old people work in civic volunteerism to get psychological and social profit to compensate former employment reward (Midlarsky & Kahana, 1994). On the contrary, social resource theory predicts a decline in civic engagement of older people because after retirement from the labor force they possess low number of social networks hence weakening their integration into broader society (Wilson, 2000).

Family pattern is important determinant of civic participation of people as family socializes and trains them how to act and behave in broader society (Arnett, 1995).

Findings illustrates in above mentioned table that there existed significant mean differences in civic participation of the individuals on the basis of family patterns.

Findings show that nuclear family patterns had lower means (Mean=15.35, S.D=4.88) as compared to joint family structure (Mean=17.03, S.D=4.69) and extended family patterns (Mean=16.75, S.D=4.71). The results imply that individuals belongingness to nuclear family, had lower civic involvement than those who hailed from Joint family system. However civic participation of those Pakistanis who had extended type of family showed their civic engagement near to Joint family holders with negligible standard deviation difference ($SD=0.2$).

Table 4: Statistics for educational attainment and family income by civic participation

Study variables	Mean	SD	p-value
Educational attainment			
i. Up to 14 years of Education	13.54	4.68	
ii. 16 years of Education	15.80	4.46	
iii. Above 16 years of Education	18.78	3.02	0.001*
Family income (PKR)			
i. Up to 20000	16.04	4.99	
ii. 20001-30000	17.20	4.10	
iii. 30001-40000	15.97	4.97	
iv. 40001-50000	16.03	4.95	
v. Above 50000	15.90	5.38	0.031*

The fourth item in measuring demographic predictor was educational attainment of the individuals. Educational attainment of the respondents was divided in three categories namely; up to 14 years of education, 16 years of education and above 16 years of education. Result indicates that respondents with above 16 years of education had higher means (Mean=18.78, S.D=3.02) as compared to individuals with 16 years of education (Mean=15.80, S.D=4.46) and up to 14 years of education (Mean=13.54, S.D=4.69). Educational attainment is the significant predictor of civic participation of people (Putnam, 2000) however some view education more significant in political participation than civic involvement (Rosenstone & Hansen, 1993). Nevertheless all opine that education is essential for civic engagement because it develops communication skills to compete for jobs, thus, increasing the skills for civic (Verba *et al.*, 1995).

Family income is an essential predictor of civic participation particularly income influences those civic activities which are most demanding. For instance donating for a charity and welfare works in the community depends on income of individuals. However voting and physical volunteering are likely to have less dependence on income (Uslaner, 2013). The fifth item measures the family income as the demographic predictors. Results depict that there existed significant mean differences of individuals' civic involvement on the basis of family income. There were higher means of individuals' civic involvement on the basis income groups of upto Rs. 20000 (Mean= 16.04, S.D=4.99) and Rs.

20001-30000 income group (Mean=17.20, S.D=4.10) as compared to (Mean = 15.97) middle level income holders (Rs30001-40000). It may be due to less availability of high income earners to give time for civic affairs such as to take part in protests which directly or indirectly benefit to community. Income also showed a considerable difference of civic participation of those Pakistanis who had their monthly family income between Rs40001-50000 and more than 50000 (Mean=16.03, S.D=4.95). The person who has above-average monthly income and educational attainment gives more time to civic activities because he or she possesses required information of community issues (O'Connor & Johnson 1989). Thus, demographic factors are substantive determinants of civic participation of Pakistani people (Wymer *et al.*, 1997).

5. Conclusion

Civic participation means involvement of people at various levels in society. Demographic factors determine the engagement of individuals in civic affairs of the society. There are significant differences regarding involvement of citizens in a country's civic matters. The quantitative study was conducted to know such variations among Pakistani people. Results showed that civic participation of Pakistani public differed according to their age, gender education, family type and income. However differences of civic participation were more significant in gender, family system and income. Civic participation may be increased among people by raising their awareness about civic issues of society. Trust and cooperation are backbone to create networks of volunteer participation. Civic

networks may give a motivation to individuals to spend their time, energy, skills, knowledge and money to solve collective community problems. Thus people rationalize their civic involvement if they know civic issues are common to all not for a single individual. This is responsibility of vibrant media and active civil society. Further study may be conducted to know the outcome and consequences of civic participation of people for the society.

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