

Analysis of the Theme of Gender Gap in the Sixth Development Program of the Islamic Republic of Iran

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Abstract

Gender gap is considered as an indicator to measure the level of inequality between women and men in a society. To measure the gender gap, four global indicators of economic participation opportunities, access to educational facilities, health and survival, and opportunities for women's political empowerment are used. In any country, policies and planning structures have a great impact on reducing or increasing the gender gap due to the distribution of resources and the allocation of facilities. One of the basic sources for policy making is development plans. In Iran, after the Islamic revolution, six five-year development programs have been implemented so far, in all of which policies in the field of women have been formulated and implemented. The purpose of the current research is to investigate the issue of gender gap in the sixth development plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran based on the above four indicators. In this regard, the question is: What is the gender gap in the 6th development program regarding indicators of economic participation, access to educational facilities, health and survival and political empowerment of women? Considering the very poor ranking of Iran in the reports of international institutions regarding the gender gap, it is hypothesized that there is a deep gender gap regarding relevant global indicators, especially regarding women's political empowerment in the 6th Development program. This hypothesis is investigated by thematic analysis method.

Keywords: Gender Gap, Sixth Development program, Women in the Development Plan, Gender Gap Indicators, Thematic Analysis.

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Introduction

Today, the importance of gender equality is emphasized not only as one of the most basic indicators of human rights, but also for reducing poverty, increasing living standards, proportional growth and economic stability. In order to achieve justice and reduce inequality and gender gap, it is necessary to carry out structural reforms, because these reforms increase women's participation in political and social life. It is obvious that supporting the role of women in society and strengthening it will improve health, improve literacy and education, voluntarily control population growth, and generally improve economic growth and fair distribution of benefits and resources. In this regard, during the past decades and years, profound changes have been made regarding the role and dignity of women, and many countries of the world have focused on reducing the gender gap in the fields of education, health, employment, social security and other fields. Studies show that policies and planning structures have a significant impact on reducing or increasing the gender gap due to the distribution of resources and the allocation of facilities, as a result, policy makers in different countries try to promote gender equality by carefully observing and monitoring the gender gap, by implementing appropriate measures, strategies and interventions in the economic, educational, health and political fields. One of the basic sources for policy making is development plans. In Iran as well as in other countries, after the Islamic Revolution, six five-year economic, social and cultural development programs have been compiled and implemented that in each of these programs, in addition to other issues, attention has been paid to the issue of supporting women in different dimensions and fields. Nevertheless, the field of women is still involved in all kinds of imbalances and its effects can be seen in the dimensions of the personal, family and social life of women in the society. For this purpose, the present study intends to enter the issue of gender gap in the

sixth development plan and examine this gap in global indicators related to gender gap with the method of thematic analysis. For this purpose, this question has been raised: At what level is the gender gap in the sixth plan of economic, social and cultural development of the Islamic Republic (2017-2021) compared to the indicators of economic participation, access to educational facilities, health and survival and political empowerment of women? Considering the very poor ranking of Iran in the reports of international institutions regarding the gender gap, the hypothesis is that there is a deep gender gap regarding the relevant global indicators, especially regarding the index of women's political empowerment in the sixth development plan. By using thematic analysis method and combining domestic and international data, the present research has shown the views of policy makers towards women in the sixth development plan of the Islamic Republic of Iran in various economic, hygiene and health and survival sectors, and by presenting a comprehensive and accurate picture of the gender gap in the sixth development plan, as well as stating the weaknesses and shortcomings related to the field of women in the above indicators, it suggests appropriate solutions to improve the position of women in society and eliminate the gender gap.

Methodology: Thematic analysis method

The theme analysis method, based on a certain procedure and on three levels, systematizes the basic themes (codes and key points in the text), the organizer (Themes obtained from combining and summarizing the basic themes) and the overarching themes (Great themes including the principles governing the text as a whole) and presents a map of all the themes that are placed in that network according to the relationship between the general and the specific (Vaezi et al., 2016, p. 23). The identification method used in the present research is done using network theme analysis.

