

A Comparison of Women's Attitudes towards Gender Norm, Gender Ideology, Gender Stereotypes and Social Roles in Cities With a High and a Low Social–Economic Development (A Case Study of Khuzestan Province, 2010)

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ABSTRACT

Historical experiences of the western communities indicate that in practice, it was after the industrialization of the Europe that the women's participation in public domains of production as a social necessity took form. Following that, the women's attitudes towards the social positions and roles were also changed. The Iranian society never experienced such an introvert process of social-economic development. The pivotal issue in this study is that it seems the women living in the regions with a high socio-economic development has a more equality-oriented attitudes towards their social roles as compared with the women living in a low development region. For this purpose, a study comprising of a sample of 400 women with a settlement record of over 15 years in urban regions of Khuzestan province was performed. The findings of the research show that with reliance upon the theoretical elaborations and with reference to the practical findings of research, it can be said that the women's attitudes living in developed cities has a meaningful difference in comparison with those of the women residing in undeveloped cities. At the same time, the results of statistical tests of this research indicate that there is also a meaningful difference among women's attitudes with regard to the rate and nature of economic, social and cultural development of their city of residence.

KEY WORDS: Socio-Economic Development, Incongruous, Women's Attitudes, Women's Social Roles, Urban Regions.

1- INTRODUCTION

The process of socio-economic development of Iran started at about early nineteen century. This process took form mainly under the influence of mechanisms outside the society and took place without an ideal structural ground and any changes in the structure and base of social relationships. So, «such a socio-economic development made the social structure and the social system became more unbalanced and dependent on the global economy »(Seifollahi, 2002). In such a condition, it is forecasted that the Iranian women to have different or conflicting attitudes towards their social roles under the impact of incongruous and unbalanced structure and function of socio-economic development of the society. In other words, it seems that the women who are living in developed regions have a more gender equality-oriented attitudes in comparison with the women who are living in undeveloped regions. So that, the main issue of this research is whether or not the women's attitudes towards roles, norms and dominating gender beliefs in developed structures are different from their attitudes and expectations in undeveloped structures? Reviewing the examples of this issue in different urban regions of Iran, it will be possible to gather the practical and statistical documents necessary for the issue.

2. Statement of the research

6631 existence of socio-economic incongruous and unbalanced structures in Iran has given rise to the involvement in objective experiences and different in connection with their social roles. For this reason, even women themselves are facing many ambiguities and conflicts in defining their social roles. The pivotal point in this study is that there is a direct relationship between the quality and quantity of socio-economic development of a society with the women's attitudes towards their social roles and their role expectation and their role expectation. So, it seems that the women who are living in more developed areas have more equality-seeking attitudes toward, gender norms gender ideology, gender stereotypes and gender roles and social participation as compared with the women living in undeveloped areas. Studying the examples of such an issue in urban society of Iran can help with the preparation of necessary practical and statistical documents for this issue.

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3. The importance and necessity of the research topic

The main assumption of this study is that the type of women's attitudes towards the social roles is subject to the rate and nature of the socio-economic development of society. So that, logically, it can be concluded that to the extent a society enjoys a higher level of development, to the same extent, it will have more equality-oriented attitudes towards gender roles and as the same time, it will have a more positive attitude towards social participation.

The identification of factors and relationships which are influential in the formation of women's attitudes towards social roles can strategically lead to the promotion of their participatory attitudes. At the same time, such an effort will help with the possibility of the efficient use of existing human forces at the society.

4. Objectives of the research topic

1. Studying and reviewing the structure and function of socio-economic development of Khuzestan province and ranking of different cities of Khuzestan province from the viewpoint of the rate and nature of socio-economic development.
2. Comparing the women's attitudes of women residing in undeveloped cities (towards their social roles) with the women of undeveloped cities.
3. Presenting strategic and applied mechanisms in the area of women's attitudes towards their social roles.

5. A review of the previous studies

Many researchers have been conducted on gender attitudes, beliefs, norms and ideology. Schmitz and Diefenthaler have tried to study the relationship between culture and gender attitudes in their research. The results of the above research show that the Mexican people are more faithful to traditional norms and expectation in comparison with the Americans. In addition, the Mexicans have gained more scores in the scale of measuring patriarchal attitudes in comparison with the Americans, so that they have more patriarchal (male-oriented) attitudes.

