



Studying the role of human development in reducing the gender Inequalities among the UN Member States

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Abstract

Today, the development indices provided by the United Nations are considered as the major criteria in determining the position of the different countries of the world. Human Development Index, despite resolving its shortcomings, is again unable to offer a correct picture of the situation of the inhabitants of the world in terms of the inequalities between men and women. Whether this inability is true about all countries? This study seeks to answer this question and determine the role of components of the Human Development Index in declining the Gender Inequality Index. To do this, all UN member states (186 countries) in a four-year period (2010-2013), being divided into four groups of countries with very high human development, countries with high human development, countries with medium human development, and countries with low human development, were studied. The data were analyzed through secondary analysis method. The results showed that Human Development Index is associated with the Gender Inequality Index in different groups. The Human Development Index is not able to explain the gender inequality in countries with high human development. Its explanatory power is also low in countries with average development. Generally, we can say that human development components have considerable explanatory power only in countries with very high and low human development. Therefore, studying the relationship between these two indices is possible in the social, cultural, economic and political structures of societies.

Key words: human development, gender inequality, long and healthy life, accessibility to knowledge

Introduction

In the past decades, there have been profound changes in perception of development. Until 1970s, the economic development was evaluated in terms of per capita income with the assumption that with higher per capita income, the situation of people will improve in all aspects. With such an index of development, production- oriented economic growth emphasized on GDP (Alikhani et al., 2012). The economic prosperity approach to the development caused the consumption of goods and services to be considered as the basis for economic prosperity, therefore, to measure the welfare and development (or the consumption of goods and services), national income is used as a general measure. In this approach, the issue of poverty and income distribution with this assumption that GDP growth will benefit everybody and its interests will cover all people, is ignored (Kavoosi & Ahmadi, 2010: 2). If the rise in GDP in a country is accompanied with rising poverty, unemployment, disease and inequality, it can be concluded that the development has really occurred in that society (UNDP,

2003). In fact, the Human Development Index is a measurement instrument to achieve the key dimensions of human development these dimensions are: long and healthy life, access to knowledge and a decent livelihood. This indicator is a geometric mean which is achieved through the normalized indices of the three dimensions (UNDP, 2003).

The intertwining of various economic, social, cultural and political aspects of development makes inevitable the need for an integrated approach to development. The main problem of the Human Development Index is that it could not address issues such as inequality, poverty, social security, empowerment, and so on. Therefore, in order to achieve the human development, analysis of other indicators and information was needed (UNDP, 2003). Since the aim of the United Nations to collect the information about human development indices was to study the situation of those countries by which it could measure the development level of those indices during the time and improve the general situation of the people over the world. But the question was that if you a country has had a high rank in human development, it means that the country is progressive and prosperous, and whether all sectors of society are equal advantages in their choices and access to shared resources. Therefore, in 1995, the UN Human Development Report suggested two new indicators to determine the status of women in each country which were appropriate. The two indicators are: Gender Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index (Bastani, 1383).