Based on a specific process, the network of themes extracts the lowest level of phenomena theorems from the text (basic themes), then by categorizing these basic themes and summarizing them, it reaches simpler and more abstract principles (Organizer themes), in the next step, these great themes are included in the form of basic metaphors and become the themes governing the entire text (overarching themes),

Then these themes are drawn as web maps and the salient themes of each of these three levels are shown along with the relationships between them (Kamali, 2018, p.195). The main purpose of this study is to examine the law of the sixth development plan. In this framework, the process of analyzing textual data is defined in three key stages; The textual data analysis process is divided into three key steps; First, the text is analyzed to identify important themes. Subsequently, themes are extracted from the identified themes, Finally, a thematic network is constructed, which includes three steps; The first step involves organizing the predetermined clauses to create basic or main themes. The second step involves categorizing these themes to identify more harmonious and coherent concepts. The third step reaches its peak with the emergence of overarching themes. These themes are the general concepts that govern the spirit of the subject, which are obtained from the organized themes of the second step. In this thematic network, the connections between themes form a coherent and integrated network that effectively depicts the descriptive patterns derived from the text.

1- Conceptual Framework

The most important concept that should be defined in the present research and how it should be revealed is the gender gap. At first, it is necessary to refer to the opposite concept of gender gap, i.e. gender equality, in order to get a better understanding of the gender gap. As stated by Mirabi et al., gender equality means that: Women and men have equal

access to proper and safe work, redistribution of unpaid care work, quality education, health, public goods and social services, Also, women should have the right to reproductive health and have equal status and participation with men at different levels of decision-making and finally, the non-violence and coercion against women should be guaranteed (Mirabi et al, 2022, p. 58). On the contrary, there is the concept of gender inequality. In a basic definition, in its sociological interpretation, gender inequality is the unequal distribution of wealth, power and benefits of society between men and women. Gender inequality can be considered as a situation in which women are generally dominated by men and the position of women and men is separated into two spheres, private and public. The different type of participation of the two genders in the public sphere and social life has expanded such distinctions and given greater social value to the social role of men (Hemmati and Maktoobian, 2013, p. 116). Accordingly, the inequality between men and women in different areas is called the gender gap, which extends from family environments to broader social levels. The Global Gender Gap Index was first introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006 as a framework for measuring the extent of gender disparities and tracking their progress over time. This index identifies national gender gaps in economic, educational, health and political criteria and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons between regions and income groups (World Economic Forum, 2016, p. 3). The Global Gender Gap Report measures the gap between women and men in four key areas as follows:

Participation and economic opportunity: This field is measured with three indicators; Participation gap, wage gap and progress gap. The participation gap is measured through the difference in the labor force participation rate. The wage gap has been measured through the index of the estimated ratio of women's income to men's and a qualitative variable calculated by the conductors of the attitude

survey of the World Economic Forum and the gap between the progress of women and men is measured through the ratio of women to men among legislators, high-ranking officials and managers and the ratio of women to men among technical and professional workers (Hemmati and Maktoobian, 2013, p. 125).

Educational achievements:

The method of calculating the gap and inequality in education should be obtained through components such as the literacy rate of women to men, in addition to their enrollment rates in primary, secondary and higher education. The long-term view of the country's ability to educate women and men in equal numbers is measured through the ratio of female literacy rate to male literacy rate (Rahimi et al, 2022, p. 340).

Health and survival:

This category aims to present a brief picture of the difference between the health of women and men.

For this purpose, two variables have been used; The first variable is the gender ratio at birth. The purpose of this variable is to measure the phenomenon of "missing women". In many countries, there are strong preferences for having a male child. For the second variable, the gap between the "healthy life expectancy" of women and men, calculated by the World Health Organization, has been used. The health gap is an estimate of the difference in the number of years men and women can expect to live in good health (free from disease, violence, and malnutrition) (Sadeghi et al, 2022, p. 398).

Political empowerment:

This category includes measures of the gap between men and women in political decision-making at the highest levels. This concept is measured through the ratio of women to men in ministerial positions and the ratio of women to men in parliament seats. Also, the ratio of women to men based on their years of presence in the executive power (Prime Minister or President) at least in the last fifty years is

another indicator of this category (Hemmati and Maktoobian, 2013, p. 126).

The most important feature of the gender gap is that it focuses on the distance between women and men in different sub-indices, regardless of their level. The continuous presentation of these four indicators makes clear the challenges arising from the gender gap and the opportunities created through its reduction. The value of these indices and their sub-indices is in a range between zero and one. In all these indicators, the highest possible score, i.e. one, indicates gender equality and the lowest score, i.e. zero, indicates gender inequality. The unweighted average of each of these sub-indices has been used to construct the overall global gender gap index score. The final index score is between zero and one (Karimi Dastanai, 2018, p. 2).

The importance of the gender gap is such that in addition to basing human development indicators, international institutions also adjust the ranking of countries according to gender and compare countries with each other in terms of this new index.