A research by Barbara Mensch and Barbara Abraham has been conducted to measure the attitudes towards gender roles among the Egyptian adults. In this research, the attitudes of girls and boys towards obedience of women and their responsibility on household labors are assessed. The rate of academic progress and some of the socio-economic variables are studied as independent variables which are effective on individuals' attitudes. The result of research indicates the lack of confirmation of the model of this research in elaborating the sociability differences of gender roles. In the views of the mentioned researchers, perhaps the attitudes towards gender roles are under the influence of unmeasured factors or those related to cultural features or life experiences (Mensch, 2003, 34).

Zanjanizadeh conducted a research entitled "The assessment of the rate of the independence of married women residing in Mashhad city and social factors affecting that" (Zanjanizadeh, 2005). The results of the research indicated that variables of job, rate of women's education and that of her husband have a meaningful, positive or average relationship with the rate of self-autonomous condition.

In a research conducted by Mohammad Abdolahi (2008) entitled, "factors, obstacles and strategies of Iranian women's civil participation" the women's participation has been considered as a dependent variable. The results of this study show that the civil participation of women living in provinces with central geographical-political position or semi-central is higher as compared with women who are residing in peripheral provinces. Also in provinces which are more developed from the viewpoint of economic, political, social and cultural indicators and enjoy a dense population and higher percentage of urbanism, women have a higher social contribution.

6. The theoretical framework of the research

In this research, the combined viewpoint of Seifollahi has been considered as the macro variable elaborating the Iranian women's attitudes. Adopting a structural and dialectic approach, he notices to the objective structures of the society in social changes. Seifollahi believes that in general, «the process of establishment of unjust social relationship is resulting from the performance of unbalanced social structure. The unbalanced social structure system is also resulting from the nature and performance of internal and external structure of the basic elements which form a social system» (Seifollahi, 2002:57). «Elaborating the unequal gender relationships in different societies, Seifollahi believes that social unjust relationships are causes for gender discrimination. In this issue, he adds: Another consequence of the unjust social relationships is the creation of gender inequalities. In a society whose bases are based on inequality, the discrimination, pre-judgment and gender exploitation is an undeniable fact» (Seifollahi, 1993:223).

Chafetz, one of the feminists' scholars studies the issue of gender inequality at micro and macro levels. He divides the mechanisms which are influencing the continuation of gender inequality into two sections. These two sections include the mandatory forces and volunteer forces and individual actions. «Chafetz distinguishes among three types of gender definition. 1) Gender ideology or belief in basic differences or typically biological differences

between the nature of men and women 2) Gender norms or expectations on correct methods and behavior of women and men 3) Cliché beliefs or emphasis on difference among women and men that what kind of reaction do they usually show in different positions» (Lahsayee Zadeh, 1990:48). Concerning the cliché beliefs, in addition to Chafetz, some other scholars have conducted researches as well. In his definition of cliché belief, Anselmi states that cliché beliefs include the prevailing beliefs among individuals based on their membership in one or some social groups (Anselmi, 1998:195). In connection with the gender roles, he says that the gender roles are prescriptions and beliefs determined by a culture and society in connection with the method of women and men's behaviors and emotions (Anselmi and Lave, 1998:195). The result of research by Mac Donald and Parke has shown that the behavior of parent-child has impacts on the formation of gender cliché and they treat their sons and daughters differently. Furthermore, they play physical games with their sons more than their daughters (Mac Donald and Parke, 1998). «The result of research has shown that boys and men are forced to act in accordance with the manly standards. For example, boys and men who do not act in accordance with manly standards are faced with inferiority complex» (Pleck, 1993:109). Researchers have indicated that parents have cliché beliefs on having special behaviors suitable for each gender and consider difference in natural capabilities of each gender (Jacobs, 1985:20-25). Such a situation has a negative impact on individuals' performance, since they see themselves before judgment of cliché beliefs in advance. The result of a research by scientists has shown that when the participants of a math test were told that the test will probably show gender differences among the two genders, the women's scores went meaningfully lower than men. Oppositely, when the participants of a test did not imagine that the result of test will indicate their gender differences, both men's and women's scores were the same (Spencer, 1990-4-28). Concerning the gender and cliché beliefs and the necessity of paying attention to these two issues in connection with each other and in particular to the mutual relationship of couples, Landrine believes that when the gender cliché beliefs are studied, though it is possible that no race or social class to be put forth, but most of people make some pre-assumptions. So when a race or a social class is put forth, different gender cliché beliefs are put forth (Landrine, 1999). In the opinion of Walzer, the labor division of house duties is based on gender. Usually, women undertake home jobs and men deal with working outside home and undertake the duty of gaining family income (Walzer, 2001:88-94). Bem is one of the feminists who put forth gender schema or theory and thereby he emphasizes on the role of cognitive system in addition to sociability. In that theory, it is assumed that children learn how culture or society has defined their role as a woman or a man and then they internalize those definitions as a gender schema or undisputable image (Bem: 1993).