Entering gender issues in human development since 1995 began with the introduction of gender development index that attracted the international attention to the gender gap in all aspects of life. In fact, the gender development index was not a measure of gender inequality, but it was an adjusted human development index compared to gender inequality that it could not be analyzed independent of the gender development index. In other words, the Human Development Index shows the average access and Gender Development Index is modified in terms of inequality between men and women. The reason of considering the gender roots in access to social suitable opportunities and resources during the history. In an effort to eliminate the inequalities, women and girls have taken main steps in this regard since 1990, but they still have not achieved gender equality (Human Development Report, 2014). Gender equality is achieved when women and men have equal rights and social opportunities in all sectors, including economic participation and decision-making. Women and girls deprivation is the main source of inequality. Overall, women and girls are discriminated in the health, education, political representation and employment. According to the mentioned discriminations, the United Nations introduced GII index or gender inequality in the Human Development Report in 2010. This index assesses the gender inequality in three basic aspects of human development: 1. Reproductive Health that is measured based on the rate of maternal mortality and adolescent birth rate. 2. Enabling through the seats occupied by women in parliament as well as by the share of adult men and women aged 25 and above with at least secondary education 3. The economic situation measured by the participation rate of women and men over 15 years. GII has had a new light on the position of women in more than 150 countries around the world. Countries with high gender inequality in human development also experience unequal distribution (Human Development Report, 2014). The experience of this type of the human development inequality in developing countries is more pronounced. It refers to the situation of women in components like health, empowerment and economic status. Although the annual reports of the United Nations suggest that rarely has a country low average in each of the three components, the lack of systematic attention to each of these dimensions can show a sharp decrease in world rank of Gender Inequality Index (Human Development Report, 2014). Therefore, this study aims to examine this issue that how the UN Human Development Index in member countries can explain the Gender Inequality Index and the position of women in terms of access to resources and social and economic opportunities in the country. In other words, can we determine the impact of human development factors on gender inequality index based on the member countries in various groupings?

Theoretical Principles

Since the early 1970s, the role of women in development has been considered more than before. Evidence suggests that modernization and development have had unbalanced achievements for men and women so that men were the beneficiaries and women were the victims of this process. Gender empowerment and their participation in development require the gender education and

development (Ketabi et al., 2055; quoted by Khamenei Mousavi, 2010: 53). The comments can be seen in the new of neo-classical and modernization schools.

Modernization- Neoclassical Perspective

According to this perspective, industrialization and economic development has declined the gender inequality (Maria, quoted by Shaibani & Afshari, 2003: 153). These studies and World Bank studies show that the economic growth, purely as a tool, has slowly changed the status of women because the public policies determined by the government play often more important role in changing the social and cultural mechanisms for or against women. Most studies show some intellectual approaches on the role of women in development, and also the role of development in promoting the women's place in society, taking into account the role of women in development programs and the impact of these programs on the elimination of gender inequality (Forsythe, Korzeniewicz & Durrant, 2000, quoted by Ghadimi et al., 2011:3). One of the most important theorists of this school is Ester Boresup. More research and studies on the role of women in economic and social development around the world were due to publish the book of women in economic development by Esther Boresup. He tried to put the concept of women in development and in an international framework. He believes that in poor countries, before the urbanization and economic growth in the market, the productivity differences between men and women was negligible. In the process of economic growth and with an increased level of discrimination against women and exclusion of them from participation in new sectors, the productivity difference increased (Morrison et al., 2005, quoted by Khani, 2010: 10).

According to Boresup, gender inequality is the result of traditional structures, and therefore the government has a main role. Government efforts to increase the women's equal access to human capital have a very effective role in reducing the gaps in employment and wages. From this perspective, economic growth provides one of the most important mechanisms to reduce the gap between men and women (Sheibani and Afshari, 2013: 154). Based on Boresup view, economic growth is not the only effective factor in ignoring the status of women in the development process and if the social ties and cultural barriers are severe, in spite of the economic growth, status of women will not improve. That is, the women will be away from the new technological developments in the traditional sectors (Khani, 2010: 10).

Using Boresup theory, Marian Schimink suggests that the economic and social changes in developing countries are qualitatively different from developed nations. According to Schimink, with an entry to the automation technology, many forces lost their jobs and despite high labor force in developing communities, men are employed and women are marginalized. Ignoring the role of women in the macro development and strategic plans, the development process has the conflicting consequences for women; they are marginalized and exploited as cheap labor force. Bloomberg believes that it is women's economic power that can reduce gender inequality. This goal will be achieved through this formula that if the women's work have systematically been considered essential and the kinship system facilitates the acquisition of assets, and layering has not been in the favor of men, then the women will gain the economic power. Without the economic power of women, the gender-based layer will be high and only the economic power of women can reduce the gender inequality reduced and provides the possibility of mobility for women (Turner, 1998: 333). Therefore, the views expressed so far indicates the importance of economic growth in reducing gender inequality in which some like Boresup call economic development as a factor for reducing the gender inequality in countries with relatively stable and have cultural and their economic development indicators are in a good position. Also, Shemyng think that the development impact on reducing the gender inequality in the developing world is different from the developed countries. Some, such as Bloomberg, think that the incomparable role of economic power in reducing the gender inequality can be achieved only with the participation of social and cultural factors. In general, these theories, despite direct attention to the variables of economic growth in reducing the gender inequality, define the human development by factors such as education, a key factor in making changes in the status of women in the development process.

