

# The Feasibility Study of the Approach of Social Participation in the Renewal of the Worn out Textures

(Case study: Gheytharieh, Tehran)

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**Abstract**—What more than anything create a sense of belonging in humans towards an environment are changes provided by them and based on their interests or needs. In fact, a place or an element of urban development creates a higher sense of belonging in those who were involved in its formation, rather than those who had no involvement in its formation. Civil participation means a serious presence, and an active, informed and organized and effective involvement of people, groups and urban organizations in the economic, social and cultural activities in urban life, to achieve urban collective goals. Gheytharieh, one of the ancient neighborhoods of Tehran, has an old history and legacy and has been a rural area of the capital, which was absorbed over time in Tehran and has developed.

Generally, in Gheytharieh's worn out texture framework, communication networks, important historical monuments and public spaces have a particular priority. Of course, it is noteworthy that in addition to the above factors, some other factors also influence it and natural factors and gardens are of this category which is effective in determining the classification of the framework of this texture. This article is a review of people's participation as a proposed renewal strategy of worn out textures of Gheytharieh and its influencing factors; and to ultimately assess the impact of people's participation in worn out texture of this area. Of the research results, one is the high participation in realization of urban and humane renewal projects especially renovation of the worn out texture with partnership approach in Gheytharieh region of Tehran.

**Keywords**— *Civil participation; worn out texture; Gheytharieh region; renewal*

## I. INTRODUCTION

By "worn out", we mean inefficiency and reduction of the efficiency of a texture relative to other urban textures. The worn out texture and its inner elements is due to old age or lack of executive development programs and technical supervision on the texture formation. The outcome of wearing out that eventually reduces its prestige in people's minds, can be identified in a variety of forms including reducing the environmental conditions or lack of flexibility and safety as well as physical, social, economic and utility disorders [1, 2].

The problematic urban texture is an urban texture in which different elements and factors, reduce the quality and value of the human environment.

The renewal stops in the texture, and the desire to migrate is deepened in residents (Jahanshahi, Urban Development Queries). In another definition, the worn out urban textures are those statutory city ranges that because of physical exhaustion and lack of urban utilities have become vulnerable and have low location, environmental and economic value. In General, reducing the efficiency of every phenomena, lack of maintenance and revitalization will wear it out. Wear out of the urban texture affects the texture structure as well as its social and economic activities.

The structural wear out and deterioration of social and economic life of the texture, in a reciprocal relationship, intensify each other and cause severe degradation of urban life and living quality. Ineffective and worn out urban textures cover a significant portion of the city of Tehran and other towns in the country. These textures, on the one hand, suffer from a wide range of problems like structural, functional, traffic and environmental issues, and on the other hand, they have the highest potential of a city for the use of land to provide accommodation, open services spaces, as well as environmental improvement. The worn out texture, despite strong neighborhood integration and social texture, suffers from problems beyond

construction style and its issues because of its urban position among other city areas.

Therefore, intervention in these textures must not merely be a type of structural action. The texture decline which is a result of physical and economic deterioration gradually undermines the possibility of proper and efficient land use and will result in wasting land in powerful parts of the city, like central and old areas. Empty spaces and worn out textures in the heart of the cities are being abandoned while the city's physical expansion creates new problems every day in addition to existing problems and issues. The extent of the worn out textures with huge problems and lack of clear strategies regarding planning and project management and implementation in the field of cooperation in the reconstruction of such a context, is another factor that mandates discussing this topic.

On the other hand, what puts dealing with worn out textures of our country in the bottleneck, is the lack of correct distinction between historical context and worn out textures that sometimes paves the way for absolute protection like museum mentality, and ties the hands and legs of designers and practitioners. In many old cores, what is valuable is not existing structures and buildings and city building, but the paths, passages, neighborhood centers, social relations between residents, monuments and texture signatures that have social and cultural value.