7. Research hypotheses

1. It seems that the women's attitudes towards their social roles in developed cities will have a meaningful difference in comparison with undeveloped cities.
2. It seems that the women's attitudes towards gender norms in developed cities will have a meaningful difference in comparison with undeveloped cities.
3. It seems that the women's attitudes towards the social roles in cities with a high social development will have a meaningful difference in comparison with cities with a low social development.
4. It seems that the women's attitudes towards gender ideology in developed cities will have a meaningful difference in comparison with undeveloped cities.
5. It seems that the women's attitudes towards gender stereotypes in developed cities will have a meaningful difference in comparison with undeveloped cities.

8. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

8.1. Measuring Instruments

In this research, creditable scales made by the Iranian and western scholars were used in order to develop and adjust instruments to assess the women's attitudes. However, with regard to the cultural difference between Iran and the western societies, the discordant components which were in conflict with the Iranian culture were either amended or deleted. The women's attitudes towards their social roles were assessed through three micro scales of women's attitudes towards participation in labor market, their attitudes towards home jobs (household labors) and their attitudes toward decision making in the family. The scale made by Slade and Jenner which have been prepared to assess women's attitudes towards social roles was one of the scales whose items were used while keeping an eye on the cultural conditions of the Iranian society (Slade and Jenner, 1978). The Fortin's scale under the title of women's attitudes towards gender roles and participation in labor market was another scales being used to develop the questionnaire of the present research. The items of this scale were used in particular to assess the women's attitudes towards their participation in the labor market and the rate of importance of this social role in comparison with the

mother and wife roles (Fortin, 2009) Ispence and Helmreich's scale entitled a version of a summary of attitudes to the women scale). The questionnaire of the present research was adjusted in accordance with the Likert spectrum. Based on coding of this research, the score of an individual with a fully equality-seeking attitude is (1) and the score of an individual with a fully non-equality seeking attitude (belief in full detachment of gender roles) is equal to (5).

In order to assess the macro variable of the research statement, i.e. the rate and nature of socio-economic development of urban regions of Khuzestan province, it was necessary to rank different cities of this province by rate and nature of development. After determining the development indexes, all cities of Khuzestan province (according to the classification of the year 2006 of Management and Planning Organization of Khuzestan province), with the help of Taxonomy technique (as one of the best ranking techniques), they were ranked in terms of the rate of their socio-economic development. At the same time, the rate of each of the cities of this province were also determined by the rate of economic development, the rate of social development and the rate of cultural development (12, 13 and 13 respectively). In the last step, these cities were divided into two general categories based on their ranking. The first group included cities with a high development rate and the second group were that of the cities with a low development rate. It is worth mentioning that due to the proximity of the scores of each of these cities and the similarities of scores with each other, in practice; it was not possible to divide the cities into three categories.

8.2. Research Reliability and Validity

In order to be assured of the validity of the questionnaire, first a copy of the questionnaire was presented to experts and authorities to assess the surface reliability of questionnaire and in case to make a possible amendment in the questionnaire. So, the questions which were making any damage on the reliability of questionnaire were deleted or amended. On the other hands, 50 copies of questionnaires were completed in form of a pre-test. In this research, in order to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire, the Cronbach's Alpha method was used. The scores related to each questionnaire were considered and assessed; using the SPSS Cronbach's Alpha and the results indicated that Coefficient of validity of the spectrum of women's attitudes towards all variables is more than 0.750.

8.3. The Statistical Community, Sample Population and Sampling Method

The statistical society in this research includes all women and girls over 15 years of age residing in urban regions of cities of Khuzestan province. Using the formula of conversion of Fischer, the statistical volume of 400 was determined and in harmony with the rate of population of each city, the sample volume of that city was specified. The sampling method was a random sampling. For this purpose, first, a simple random sampling was made and one city was selected out of the two groups of developed and undeveloped cities. For this, Andimeshk was selected out of the cities with a high development and Izeh from the group of cities with a low development. In this research, the socio-economic development of cities was assessed based on three dimensions, i.e economic development, cultural development and social development. The two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh which are in two different groups due to a general rank of socio-economic development, belong to two different groups (high and low) in two other dimensions, i.e. economic development and social development too. However, these two cities are both placed in one group due to the cultural development, since both have a low cultural development and therefore are placed in the group of cities with a low development. Thus, based on the existing data, in the Table of City Ranking (in terms of cultural development) once again the two cities were selected randomly. Thus the two cities of Ahwaz and Dezful were selected as the representatives of cities with a high and a low cultural development. As each of the mentioned cities consists of a number of cities, for facilitating the sampling and upgrading the rate of accuracy, the centers of each of these cities were selected as sample units. At the second stage of sampling, by using random systematic sampling, sample units were selected.