Women and Development

One of the interesting fields in the feminist studies is the economic and social impact of development on women's lives. They point out the different effects of development programs on different groups of women. That is, the impact of development programs on all the criteria was not the same for the status of women. Although some measures have been modified, others have been destroyed and by changing the some social institutions, it has created new problems for women (Sheibani & Afshari, 2003: 157). According to "Tyanev", three views in this area compete together; in the theory of "integration" it is said that the development promote the gender equality through the more involvement of women in the economy and public life. The more presence of women in public activities, especially in the field of human development, eliminates the gender inequalities in all the fields. The theory of integration in terms of an emphasis on the positive role of development in reducing the inequalities is closer to the neoclassical theory and it is more optimistic about promoting the status of women in the development path (Shaditalab, 2001: 40). The theory of "Marginalization" says that to capitalist development stops women from their more productive roles and limits them to the private sphere and home. This development, women lose their control over resources and are financially dependent on men. The theory of "exploitation" also says that modernization leads to the emergence of a cheap labor force like women. Women will have an important role in the manufacturing sector, but since they are considered a as second-class work force, they are vulnerable to exploitation (Abbott & Wallace, 1380: 72- 75).

Some feminists also believe that the development has made the women's situation worse because the emergence of the new industries and the assistance programs imposes the western ideas about feminism; men have to migrate and leave the home due to the work. In this situation, running the home, answering the economic needs, giving birth and raising the children are all the women's responsibility. There are no evidence to verify the compounded theory and it does not seem that women achieve the equality and freedom through the development. In contrast, some evidences verify the marginalization theory. That is, women are deprived from the productive roles and they are limited to the private field of home. It seems that it has happened in some rural places, but the modernization process has led to the emergence of new forms of exploitation which has made women as a cheap labor force in the factory or farms (Abott & Valace, 2001:72-75). In summary, the majority of the theorists have focused on the relationship between the human development and gender, especially the role of social and cultural criterion in reducing the gender inequality. They stress this point that all social, political, economic structures and the developing policies have made the gender inequality and difference possible. In this sense, countries with traditional structure (patriarchy system) which are in low level in terms of the human development, they are mainly subject to gender inequality.

Literature review

Sabina Akire (2010) in a report titled "Human Development, definition, reviews and other related concepts" examines the human development index and the effectiveness of it. The study, conducted by the United Nations, refers to the inadequacy of the indicators in showing the status of all peoples of the world. The results show that the HDI should have flexible components in terms of changing conditions and position of both genders (male and female) in different times and places. This means that these indicators should be estimated based on gender and along with indicators of human rights, human security and happiness. Khani (2010) in "the framework of analysis in the study of gender inequality in the world" explained the structural problem of indicators about the lack of attention to the patterns and structures of the communities. In his view, the key to the rise of inequality are social factors which can be different considering the location and structural features of the society. Williamson (2000), categorizes the gender inequalities under three factors: the economic role and labor market access, customs and social conventions resources and level of development. According to him, in developing countries, rules, norms and customs have a crucial role in explaining the gender disparities in society so that the long time formed rules cannot be easily changed. This limitation prevents them from reducing the gender inequality. Lee (1998) showed that the analysis of equality in Asia requires the consideration of four categories: gender, income, region and socio-cultural categories. His findings show that many Asian countries are trying to reduce the difference in

the enjoyment of the benefits for women and men. But in none of the societies, men and women are still treated equally. Also, access to education or employment opportunities for men and women are different in some areas. Lee also suggested that gender inequality is closely linked with human poverty, but it does not necessarily relate with the growth of the national economy (Lee, 1998; quoted by Khamenei Mousavi et al., 2010). Klasen (1990) used the cross-country data to examine the relationship between education and child mortality rate. The results of the study show that there is a reverse and significant relationship between the variables so that one year increase in the education of women leads to 18.1% increase in 1000 people annually (Klasen, 1999).