Therefore, intervention in these textures must not merely be of the type of physical actions, or as it is sometimes called, demolition and reconstruction again. In a lot of areas, improvement of texture and participatory action with people living in it is very favorable and offers sustainable methods which can be carried out in short term and empower citizenship in the context.

To improve neighborhoods with worn out texture, participatory methods are required—with a partnership between sectors and the bottom-up methods—to provide local economy's self-sufficiency and prosperity.

The multiplication of today's cities, poses the main challenge in the physical realm and in the cultural arena, which leads to facilitating in local government. This partnership has three poles: one is citizens, another is entrepreneurs and investors, and the last one is local politicians and authorized experts. Citizens are not inactive information resources to be attacked by the influx of questionnaires, but they have indigenous knowledge and experimental wisdom and are acquainted with local constraints and challenges.

Citizens' participation in city building, perhaps due to the nature of the cities (a place to live for people/citizens), may seem obvious and at the same time ambiguous and intangible. Ambiguous, since in today's communities, modern governments are ruling over city core, and policy makers determine the future of cities, so citizens' participation is a kind of interference with power structure. On the other hand,

actual participation is possible when the main intention of planners is rooted in their internal and serious conviction to real participation of citizens [3].

Appreciating citizens' views as cells in urban community in order to promote the purposes and objectives of urban development plans is a topic whose modern manifest is not too old, but discussing civil participation, mobilization of local forces, and protection of their culture and identity as one of the principles of Rio Declaration in the Environment & Development Conference—or Earth Summit—in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992, shows the importance of this topic [4].

Also, two major initiatives to improve urban life and global management were presented in the UN meeting in 1996:

- Increasing quality of functional criteria of urban management.
- To encourage people to participate in urban affairs (Prdaraz Consulting Engineers, 2004).

Global experiences offered by countries participating in this meeting show that many of these countries, particularly the developed countries, realize the importance of citizens' participation for the implementation of urban management program (UMP). So, some of the neighborhoods or neighborhood units have a fundamental role in landuse decision (General Plan, 2002).

## II. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Since late 1960s, the role of citizen participation in the communities took over more than before. Ernstein, in an article published in 1969 for the first time, clearly defined the concept of participation. His article was frequently used later by pundits and was the basis for the partnership theories (Pakzad, 2003). He tried to clarify the citizen engagement meanings using the eight ladder-steps partnership metaphor. In the metaphor, the various degrees of impact or the direct power of the people were evaluated on the decision making.

### A. *Public Participation Ladder*

- Citizen control
- Delegated power - Participation power scale
- Partnership
- Placation
- Consultation - Partial participation
- Informing
- Therapy - No participation
- Manipulation (Ostheusen, 1998)

At the lowest level of Ernstein ladder, there is no power for the citizens. In other words, the lack of participation shows itself in two categories that he has named Manipulation and Therapy.

Ernstein holds that the Manipulation means some government agencies form a dummy substitute of partnership whose true purpose is training citizens to accept tasks that have been already determined [5].

Participation of the people in General, is the spontaneous and informed formation of a group of people living in a district to improve housing and residential environment in a non - profit way and on the basis of informed and voluntary selection that demands involvement of people at all stages of the preparation monitoring and implementing of a plan [6].

Also among non - Iranian experts, Friedman has raised the necessity of a revision in thought, and planning and shifting from large scale decision - making to local aspects of everyday life. He believes the traditional planning framework in order to today's conditions is in need of change. He emphasizes that planning as the knowledge and activities that occur in "time and space" dimensions, should change its position again.

In time means that:

- Planning is an activity occurring in present everyday life and not in a future that we may imagine.
- Planning should be quick and immediate, a process which currently occurs among the people and not among the reports and documents.

In space means that:

- Planning on the local and regional scale precedes the national and international scale.
- Planning on the local and regional scale is non-centralized and open.