8.4. DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

In this research, in order to analyze data, various methods of descriptive and perceptive statistics were used. For the purpose of data analysis, while considering the nature of variable (nominal, ranking or distance), various types of statistical tests in proportion with each of these variables were utilized. In order to study the relationship of structure and function of socio-economic development with the women's attitudes towards social roles, the techniques of variance analysis, Toki test, T test and Pearson Correlation Test were used. All statistical analyses were made by the SPSS software's.

9. Research findings

In connection with the women’s attitude towards gender norms, a gender ideology and gender stereotype Andimeshk has the highest rate of equality-oriented, and there comes Ahwaz following, Dezful Izeh have the highest to lowest rate of equality seeking attitudes.

In connection with the women’s attitudes towards their social roles the average of scores of women in these four cities is about 3.158. The descriptive findings indicate that Andimeshk with an average score of 2.844 has the highest rate of equality-oriented attitudes and there comes Ahwaz following that with an average of 3.069. The two cities of Dezful and Izdeh, each with 3.479 and 3.606 are ranked to be after these two cities. In other words, it can be confirmed that the women’s attitudes of the first two cities is more equality-oriented than the second two cities.

The results of the variance analysis of assessing the connection between women’s attitudes towards gender norms, gender ideology, gender stereotypes and socio-economic development of the city are presented in Table 1. The results of test confirm the existence of a meaningful difference among the women’s attitudes toward gender norms in these four cities with 95% reliance. So, it can be said that there is a difference between the attitudes of the women of at least two cities of the above cities.

Here, in order to assess the impact of the various dimensions of socio-economic development, with the help of Toki test, a pair comparison was made between the mean squares of the scores of cities with high and low development. The results of the test of comparison of two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh indicated that with reliance over 0.95, there is a difference between the two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh from the perspective of women’s attitudes towards gender norms.

With regard to the fact that these two cities are different from each other from the viewpoint of economic development, social development and general development of the city, it can be said that there is a meaningful difference between the women’s attitudes towards household labor with regard to the rate of economic development of city, social development of the city and general development of the city. Also the result of Toki test of comparison between two cities of Ahwaz (with a high cultural development) and Dezful (with a low cultural development), shows there is no meaningful difference between attitudes of women of these cities of cities.

As Table 1. show the results of variance analysis among above four cities from the perspective of women towards gender ideology, show that the mean (average) of inter-groups (between groups) squares is greater than average of intra-groups (within groups) squares. With 99.9% reliance, it can be said that there is a difference between women’s attitudes of these four cities from the perspective of gender ideology. The result of F test indicates that at least between two cities of mentioned cities, there is a difference from the perspective of women’s attitude towards gender ideology. Once again, by doing Toki test, the relationship among different dimensions of socio-economic development with women’s attitudes is assessed. The result of Toki test resulting from comparing the women’s attitudes toward gender ideology in two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh indicates that with 0.99 reliance, the zero assumption of research is rejected and the assumption of research is confirmed. At the same time, it can be concluded that the women’s attitude towards their social roles in the cities with a high economic development and in comparison with the cities with a low economic development and also the women’s attitudes towards their social roles in the cities with a high and a slow social development has a meaningful difference. The result of Toki test indicated that no meaningful difference between attitudes of women of cities with high and low cultural development.

Regarding to women attitudes toward the gender stereotypes, The above Table 1. shows that the mean (average) of inter-groups (between groups) squares are greater than average of intra-groups (within groups) squares, With 0.99 reliance, it can be said that there is a difference between women’s attitudes of these four cities from the perspective gender ideology. Once again, by doing Toki test, the relationship among different dimensions of socio-economic development with women’s attitudes is assessed.