Methodology

The research is conducted using the secondary analysis of existing data about gender inequality and human development. This study aimed to investigate the role of human development in reducing the gender inequality in the Member States of the United Nations. Indices are used based on the research objectives and hypotheses and as they are reported by the collection center. In the next phase, the raw data are mixed based on the research needs and during the arithmetic operations to achieve decisive indicator. These countries are categorized in four groups; countries with very high human development, countries with high human development, countries with medium human development, countries with low human development. They were also a comparison measurement for the Gender Inequality Index. The division took place in 2014 is the UN Human Development Report. This categorization is done based on the Human Development Index in 2014 so that the countries with 0.800-1.000 Human Development Index in the first group, countries 0.700-0.799 Human Development Index in the second group, countries with an 0.536-0.699 in the third group, and countries with 0.535 were placed in the fourth group.

Research Concepts

Human development

Philosophically, the concept of human development means respect to human individuality. This means that human development targets the each person to achieve his/her needs and aspirations and do not want human beings, as elements in a set of uniform, obey the same and steady material and spiritual patterns considered for a society. It also does not want to impose people some responsibilities regardless of their differences. Although it was Morris who suggested the physical quality of life index, which consists of three components, life expectancy at one year of age, infant mortality and literacy in the 1960s (Mahmoudi, 2009: 85), since 1990s the United Nations Development Program offers a Human Development Report for the world countries each year. As shown in Figure 1, this index is a combination of four different criteria in three components: a long and healthy life, access to knowledge, and desirable standard of living.

- A long and healthy life: longer life expectancy, not only shows the better nutrition and health facilities, it also offers more opportunities and choices for people's lives. Life expectancy at the birth means the number of years in the life of a newborn if the prevailing patterns of mortality rates for different age groups remain constant throughout the life of the child. Since the measurement of these structures is not the same with two other structures, is necessary to combine these structures and unify the scale. Therefore, the range of values for each of the desired parameters is adjusted to a value between zero and one that is made possible by using the following equation (UNDP, 2014).
- Access to knowledge and Education: this indicator includes two measures of adult literacy rate and gross enrollment rate in primary, secondary and higher education. Educated adults include people over 15 years who are able to read and write the simple statement. The gross enrollment ratio in primary, secondary and higher education is the average of students' enrollment at each educational level as a percentage of the population in each age group.
- The education Index is evaluated through the following operations. Since this index includes both the average of education level and the expected years of education, firstly the mixed index of the variables must be formed and then we can find the main education index. It

should be noted that the data basis in the inferential statistics is educational indicator (Social and Economic Development of Europe Report, 2012: 7).

- **Standard of Living:** This index represents the life standard of people in a country or region and it is obtained by the ratio of GDP to population. In the Human Development Index, income is used as a substitute for all aspects of human development in which the long and healthy life and education are not included. Since achieving an acceptable level of human development is not limited into income, the income should be modified. Therefore, the logarithm of income is used in the calculation.

Gender Inequality

Gender-definitions are a set of ideologies, beliefs, norms and gender stereotypes which are formed over the time through the processes of socialization and social roles and become so strong that everybody call them natural, permanent and necessary (Nabavi, 2007 : 58).