From his perspective, the city and neighborhood unit are places where meaningful citizen participation may be realized. He holds that, national and international space is not a space where ordinary people can substantially affect the course of affairs. But the people affect the spaces wherein they make a living and their everyday life is going on and quality of these spaces has superb significance for them [7].

Therefore, from the above point of views, we can conclude that not only the participation of citizens in development of the city and urban projects as the main exploiters of city should be in order, but we must pay attention to this statement by Roger the famous English architect:

"The city makes its citizens and the citizens make their city".

On this basis, focusing on a planning model based on people's participation and local planning groups, which is a type of bottom – up planning, is considered appropriate for urban planning and management in all parts of the city, especially the worn out textures in need of serious and faster participation of citizens in order to improve the quality of their environment.

Participation means the presence and involvement of the people in determining the fate of economic,

social, cultural and political issues, but in relation to the type of participation, there are different definitions. Table 1 shows the people's participation modes in various worn out urban textures:

With regard to the extent of worn out textures in Tehran (approximately 50% of residential areas), the following factors as the main obstacles to the reconstruction of worn out textures and refers to the necessity of participation of residents:

1) *Time limitation: If we optimistically estimate 1% reconstruction of worn out texture annually, it takes 100 years for total reconstruction of worn out texture. Notwithstanding during these years, many new and semi – constructed buildings will be added to the current worn out texture.*

2) *Limitation of financial resources: the financial resources of any organization alone cannot afford this level of investment. If people's investments are used in a megacity like Tehran with significant population, certainly the reconstruction would be facilitated.*

3) *Sustainable development: reconstruction of an area should be based on indigenous identity and culture platform, so in the end, it does not force the current inhabitants to migrate. Because in such conditions, worn out texture, marginal slums, etc. will occur in another location in the city [8].*

### III. GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

A review of the experience of countries that were successful to attract participation in worn out texture, showed their experiences can be used in spite of physical, cultural, political and economic differences and we can utilize their achievements in modernization of these textures in our country.

The French politicians (Prime Minister, and the Mayor of Grenoble) implemented a program entitled "social development of neighborhoods" or SECO?. An important innovation of the plan was close cooperation of government and local institutions and the role of citizens in the process of planning, project, and overall, urban development. In the neighborhoods that are selected for the implementation of the plan, the government contracts the municipality. According to this contract, private offices are established in problematic neighborhoods to assume contract execution job under mayor and act as main element in management of urban planning and the project. The duty of the office includes a role of intermediary between official institutions and representatives of civil society (forums, etc.). It is also responsible for providing the best local conditions for citizens' intervention at various stages of the program [9].

Also, the collaborative renovation experience in a neighborhood in the east of Paris in district 20 (project includes 3 stages) reveals that:

- 1) *Providing full information to the public.*
- 2) *Polls.*
- 3) *More exchange of ideas on a certain project.*

4) The plan was provided by three groups: the Municipality, city building professionals, and inhabitants, and was dynamic and flexible.

In the American City of Oakland, some citizens started citizenship participation policies and programs with several operational stages as follows:

TABLE I. TYPES OF PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION

Texture category	Types of government intervention	Types of people's participation
<b>Type A: reputable and historical textures</b>	Full involvement of the government through the relevant institutions (urban development and renovation organization, cultural heritage organization, municipality, etc.) by capturing State Budget.	Cooperation in selling some residential/business units to expand passages, aggregating texture's lands, creating institutions of welfare services and so on, and evacuating the textures.
<b>Type B: scattered historical textures, or else</b>	Involvement of government for the preparation of detailed plans and intentions with respect to people's requirements and with the intention of keeping the residents there and facilitating the continuation of living and activity in the texture through improvement of passages and creating necessary services spaces.	The participation of people who could be with the organization of the neighborhood groups on the level or on the pass or to cooperate with the government in order to facilitate the sale of parts of the texture that are merely used to create a crossover or public spaces, and placement of homeowners and residents within the texture, including assigning proper reconstruction loans, providing an additional density incentive, the exemptions for water, power, gas and telephone and. Ultimately to enable the textures and to create accommodation complexes appropriate with social and cultural characteristics of the inhabitants.
<b>Type C: worn out textures without historical value</b>	The involvement of the Government in order to prepare detailed plans and reform of required passageways and welfare / services enterprises by directing social groups lacking any housing to these textures and to change the social nature and to create the right living environment for low income groups, etc.	In such areas, we encounter two groups of people: one is the owners of residential units and the other, residents, who are different with each other. The first group is eager to buy and receive related funds because they have left the neighborhood long ago and look for a buyer and the second group who do not have any loyalty to the neighborhood and also they are opposed to disrupting the existing situation, and naturally resist change. This group does not accept the terms of economic improvement and will not cooperate. In this area, government entry as executor of all renovation projects is not recommended but it is necessary to prepare the project, and attract the participation of the private sector to be present in the reconstruction. Construction of roads required urban services in the area and construction of residential complexes by public companies facilitate the possibility of the presence of the private sector, or a part of the region's homeowners.
<b>Type D: new worn out textures constructed in suburbs</b>	The government is obliged to officially recognize these regions based on government decree and responsibility and provide an organizing plan for them. The plan includes construction of the appropriate passageways, to serve the area and issuing title deeds, etc. Each of these factors by itself is enough to encourage residents to cooperate and participate in betterment of the area. But in this respect and also in the previous instance, the necessary agencies must be established to set the grounds for participation.	In these areas, while we do not encounter a consistent urban board, but the region contains ethnic and clan groups with adequate internal cohesion, however, in their interactions may have a lot of conflicts and confrontation. It is important that in such areas, there are many subsidies for the participation and the presence of people for implementation of the projects of the Government. Since their displacement and spreading them inside the city is not recommended by any sociologist, thus they must be organized inside the same area but the necessity to provide minimal urban services can facilitate participation in organizing plan. The major point here is creating a participatory public agency and also establishing social agencies with the presence of the residents and this participation can be realized through societies or committees so the competitiveness and taking over phenomenon that is strong in the area's residents can be exploited.

Reference: Thesis (Application of urban renewal approach in the worn out textures of City of Tonkabon)



1) Coding houses and determining social development needs.

2) Preparing savings schemes (funding) for the next year in the annual plan proposal.

3) Official confirmation of City Council after the final annual plan or five-year strategic plan.

4) It is possible that some requirements will be added and changes should be made for the budget use.

5) After completion of the full year program and when the program was established, the annual implementation and evaluation of reports should be made public.

Public participation program is only effective when the public can be aware of changes and has the opportunity to comment on the plans (City of Oakland, 2000).

Also, Majale's experiences in Kenya related to unofficial habitats, achieved interesting results about civil participation. In his Bandanna? Project, he found that the level of satisfaction among those who have been consulted about the project was higher, and not only they were inclined to pay the costs, but also, depending on the value of housing utilization, the environment, and the advantages of these services for the individual, and their inclination to pay the cost by the beneficiaries, the project got higher execution priority (Ghdosi, 2001).

After this brief investigation, some cases showed that the involvement of citizens in the success of the programs, and also growth and development of the city and assisting urban management, is undeniable. Now, by demonstrating some types of participation between people and the municipality - as the major authority of city development affairs in a historical context—we study the status quo of civil participation.

#### IV. THE NECESSITY OF USING PARTICIPATORY PLANNING TOWARDS URBAN RECONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION OF WORN OUT TEXTURE

After The process of renovation and reconstruction of the urban worn out texture in the past and present, shows that the state and municipality acted in the very limited scale and without regard to the economic, social and environmental dimensions, and the popular participation potential in such textures [10]. Paying attention to the improvement and renovation of the urban worn out texture and the citizenry partnership issue has many different dimensions and this must be followed gradually. When we talk about people's partnership, it is expected that the costs related to reclamation and renovation must be paid by the people and residents of such textures.