These indicators are the same as the human development indicators, with the difference that they adjust the human development indicators according to the difference between men and women in enjoying them. (Sadeghi Fasai and Kalhor, 2007, p. 7). The next concept is economic, social and cultural development programs of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The economic, social and cultural development programs of the Islamic Republic of Iran are a framework of goals, strategies, policies and designed actions to realize the principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which is designed in the framework of a 20-year vision. These programs are compiled according to the conditions and capacities of the country in a specific period, usually five years. The notable features of these programs are their comprehensive nature, long-term perspective, legal obligation after approval, mandatory nature

for government agencies and coordination of national budget with their regulations.

The five-year development plans, as the most important form of development policy, are compiled by the program and budget organization and are finally approved by the Islamic legislative Assembly and become the upstream development documents in Iran in the form of law. So far, six development programs have been compiled and implemented (Kamali et al, 2021, p. 96).

Development programs play an important role in advancing gender equality by participating in policy formulation, forecasting, implementation and close monitoring of programs designed to facilitate access to educational facilities, create job opportunities and increase economic participation. These programs also help promote health and survival through the provision of health services and support measures such as health insurance. In addition, they advocate for laws empowering women in political spheres and design mechanisms to protect women from violence and discrimination. In the following, the issue of gender gap in the 6th Development Plan (2017-2021) is investigated with thematic analysis method.

2- Research Findings

2-1: Gender gap theme analysis in the sixth development plan

The present study has been compiled using thematic analysis method according to the following steps: The first stage: a complete review of the content of the sixth development plan in order to identify the articles and clauses related to the field of women among other topics. Step 2: Separation of categories related to women's domain based on 4 criteria

related to the gender gap including women's economic participation rate, health and longevity, access to education and the level of political empowerment of women from other categories. Third: creating a thematic network to obtain specific patterns that can be analyzed, which includes several steps as follows: First, the researcher separates the same and similar concepts for each index as the main theme from the text and by connecting to each other, extracts the main or basic themes in four indicators. The second step: the necessity of determining a broader and more regular concept which have the same content targeting and the organizer themes are called and emerge through the connection of related basic themes. In the last step, overarching themes, which are actually the governing spirit of the network of themes, are identified in each indicator. In fact, the overarching theme is the general pattern and concept that is institutionalized in the goals of the policy maker in compiling each index.

2-1-1: First step: extracting basic themes from the text

In this way, the first step is to break down the article and clause of the law and extract the basic themes. In the first step, basic themes should be extracted directly from the main text of the program. These themes related to each of the 4 indicators of gender gap such as: opportunity for economic participation, health and survival, access to educational facilities and political empowerment which are drawn in the same direction and clearly indicate the meaning of each clause or legal article. In this way, in the first step, 4 tables are created in which the legal clauses are converted into basic themes in each of the indicators.

Table 2-1: Converting the text of the sixth development program into basic themes (Women's field, related to economic participation opportunity index)

The Text of the Law	Basic Theme
<p>Article 2 Clause T</p> <p>Specific macro-interdisciplinary issues regarding the improvement of the business environment, employment, virtual space, providing financial resources for the country's economy, a fair payment system and eliminating discrimination, empowering women and the poor (with priority for women heads of households), social insurances and organization and sustainability of insurance and retirement funds and prevention of reducing social damages and the implementation of the document on the fundamental transformation of education, public culture and Iranian Islamic lifestyle.</p>	<p>Providing financial resources for the country's economy, fair payment system and elimination of discrimination, empowering women and the poor with priority for female heads of the household</p>
<p>Section 15 of Article 80</p> <p>Clause T: Support for female heads of the household</p> <p>Preparation and full implementation of the comprehensive plan for empowering women heads of households according to the laws and approvals of the social council until the end of the implementation of the program law by the presidency (deputy for women's affairs) in cooperation with the Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare and other relevant institutions and approving the mentioned program in the cabinet and approving it in the parliament and monitoring its implementation.</p> <p>base year of the implementation of the program law.</p>	<p>Preparation and full implementation of the comprehensive plan for the empowerment of women heads of households according to the laws and approvals of the social council</p>
<p>Section 17 of Article 102</p> <p>Clause B: Support, support and promotion of livelihood and family economy through the development of home businesses, early economic return enterprises and rural and family-oriented production cooperatives and increasing the continuous growth rate of activities compared to the</p>	<p>Development of economy and family economy through the development of home occupations, fast-yielding enterprises and rural and family-oriented reproductive cooperatives.</p>