According to Sumner, inequalities, like gender inequality, includes various types of inequality; employment, education, income, health, appearance, health, freedom and so on. From his perspective, inequality in access to health care is one of the aspects of gender inequality and is reflected in the health of reproductive and maternity. However, Bourdieu focuses on the role of access to a variety of the capitals in inequality. According to him, in most societies, men have more capitals due to two reasons:

- Since men have access to higher education, practical training and broader network links, they can get better and well paid jobs and thereby reinforce their economic resources.
- Because of the patriarchal and gender ideologies and prevalence of dominant stereotypes about women's abilities and traits, men have greater opportunities to obtain various sources. For example, in a patriarchal culture, important jobs with higher status and well paid jobs are given to men, not women. In many cases, this culture also undermines the simple job opportunities from the women (Bourdieu, 2001). In this study, the Gender Inequality Index is composed of four variables at a distance scale. Figure 3-1 shows the structure and dimensions of GII index in which a collection of data in the form of several items, measures the status of women in the world. These variables are as follows:

Reproductive Health

Two variables of maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rate measure this structure. Health of women in childbirth, of course, is a key component that reflects the status of women in society. The risk of dying in childbirth can be significantly reduced through basic education, adequate nutrition, and access to contraceptives, prenatal care and childbirth services,. However, in many areas we see high rates of maternal mortality. For example, there are countries with the same income, but different rate of maternal mortality (Report of United Nations Human Development Index, 2010: 110). Early pregnancy is not only risky but also threatens the health and limits opportunities in the future. Early pregnancy (15-19 years) measured by the adolescent fertility rate, has greater health risks for both mother and baby and it prevents the young girls from going to school and leads them to lack of expertise businesses (Ibid).The operation of this mechanism through two variables is as follows:

- **Empowerment:** women have traditionally been denied from the political arena and all levels of government. The indicator of this disadvantage is the women's seats in National Parliament that reveals their presence in the political leadership. Also, the access to higher education increase the liberation of women through their awareness from one hand and on the other hand, by increasing their access to information, it actives them in response to their situation. The educated women may have more satisfaction from their work, have greater participation in public affairs and are more cautious about their health and families. The gender empowerment index is measured through two variables:

Participation of women as Labor Force

The participation of women in the workforce consists of people employed (full-time and part-time) and unemployed women looking for a job. Despite its advantages, the structure is unable to measure the discrimination in the labor market and the gender wage gap.

Hypotheses

- There is a relationship between the HDI and GII based on the group divisions.
- There is a relationship between having a long and healthy life in the birth time and all the dimensions of GII based on the group divisions.
- There is a relationship between access to knowledge and educations and all the dimensions of GII based on the group divisions.
- There is a relationship between good life level and all the dimensions of GII based on the group divisions.

Findings

To present the results of this study, firstly the descriptive characteristics of the sample population and the variables are described and then the most important research results and data analysis are presented. Due to the large volume of data, just some statistics are provided in the form of tables and the results of other data analyses are presented in the text.

Table 1

Average classified groups based on the research

Variables	The average of countries with a very high HDI	The average of countries with a high HDI	The average of countries with a medium HDI	The average of countries with a low HDI
Long and healthy life	79.578	74.201	69.738	57.139
Access to knowledge	0.803	0.638	0.508	0.256
Level of a good life	32.790	14.116	6.040	1.697
Human development	0.871	0.750	0.639	0.431
Gender inequalities	0.178	0.387	0.499	0.628

As table 1 show, the average of group one to group five in the human development index, from the highest to the lowest, shows the place of considered classes. That is, in all the HDI components and also in the human development index, the highest average belongs to the first groups and gradually it decreases. This is completely different in the GII index because this index shows the gender inequality in the countries; countries with high HDI index have lower gender inequality. The table data show that, for example, the average of group one in having a long and healthy life, calculated in terms of life expectancy, is about 80 years; Access to knowledge and education variable, whose range is from zero to one, is 0.803; having a good life, in terms of GNI per capita, is 32790\$. Also, the average of the first group in the human development index is 0.871 and in gender inequality index is 0.178.