While in principle, texture regeneration and conservation of historical monuments, ancient architecture and cultural heritage values are a national category. So we cannot expect that all costs and plans be funded by such textures (where they are worn out,

most of its inhabitants are from the lower classes of society, and are fleeing).

Now, there are two very important issues to be discussed:

First, if only the Government must intervene in urban worn out texture, it means stripping authority from the people and inhabitants of the texture and therefore it will not be sustainable, because the renovation is not natural.

Secondly, if the government (as a strong investor) do not intervene in worn out textures and do not encourage people to do so, people never attempt the renewal of texture and will gradually leave (Naraghi, 2001).

#### V. INTRODUCTION OF STUDIED ZONE

Gheytaarieh, one of the ancient neighborhoods of Tehran, has an old history and legacy and has been a suburb area near the capital Tehran which was absorbed over time in Tehran and developed. It can be said that Gheytaarieh was the first place in the north of Tehran around Alborz mountain range that was a human habitat. The first inhabitants were similar to those who lived three thousand years ago in Cheshmeh Ali. The "problematic Gheytaarieh Hill" is an old hill in Gheytaarieh, at the intersection of Shahid Amir Karimi St., today's Gheytaarieh Ave., and Saba Blvd. It is noteworthy that before inhabitants settle on the hill, until 1947 or 1949, dry land cultivation methods were used on it. The hill was the settlement of tribes that have migrated there a few years after the initial formation of the hill, which include Isfahan people coming from Isfahan, Turks from Azerbaijan, Lurs and Tabasi people.

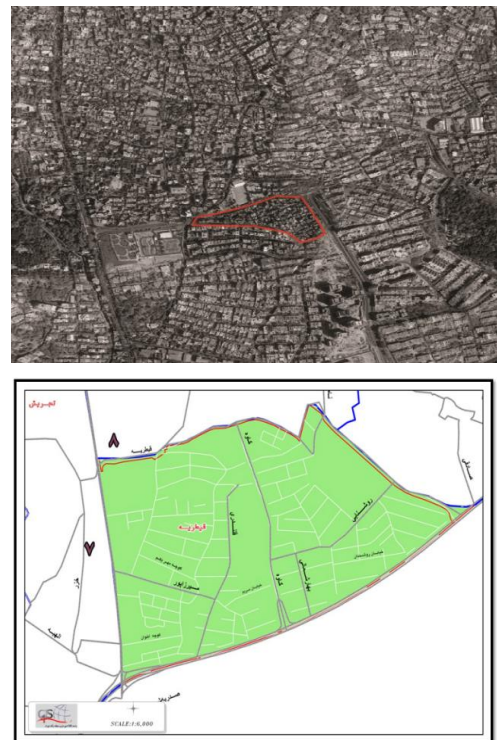


Fig. 1. Map and aerial photos of worn out texture of Gheytaarieh Hill

Gheytrarieh's problematic texture is limited on the north to Gheytrarieh St., on south to Shahid Dehghan Kaman St., on west to the intersection of Saba Blvd. and Gheytrarieh St. and Shahid Amir Hossein Karimi St. (Bouali St.) and Fatemieh St., on the east to Kaveh Blvd. Generally, in terms of determining the classification of each texture; communication networks, important historical monuments, and public spaces have a particular priority

#### VI. PREDICTION OF SOCIAL ASSOCIATIONS' PARTICIPATION IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Participation is "the mental and emotional involvement of individuals in a group formation and they help each other to achieve group objectives and share the responsibility of the work". Therefore, the presence of persons, and their involvement and accountability are important components of their participation [11].