Table 2-2: Converting the text of the sixth development program into basic themes (Women's field, related to health and survival index)

The Text of the Law	Basic Theme
<p>Article 75</p> <p>All marriage applicants must submit a certificate of screening in the health and treatment networks in order to identify high-risk marriages in terms of genetic disorders to the marriage offices in order to legally register a permanent marriage. Cases at risk can be referred to counseling centers, either health centers affiliated with the Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education or counseling centers approved by the Welfare Organization and if genetic testing is needed, they can be introduced to authorized centers within the framework of provisions of Article 70 of this law. Note 2: 10% copyright of divorce registration has increased and the resources obtained after depositing into the treasury and public and government aid within the framework of the annual budget to help cover the costs of genetic testing of needy people based on wealth test will be at the disposal of the Welfare Organization and the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee.</p>	<p>Screening and prevention of risky marriages</p> <p>The need to finance the costs of genetic testing in order to help people in need</p>
<p>Article 76</p> <p>The government is obliged to ensure the health of mothers and children and improve the indicators of maternal and infant mortality rates according to the following table by following the general policies of the population.</p>	<p>Paying attention to the general policies of the population</p> <p>Improving indicators to prevent maternal and newborn deaths</p>
<p>Section 17 of Article 94</p> <p>The government is obliged to allocate 27% of the total 9% value-added tax for the development of school sports, public sports, the International Zurkhaneh Sports Federation, rural and nomadic sports, women's sports and sports infrastructure, especially in the field of disabled and veterans. This amount is foreseen for the rows related to the Ministry of Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Education in the annual budget.</p>	<p>Allocation of funds for sports development</p> <p>Development of women's sports</p>
<p>Section 17 of Article 102</p> <p>Clause Th: Supporting and backing the promotion of successful, stable and easy marriage, having children and raising righteous children, recognizing the value</p>	<p>Supporting the promotion of stable and easy successful marriage and childbearing with legal provisions</p>

<p>of marriage and having children through the establishment of legal mechanisms and the granting of facilities and convenience</p>	
<p>Section 17 of Article 102 Clause C: Continuous and responsible education and counseling of teenagers and young people with priority to families before, during and at least 5 years after marriage by all relevant institutions, especially the Ministries of Education, Health and Medical Education and Sports and Youth, Welfare Organization, State and non-state public and higher education institutions, organization of psychology and counseling system and other relevant institutions with counseling and psychological services, facilities and benefits of basic and supplementary insurances</p>	<p>Developing health related skills through education and institution building</p>
<p>Section 17 of Article 102 Clause d: Support and development of health insurance in basic insurance and supplementary insurance for mothers in all stages of pregnancy until the end of infancy</p>	<p>Insurance support for mothers from the beginning of pregnancy to the end of infancy</p>
<p>Article 103 Clause b: The Ministry of Cooperation, Labor and Social Welfare is obliged to provide the necessary review and plan for the creation of social insurance for housewives with at least three children within six months from the effective date of this law, in line with family consolidation policies, and submit it for legal decision making.</p>	<p>Creating social insurance for housewives with at least three children in line with family consolidation policies</p>
<p>Article 104 Clause a: In order to control and reduce the divorce rate by 20% of the base year during the implementation of the program law, the welfare organization is obliged to implement the necessary groundwork through the social emergency and assistance center and counseling and psychological service centers in order to prevent family disputes and crises and to prevent the occurrence of divorce, and with the help of popular institutions, to expand its services.</p>	<p>Using counseling centers and psychological services to prevent disputes and divorce by the welfare organization</p>

Table 2-3: Converting the text of the sixth development program into basic themes (Women's field, related to the index of access to educational facilities)

The Text of the Law	Basic Theme
<p style="text-align: center;">Article 64</p> <p>Clause a: In order to promote science and competition between the country's universities and international interactions during the implementation of the program law, The government is allowed to establish higher education units and branches with the participation of international prestigious universities and universities and institutes of higher education, research, technical and professional and a University of Applied science & Technology in the country within the framework of the policies of the Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution.</p>	<p>Scientific promotion of the country's universities and the establishment of higher education units and branches in partnership with universities</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Article 65</p> <p>Clause b: The government is obliged to increase the share of skill training in the education system of the country with the approach of realizing resistance economy and knowledge-based economy during the implementation of the program law by reviewing and reforming the structure of the administrative system of universities and higher education centers and increasing resources and equipment regarding increasing the share of Technical and Vocational University and University of Applied science & Technology in the education system of the country and update the educational equipment of conservatories, Training schools and technical and Vocational colleges.</p>	<p>Reforming the educational structure and increasing the share of skill training with the approach of resistance and knowledge-based economy</p>