Table 1. Variance analysis of comparing the women’s attitudes towards gender norms, gender ideology and gender stereotypes in four sample cities

	Sum of Squares	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
gender norms	Between Groups	3.629	3	1.210	3.294	0.021
	Within Groups	79.704	397	0.367		
	Total	83.333	400			
gender ideology	Between Groups	7.486	3	2.495	4.483	0.004
	Within Groups	120.788	397	0.557		
	Total	128.274	400			
Gender stereotypes	Between Groups	6.933	3	2.311	5.004	0.002
	Within Groups	100.218	397	0.462		
	Total	107.151	400			

The results indicated in Table 1. show that there is a difference between the women's attitudes of the two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh towards gender stereotypes with a reliance of 0.99. Thus, the zero assumption of research is rejected and research assumption is confirmed. Result of Toki test of comparison between two cities of (Ahwaz) and Dezful, shows there is no meaningful difference between attitudes of women of these cities. So it can be said there is no difference between women attitudes residing in cities with high and low cultural development.

Table 2. Variance analysis of comparing the women's attitudes towards gender roles in four sample cities

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Women Attitudes toward Gender Roles	Between Groups	9.430	3	3.143	9.918	0.000
	Within Groups	68.773	397	0.317		
	Total	78.203	400			

The result included in Table 2. shows that the average of the inter-group (between groups) squares is more than intra-group (within groups) squares. The F test indicates that there is a meaningful relationship with 9.918 reliance. So, the zero assumption of the research for their social roles is rejected and the research assumption, i.e the existence of difference in women's attitudes who are residing in these four cities towards their social roles is confirmed. However, in order to clarify that the resulting difference in the variance analysis test comes from which cities, the above relationship was assessed with the help of Toki test in a more specific way. As it was mentioned earlier, Andimeshk was selected as the representative of the group of cities with a high development and Izeh as the representative of the group of cities with a low development. However, since these two cities are placed in one group (both with a low cultural development) from the perspective of cultural development, both cities of Ahwaz and Dezful were selected as cities representing cities with a high and low cultural development.

Table 3. shows the results of the Toki test resulting from the comparison of women's attitudes of both cities of Andimeshk and Izeh.

Table 3. Toki test resulting from comparing women's attitudes of both cities of Andimeshk and Izeh

Women Attitudes toward Gender Roles	City (I)	City (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	Andimeshk	Izeh	-0.72245(*)	0.19445	0.001	-1.2259	-0.2190

The result of Toki test indicates that with 0.99 reliance, the two cities of Andimeshk and Izeh are different from the perspective of the average score of attitudes towards social roles. So, the zero assumption of the research is rejected and the research assumption indicating difference among women's attitudes of cities with a high and small socio-economic development is confirmed. On the other hands, since the two cities are different from each other from the perspective of social and economic developments, and each has been selected as a sample of their own class, so it can be said that women of the cities with high economic developments in comparison with women of the cities with low economic developments, also the women of cities with high social developments in comparison with the women of cities with the low social developments have a meaningful difference from the perspective of attitudes towards gender norms with a 9.0.99 reliance.

In order to test the relationship between city cultural developments with the women's attitudes towards their social roles, the two cities of Ahwaz (with a high cultural development) and Dezful (with a low cultural development) were compared using Toki test. The result of this test is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Toki test resulting from comparing the women's attitudes in two cities of Ahwaz and Dezful

Women Attitudes toward Gender Roles	City (I)	City (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
	Ahwaz	Dezful	-.40943(*)	.10334	.001	-.6770	-.1419

As Table 4. shows, there is a difference between the women's attitudes of these two cities with a 0.99 reliance. The women's attitudes towards their social roles in the cities with a high economic development and also the women's attitudes towards their social roles in cities with high and low social developments have a meaningful difference.

10. Conclusion

Relying upon combinational theory of socio-economic (Seifollahi) and of Chafetz and Bem's feministic theories, this research aims at to elaborate the women's attitudes towards their social roles. For this purpose, the women's attitudes of over 15 years of age were measured. The result of research shows that with a reliance on the theoretical clarifications of the research and based on practical findings of the research, it can be said that the women residing in developed cities have a more equality-oriented attitudes towards their social roles in comparison with women inhabiting the undeveloped cities. Thus, as it was expected, the findings show that incongruous conditions in socio-economic structures of Iran have had a deep impact on intellectual dimension and women's attitudes of this society. It can be said that the undeveloped structures pave grounds for the formation of less equality-oriented and participation-oriented attitudes in women. On the other hands, the incongruous status in socio-economic structures has created grounds for the creation of role conflicts, role pressure and dissatisfaction with roles and ambiguity in role definitions for women. Thus, change in the objective and subjective situations of women are subject to the creation of deep changes in Socio _ economic structures.

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