In a classification, participation can be divided into three types:

1) *Includes participation in decision making and management: evaluation and criticism of programs and at large scale, decision making and administration of a city or a neighborhood. This type of participation depends on mutual trust among groups, existing regulations in executive systems, urban administrator's outlook, structure and performance of public groups, etc.*

2) *Participation in financing the projects: financing administration of city or neighborhoods, service delivery, and the implementation of various civil projects have many financial resources, and the two main sources are public grants and taxing the citizens.*

3) *In this regard, some of the financing can be implemented by correct economic guidance along with attracting private investors, or participation of citizenry agencies. Participation in providing human resources: one of the participations is provision of human resources to carry out civil plans and development programs. This type of participation depends on age composition of the population and the amount of people's spare time.*

- Prediction of the amount of participation of social organizations is related to the various factors that connect on one side, with the type and structure of associations, and on the other side, with the amount and the type of relationship with government organizations. In this regard, according to the interviews, some of the characteristics of social organizations in the neighborhood may be pointed out.

- Some of the neighborhood associations are based on the family/ethnic links. In this regard, appropriate communication of authorities of these associations with the neighborhood residents, and solidarity with the people for establishment or development of a civil agency is a positive point.

- Nongovernmental organizations or people's associations can be divided according to performance scale to small, medium and large units. In this regard, based on the number of members of each association, the amount of their credits and covered areas, these units are generally classified as small scale.

- Nongovernmental organizations' connections with governmental organizations (effective in urban development) have been weak and interaction between these sectors has not resulted in establishing services or improving environmental conditions for the households.

- These units have special activity areas and their performance shows that they were not active in neighborhood development efforts.

- The attitude of the officials of the associations is often based on emphasis on economic and social issues, and they believe the existing physical issues are caused by poor economic conditions of the households.

- The financial power of these associations to improve the physical conditions is very limited and cannot be exploited.

- The final evaluation of social organizations of neighborhood reflects that their financial power cannot be exploited in the project, but utilizing and identification of their points of view can increase the executive ability of the project.



Fig. 2. Deteriorated area in Gheytrariyeh region

A study of the residents' views on neighborhood development shows that among the total study sample households (68 households), approximately 33.8% of households stated that the situation was better than the past, 25 percent of households said the present status of the neighborhood was worse than the past, and 36.8% saw no differences. It is evident that more than half of the residents had a negative evaluation of the neighborhood changes (including lack of change and adverse changes).

Based on study sample, from 68 households, about 48.5 percent of households tend to continue living in problematic texture, and 45.6 percent of households expressed dissatisfaction to go on living in the neighborhood, also 5.9% of households were undecided. Accordingly, a significant proportion of residents of the problematic texture showed dissatisfaction resulting from inadequate social and physical conditions in the neighborhood.

TABLE II. EVALUATION OF STUDIED HOUSEHOLDS IN THE PROBLEMATIC TEXTURE ABOUT THE NEIGHBORHOOD STATUS RELATIVE TO THE PAST

View	Number	%
Got better year after year	23	33.8
Got worse year after year	17	25
No changes occurred	25	36.8
Unknown	3	4.4
Total	68	100

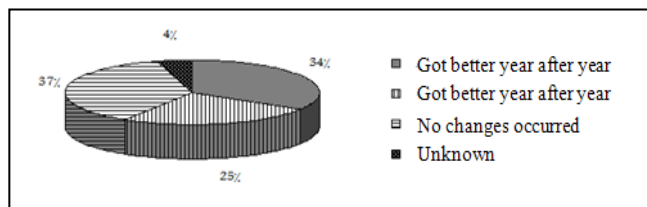


Fig. 3. Distribution of studied households in the worn out texture by percentage, which evaluated the neighborhood status relative to the past

TABLE III. EVALUATION OF STUDIED HOUSEHOLDS IN THE WORN OUT TEXTURE ABOUT CONTINUED RESIDENCE

View	Number	%
Prefer to stay	33	48.5
Prefer not to stay	31	45.6
Unknown	4	5.9
Total	68	100