Table 2-4: Converting the text of the sixth development program into basic themes
(Women's field, related to the index of access to political empowerment)

The Text of the Law	Basic Theme
<p>Section 17 of Article 101</p> <p>All executive bodies are obliged to achieve the goals stated in the 10th, 20th and 21st principles of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran and objectives of the 20-year vision document and general policies of the 6th plan and general family policies based on "Strengthening the institution of the family and the place of women in it and upholding the religious and legal rights of women in all fields and paying special attention to their constructive role", and also in order for the society to benefit from the human capital of women in the process of sustainable and balanced development, by organizing and strengthening the organizational position of women and family affairs in the organization, in relation to Apply the approach of gender justice based on Islamic principles in their policies, programs and plans and evaluate the results and decisions based on the indicators announced by the National Women and Family Headquarters of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution.</p> <p>Note 1- The Presidency (Deputy Minister for Women and Family Affairs) is required to evaluate and implement the policies, programs, and plans of the institutions and continuously monitor the improvement of indicators of the status of women and the family, and to submit its report annually to the Islamic Consultative Assembly and the Cabinet of Ministers.</p> <p>Note 2- The executive regulations of this article regarding the manner of application, Mechanisms for monitoring and supervising indicators and the duties and requirements of executive bodies to improve the aforementioned indicators will be approved by the Council of Ministers, upon the joint proposal of the Presidency (Deputy of Women and Family Affairs), the</p>	<p>Upholding the religious and legal rights of women in all fields</p> <p>The constructive role of women in order for the society to benefit from the human capital of women in the process of sustainable and balanced development</p> <p>Organizing and strengthening the organizational position of women and family affairs in the organization in relation to applying the approach of gender justice based on Islamic principles</p>

Administrative and Employment Organization of the country, and in cooperation with other relevant executive agencies within the framework of relevant laws, six months after this law comes into force.	
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2-1-2- The second and third steps: transforming basic themes into organizer and comprehensive themes

In the second step and the third step according to Table No. 1-5, organizer and comprehensive themes are examined.

Table 2-5: Transforming basic themes into organizer and comprehensive themes (related to the economic participation opportunity index)

Basic Theme	Organizer Theme	Overarching Themes
Providing financial resources for the country's economy, Fair payment system and elimination of discrimination, Empowering women and the poor with priority for female heads of the household	Empowerment of female heads of the household	Empowering women in the economy with the focus of developing home businesses and in the family institution
Preparation and full implementation of the comprehensive plan for the empowerment of women heads of households according to the laws and approvals of the social council		
Improving the family's livelihood and economy through the development of home businesses, fast-yielding enterprises, and	Improving the family economy by developing family-oriented home businesses	

rural and family-oriented production cooperatives		
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Table 2-6: Transforming basic themes into organizer and comprehensive themes (related to health and survival index)

Basic Theme	Organizer Theme	Overarching Themes
Screening and prevention of risky marriages, The need to finance the costs of genetic testing in order to help people in need	Funding the costs of genetic testing to prevent high-risk marriages	
Paying attention to the general policies of the population, Improving indicators to prevent maternal and newborn deaths	Prevention of maternal and newborn deaths	
Insurance support for mothers from the beginning of pregnancy to the end of infancy	Supporting the treatment of pregnant mothers	
Allocation of funds for sports development	Attention to women's health and sports	
Supporting the promotion of successful, stable, and easy marriage and childbearing with legal arrangements	Legal support for marriage	The importance of women's health with the approach of carriers of population increase
Developing health related skills through education and institution building	Institution building for health development	
Insurance support for mothers from the beginning of pregnancy to the end of breastfeeding	Supporting the treatment of pregnant mothers	
Establishing social insurance for housewives with at least three children in	Attention to women's health and insurance	

line with family strengthening policies		
The use of counseling centers and psychological services to prevent disputes and divorce by the welfare organization	Improving women's mental health	

Table 2-7: Transforming basic themes into organizer and comprehensive themes (related to the index of access to educational facilities)

Basic Theme	Organizer Theme	Overarching Themes
Scientific promotion of the country's universities and creation of higher education units and branches with the participation of universities	Attention to increasing the quantity and quality of the university	Increasing the educational and skilled share of women
Reforming the educational structure and increasing the share of skill training with the approach of resistance and knowledge-based economy	Increasing the share of skills training	