Table 2
Mean differences of the research components

Components	Sum of squares	df	Mean of squares	F	Sig.
Long and healthy life	5114.4	3	17038.1	796.7	0.00
Access to knowledge	30.2	3	10.0	992.6	0.00
Level of a good life	120724.4	3	40241.4	412.1	0.00
Human development	19.6	3	6.5	2626.4	0.00
Gender ineq.	16.0	3	5.3	461.0	0.00

The results of the ANOVA test represented in table 2 show that score of F test in all the variables were significant ($0.05 > p$) and it shows that the average of three components (a long and healthy life, access to knowledge and education, a good life) and two HDI and GII indices have caused the significant difference. Therefore, the first hypothesis is verified and H_0 is rejected. Given the significant difference of F test between, we should have a multiple comparison of the variables. To do this, Tukey test found was used that due to the length of the graph and statistics, they are not shown here and we rely only on its results. Tukey test compares the pair averages of the components among the four groups. According to the fourth column of the table (Sig), the difference between the averages of all groups is significant. This means that all components of these two groups in terms of the considered components are different. Prior to testing the hypotheses, focusing on the differences between the groups, it is necessary to assess the relationship between the components of research regardless of the groupings. Table 3 shows the Pearson's test results on the relationship between the dimensions of the HDI index and the GII index.

Table 3
Pearson correlation coefficient tests between HDI index and GII index

Variables	Correlation intensity	Sig.
HDI and GII	-0.837	0.00
Long - healthy life and GII	-0.744	0.00
Access to knowledge and GII	-0.805	0.00
Level of a good life and GII	-0.625	0.00

As shown in the above table, the correlation coefficient between the Human Development Index and the Gender Inequality Index was -0.837 ($0.05 > p$) and significant. It means that an increase in HDI leads to a reduction in GII and vice versa. About the dimensions of the human development index and their relationship with the gender inequality, there were also different correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficient of a healthy and long life and the gender inequality index was -0.744, correlation coefficient of access to knowledge and the Gender Inequality Index was -0.805, and correlation coefficient of good living standards and the Gender Inequality Index was -0.625. They were all significant ($0.05 > p$). This means that an increase in each of these components leads to the Gender Inequality Index decrease and vice versa.

Table 4

Pearson correlation coefficient test between HDI dimensions and GII index based on groupings

Variables	Correlation intensity of first group	Sig.	Correlation intensity of second group	Sig.	Correlation intensity of third group	Sig.	Correlation intensity of four group	Sig.
HDI and GII	-0.495	0.00	-0.271	0.001	-0.277	0.002	-0.283	0.00
A long - healthy life and GII	-0.327	0.00	-0.021	0.800	-0.148	0.097	-0.212	0.015
Access to knowledge and GII	-0.453	0.00	-0.192	0.020	-0.196	0.027	-0.304	0.00
Level of a good life and GII	-0.200	0.013	0.029	0.727	-0.088	0.325	-0.197	0.017

As can be seen in table 4, correlation between the dependent and independent variables in the groupings are different and more complicated than the results of correlation in table 3. As it can be seen, although the Pearson correlation coefficient of HDI and GII in all groups at the level of error of less than 05/0 is significant, the intensity of the correlation in the group one was half (-0.495) and in the other three groups was a quarter (-0.271, -0.277 and -0.283). To check the explanatory status of Human Development Index and the predictivity of the Gender Inequality Index is tested by the regression with and without the groupings. Results The following tables represents the results of linear regression analysis in the above two cases.

Table 5

The multiple regression analysis of GII index with the independent variables

Sig.	F	R ²	R	Model
000/0	0/440	698/0	835/0	1

The results of the regression analysis between the variables entered into the model in GII analysis and HDI variables showed that the coefficient of determination (R²) is 0.698. In other words, the proportion of Gender Inequality Index variance explained by the variables is about 70 percent. F-test ratio (440.0) implies that the regression model of research, regardless of classification and division of the countries into four groups in terms of achieving the human development, is an appropriate model for explaining the gender inequality (Sig = 0.00). The following table shows the impact of in the regression analysis of the independent variables which explain the gender disparity.