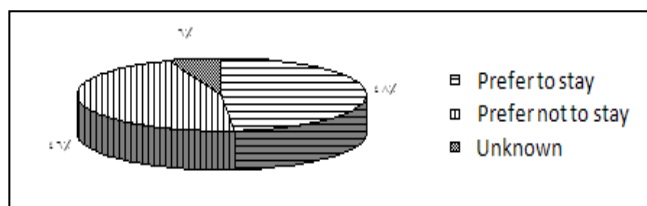


Fig. 4. Distribution of studied households in the worn out texture by percentage, which evaluated the question of continued residence

TABLE IV. EVALUATION OF STUDIED HOUSEHOLDS IN THE WORN OUT TEXTURE ABOUT NEIGHBORHOOD RECOVERY SOLUTIONS

View	Number	%
Neighborhood must continue as is	4	5.9
Partial modification needed	7	10.3
Major modification of some passageways needed	19	27.9
Neighborhood must be demolished and apartments must be built	26	38.2
Neighborhood residents must be relocated	3	4.4
Unknown	9	13.2
Total	68	100

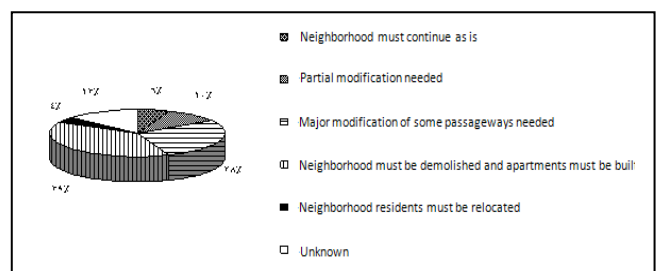


Fig. 5. Distribution of studied households in the worn out texture by percentage, which evaluated the question of neighborhood recovery solutions

## VII. THE SOLUTIONS TO COLLABORATIVE NEIGHBORHOOD IMPROVEMENT

The Study on the residents about the neighborhood recovery solutions indicates from 68 households, a considerable proportion like to demolish the neighborhood and build apartments (38.2% of the total number of households) and wanted major modification of some passageways (27.9%). On this basis, most households want major reform in the neighborhood including improving housing conditions and the passageway network.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

As it was pointed out, a main cause of wearing out the texture and separating it from the city level is narrow - minded approach to these textures, and ignoring people's participation in its renovation. Also, underestimating the people, customs and culture of the people in the region, and the lack of participation of the people is another factor of this decline. To exploit the people and dynamic social participation and to achieve a sustainable city and participation in the shadow of active and effective partnership of people and the non - government sector, and creation of that platform, it is necessary to encourage, support, and empower them.

Recent experience has shown that in many cases, where the city administration has acted selfishly and unilaterally without asking people's views, it has not been so unsuccessful. Therefore, if the people are one side of the project of urban development, and urban authorities (managers and planners) are on the other



side, it must be like a loop whose starting and ending point is discussion and idea exchange.

After discussions, the time comes for decision making and taking action and project execution.

After this stage, the effectiveness of the plan shall be determined and the cycle is repeated until the project is expected to reach the desired conclusion.

It must be noted that citizen participation planning is a process and not a project and by internalization of it in citizenry through participation agencies, the substrate for cooperation and participation and transparent settings for attracting such participation can be realized. In the case study of sensitivity analysis, and attitude of Gheytaarieh residents about necessity of participation in renewal of regional texture, the following points are noteworthy:

Some residents are families so any structural plan must be must be presented based on family structure ruling there.

- One of the factors effective in renovation of the neighborhood by the residents is the prevailing social strata structure, because most residents of the area placed in the medium and lower income classes.

- Evaluation of residents of the neighborhood improvement solution is not limited to a particular class or group.

- Small residential parcels resulted in increasing minor owners and offering structural plans to transfer residents to newly built complexes or purchase of neighborhood lands means conflicting with many households.

- Residents of the neighborhood are generally owner of residential units.

- A significant part of the residents hold negative views about the neighborhood changes relative to the past.

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