Table 2-8: Transforming basic themes into organizer and comprehensive themes (related to political empowerment index)

Basic Theme	Organizer Theme	Overarching Themes
Upholding the religious and legal rights of women in all fields, The constructive role of women in order for the society to benefit from the human capital of women in the process of sustainable and balanced development, Organizing and strengthening the organizational	Fulfilling the religious and legal rights of women in all fields Attention to the capacity of women in sustainable and balanced development of society	Subsidiary support for women towards political empowerment

<p>position of women and family affairs in the organization in relation to applying the approach of gender justice based on Islamic principles</p>	<p>Strengthening the organizational position of women and family affairs in executive bodies with a gender justice approach</p>	
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2-3- Theme network analysis of the sixth development plan

In the current research, the author reached 4 overarching themes by dividing the sixth development program in the field of women into 4 indicators (opportunity and economic participation, health and survival, access to educational facilities and political empowerment) and drawing the thematic network of each of those indicators. These overarching themes are the goals and important plans of policy-makers in the field of women in the sixth development plan. In the following, the cause of the gender gap and Iran's very low ranking should be sought based on the report of the World Economic Forum in the analysis of the overarching themes obtained in the sixth development plan.

These overarching themes are:

1- In the index of opportunity and economic participation, the overarching theme is identified: empowering women in the economy with the focus of developing home businesses in the family institution.

2- In the index of access to educational facilities, the overarching theme is identified: Reforming the educational structure with a skill development and research-oriented approach in line with economic self-reliance.

3- In the index of health and survival, the overarching theme is identified: the

importance of women's health with the approach of carriers of population increase.

4- In the index of political empowerment, the overarching theme is identified: Subsidary support for women is aimed at political empowerment.

The overarching themes obtained are discussed below:

1- Empowering women in the economy with the focus of developing home businesses in the family institution (Women's economic participation opportunity)

The first indicator of the gender gap in the report of the World Economic Forum is women's economic participation opportunity. According to the report of this forum in 2018, i.e. in the year of the start of the sixth development program in Iran, the score of this country is 0.376 with a rank of 143 in the women's economic participation opportunity index out of a total of 149 reviewed cases in the world (World Economic Forum, 2018, p. 11). And in 2023, which was the last year of the sixth development program in Iran, Iran's score in this index was 0.344 and ranks 144 among 146 countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2023, p. 17).

The overarching theme of this index is the empowerment of women in the economy with the focus of developing home businesses in the family institution and the organizer themes

in this index are: a: Empowering women heads of the household, b: Improving the family economy by developing family-oriented home businesses. In the women's economic participation index, the issue of "supporting female heads of households" is one of the most important issues in the sixth development program, but at the same time, it is directly mentioned in only one article. In general, the focus on empowering women in the family in the 6th program has ambiguity about the implementation of related laws and it is not clear which approach and strategy, with what operational scale and what quality was the policy maker's goal. In addition, the word empowerment itself needs a clear definition and interpretation. The policymaker does not clarify which of the economic, political or social spheres is meant by empowerment. Another important issue is that there are different reasons for a woman to be the head of a family, and not all female heads of the family share the same economic and social conditions. Sometimes, the reason for being a head of a family may be the presence of an addicted or disabled spouse, etc., in which case the woman of the family takes over the responsibility of running the family. In this case, it is necessary to formulate laws based on the empowerment of this head of the family carefully and proportionately in different areas. As stated in the report of Islamic Parliament Research Center regarding the 6th Development program, this issue is raised in the development plan in general and is completely ambiguous (Arhami, 2022, p. 43).

It seems that these themes are not exclusively related to employment and pursue women's economic participation in the context of the family and its goals. On further examination of the relevant sections, it is obvious that even in these cases, the definitive measure of its quantity and quality is not still clear. Throughout the entire program, the policymaker has not been able to express a coherent strategy to achieve these goals. As a result, it is expected that the continuation of this policy will face challenges in realizing the goal and

monitoring its progress. This problem shows the need of the policy maker to address this problem in the program. The lack of a clear position on women's economic participation, along with its correlation with family issues, has contributed to the complexity of the issue and made the issue even more difficult.