Table 6

Regression coefficients of the variables in general

Research hypothesis	Angle coefficient	regression	Standard coefficient	T	Sig.
	B	Standard deviation	B		
A long and healthy life	-0.005	0.001	-0.254	-6.718	0.00
Access to knowledge	-0.452	0.033	-0.515	-4.976	0.00
A good life level	-0.002	0.000	-0.152	-4.976	0.00

As can be seen in Table 6, the regression coefficients of each independent variable can respectively explain the access to knowledge and education (-0.515), having a long and healthy life (-0.254), adequate living standards (-0.152), which generally reflects the power of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable.

Table 7

Multivariate regression analysis of GII index with independent variables for each group

	R	R Square	F	Sig.
Group 1	0.530	0.280	19.619	0.000
Group 2	0.197	0.039	1.903	0.132
Group 3	0.290	0.084	3.752	0.013
Group 4	0.411	0.173	10.052	0.000

Data in Table 7 show that in a research model in which the human development index is able to predict the gender inequality index, is not significant in the second group with an error more than 0.05 (0.132). Therefore, this model can be used for the first, third and the fourth groups. However, its explanatory rate is much lower than in the general case (0.698). The coefficient of determination in the first group is 0.280, in the third group is 0.084, and in the fourth group is 0.173 that represents the variance of the dependent variable explained by the independent variables in the low level (0.280 and 0.173) and very poor (0.084). This finding is consistent with the findings of Pearson correlation coefficients which indicate the relationship between human development index and gender inequality among these groups.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of the Human Development Index in reducing the gender inequality in a four-year period (2010-2013) among the Member States of the United Nations. According to the neoclassical approach and Bozurp, it can be said that the development factor in countries with high levels of development can lead to the reduction of gender inequality, compared with other countries. Also, based on Bozerp, Shemyng, Bloomberg, Tyanow, Bonik and Parpart, the major problem of women in achieving the gender equality and eliminating the gap is a socio-cultural issue. In countries with gender stereotypes, it can hardly be expected the development to reduce or eliminate the gender inequities.

Looking at the groupings based on selected criteria, we can verify the views and opinions, especially the idea of Parpart, and the importance of social norms in disregarding the women in the macro development programs. These groupings show that the second group, due to access to the human development index, has a good position. In many cases, it includes countries with traditional structures in which the human development and improve of its components have no strong effect on the reducing the gender inequality. This situation can also be seen in the third group. Also, the results of this study the challenges the theories that focus the merely economic development impact on the empowerment of women and reducing the gender inequality. As we discussed in the findings, appropriate living standard variable that is measured by per capita gross domestic product, has the lowest correlation with the dependent variable, both in general and in the separate groups so that the correlation between these variables and the gender inequality in the second and third groups was not significant and it was also very low in the first and fourth groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Human Development Index among different countries cannot present a same picture of the people's status. For example, countries with high human development are often countries which parallel the world developments in the field of access to health and education or merely the adequate standard of living and in terms of gender equality; they are still in the low position.

The findings are in line with the findings of empirical research by Akire (2010), Khani (2010) and Williamson (2000). It indicates that the human development index can be evaluated as one of the effective in making the equality between men and women and a representative of the development and progress only when it was examined in its social, economic, political and cultural context. Therefore, the deficiency of human development index in identifying the place of different countries

in the development process shows the necessity of attention to the alternative indices offered by the United Nations. It is a human index based on the gender and the women empowerment. In fact, it is the alignment of human development indicators based on the gender and gender inequality indices which is able to offer a relatively clear picture of the situation of the inhabitants of a country, either men or women. Human Development Index, despite preparing a relatively detailed statistics of the desired dimensions, in an attempt to map global development, is not able to investigate the characteristics and the social, cultural and economic structures and it considers the same standard for assessing the numerous cases.

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