2- Reforming the educational structure with a skill development and research-oriented approach in line with economic self-reliance (access to educational facilities)

The second indicator of gender gap is the access of women to education compared to men in any society. According to the report of this forum in 2018, i.e. in the year of the start of the sixth development program in Iran, the score of this country in the index of access to educational facilities was 0.969 and it ranked 103 out of 149 countries under investigation (World Economic Forum, 2018, p.11). and in 2023, which was the last year of the sixth development program in Iran, Iran's score in this index was 0.960 and ranked 112 among 146 countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2023, p. 17).

From the analysis of the content of the clauses and articles related to this index in the sixth development program, the overarching theme of reforming the educational structure with a skill development and research-oriented approach in the direction of economic self-reliance was obtained. Themes of the organizer: a: The importance of the institution of education and its supervision, b: Paying attention to increasing the quantity and quality of the university were extracted. In this program, no material has been directly addressed to the issue of women's education.

3- The importance of women's health with the approach of carriers of population increase (health and survival)

The third indicator of the gender gap is the level of health and survival of women compared to men in a society. According to the report of this forum in 2018, i.e. in the year of the start of the sixth development program in Iran, the score of this country in the index of

in the health and survival index was 0.966 with a rank of 127 out of 149 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018, p.11). and in 2023, which was the last year of the sixth development plan in this country, Iran's score in this index was 0.964 and ranked 116 among 146 countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2023, p. 18).

From the analysis of the content of clauses and articles related to this index in the 6th development program, the overarching theme of the importance of women's health with the approach of carriers of population increase was obtained and the organizer themes in this index are: Providing genetic testing costs to prevent high-risk marriages, prevent maternal and infant deaths, pay attention to women's health and exercise, and provide legal support for marriage, Institution building for health development, supporting the treatment of pregnant mothers, paying attention to women's health and insurance, and promoting women's mental health.

Under these concepts, the policymaker supports strategies such as the implementation of educational and counseling initiatives with the aim of reducing social harms, allocating credit to strengthen and advance women's sports, creating support systems for the families of imprisoned people and working children and providing health insurance for pregnant women. Emphasizes reducing the incidence of high-risk marriages by highlighting the importance of education and counseling for adolescents and young adults, focusing on family-oriented priorities before and after marriage. The Ministry of Health has a central role in providing education in psychological and health-related matters; However, there is currently a lack of operational support for insurance coverage related to the above consultations.

One of the most important focal points investigated in the 6th development program, which has been addressed in various ways and in 22 paragraphs, is related to the support of the family institution. These include increasing childbearing, supporting marriage, and lowering the average age of marriage.

Support strategies for these cases include providing facilities such as housing facilities, allocation of financial resources for marriage, establishment of student dormitories, father's incentive leave for three days, insurance coverage for pregnant mothers, social security insurance for housewives mothers with more than three children and infertility treatment insurance. To address the issue of divorce, as specified in articles 102, 104 and 113, the government's proposal is to establish social emergency centers and counseling services, along with implementing cultural programs that encourage marriage and condone divorce. The analysis of the data published by the National Organization for Civil Registration shows a continuous upward trend in the divorce rate, despite the emphasis on a 20% reduction in divorce rates. According to the report of Research Center of Islamic legislative Assembly, divorce has increased from 169,093 in 2013 to 183,193 in 2020. Nevertheless, the examination of the fertility rate based on the data of the National Organization for Civil Registration shows a continuous decrease. So that in 2015, the fertility rate was 2.12, but according to the statistical yearbook of 2019, the first edition, which was published by the National Registry, it decreased to 1.5% (Arhami, 2022, p. 35).

4- Subsidiary support for women towards political empowerment (political empowerment)

The fourth indicator of gender gap is the empowerment of women compared to men in a society. According to the report of the World Economic Forum in 2018, i.e. in the year of the start of the sixth development program in Iran, the score of this country in this index was 0.046 with a rank of 141 out of 149 countries (World Economic Forum, 2018, p.11). and in

2023, which was the last year of the sixth development plan in this country, Iran's score in this index was 0.031 and ranked 143 among 146 countries under global review (World Economic Forum, 2023, p. 18).

From the analysis of the content of the clauses and articles related to this index in the sixth development program, the overarching theme of importance of using women's capacity in development and at the same time, a more important role of women in consolidating the institution of family and having children was obtained. Themes of the organizer: Fulfilling the religious and legal rights of women in all fields, attention to the capacity of women in sustainable and balanced development of society, strengthening the organizational position of women and family affairs in executive bodies with a gender justice approach.

In this program, attention has been paid to fulfilling the religious and legal rights of women and paying attention to their capacity in the sustainable development of the society, but this program lacks specific measures related to the recognition of women's legal and religious rights, as well as attention to the role of women in the sustainable and balanced development of society. However, despite the ambiguity in the specific operational approach and action to achieve the specified goals, the supervisory responsibilities of the headquarters have been emphasized to handle and monitor this issue. Regarding "strengthening the organizational position of women and family affairs", this program fails to provide a coherent strategy with the aim of coordinating with the government's structures in this area. Determining the indicators for achieving gender equality, as specified in this article, is also entrusted to the National Headquarters of Women and Family and its Secretariat (Vice President for Women and Family Affairs) (Law of the sixth five-year program, 2016, p. 135). Thus, the global indicators related to the gender gap in the sixth development program were examined and evaluated, and the extent

of the gender gap in these indicators was evaluated.

Conclusion

The present study shows that examining the effectiveness of different policies in the field of women in development programs is very important to understand their impact in perpetuating or reducing gender inequalities. Using the method of thematic analysis, the sixth development program was investigated with the specific aim of evaluating these policies and their impact on the gender gap. The results of this research showed that the gender gap is increasing during the sixth development program. In the first year of this program, Iran ranked 142 out of 149 countries with a score of 0.589, and in the last year of the program, it fell to 143 out of 146 countries with a score of 0.575. The current research showed that the sixth development program in the field of women has not been successful in all stages of policy making, formulation, implementation and monitoring. By examining the themes related to the gender gap in the sixth development program, four overarching themes were obtained:

- 1- Empowering women in the economy with the focus of developing home businesses in the family institution.
- 2- Reforming the educational structure with a skill development and research-oriented approach in line with economic self-reliance.
- 3- The importance of women's health with the approach of carriers of population increase.
- 4- Subsidiary support for women towards political empowerment.

The mentioned themes show the policy maker's position towards women. In the index of women's economic participation, this particular position has shown itself in the realm of family structure and the amount of household jobs. Apart from that, it refers to the empowerment of women heads of the household; However, the legislator has not expressed a

specific approach for empowerment, whether economic, cultural, etc., and has not been able to draw an operational strategy for its implementation. As a result, it seems that the legislature lacks a coherent plan for women's economic participation in society. In the education index, there is no specific content for women in the 6th plan that is directly related to women's education.

In the field of health and survival, while there is women's health and sports, as well as the recognition of the importance of women's sports development, without paying particular attention to women's health, the legislator's focus has been mainly on mothers' health in relation to fertility, children's well-being, and society's health. The political empowerment index shows the recognition of women's legal rights within the framework of the constitution, focusing on the role of women in sustainable development. Despite the fact that the 6th Development Plan mentions the fulfillment of women's religious and legal rights and attention to the capacity of women in sustainable and balanced development, but a clear strategy for its implementation and monitoring has not been determined. Also, in this field, it has been mentioned to strengthen the organizational position of women and family affairs, but the purpose and legislative approach remain unclear. At the same time, in accordance with this matter, the Vice President for Women's Affairs paid special attention to the appointment of women in managerial positions. These appointments included the vice president of development and resources of the governors, which happened in a domino pattern in many provinces. From that, in some provinces, a limited number of female governor and prefect, as well as middle managers, heads of departments, etc., were appointed from women. These measures were short-term and with the new government in place, the same limited

number of managerial posts were also reclaimed and the share of women in management and political positions reached almost zero.

In general, from the total content and concepts examined in the field of women in the 6th program, which has been given attention in different ways in 22 Clause, the issue of supporting the family institution, divorce reduction and childbearing increase is emphasized. Women have been the subject of legislation only in the form of the family and there is no problem and concern in the issue of women in the development plan. The proportion of the issue of women and family in this program shows that regardless of the role and rights of women as independent people and socio-economic activists, policies and approaches are mainly focused on the role of women in the family. The sixth development program in the field of women, instead of providing comprehensive strategies for empowering women in all aspects of social, economic, cultural and political life, has emphasized only their traditional role in the family and has ignored the multifaceted roles of women in society. In this program, although family issues and its consolidation have been paid attention to in development programs, operational and effective strategies to reduce divorce and increase marriage have not been used. These problems have helped to increase the gender gap in the society and have hindered the progress and empowerment of women in various dimensions of social, economic, cultural and political life. In order to reduce this gap, it is necessary to make policies comprehensively and according to the multifaceted needs and rights of women as independent people. Policies and plans should be formulated, implemented and monitored in a coherent and specific manner in development indicators. These programs should continue continuously.

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