



Gender Gap in Algeria

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the gender gap in Algeria which consists of four dimensions: economic, educational, political, and health care through a comparative study, using a descriptive-analytical methodology. The data in this paper are extracted from global gender gap reports during the period between 2006 and 2018, in which 13 years of (GGG) reports show that Algeria is more successful in bridging the gender gap in education and health, whereas the political and economic gaps between women and men are far from being bridged. Women's economic participation and opportunity is a matter that Algeria had failed to address competently, rendering women's participation in Algerian economy and job market weak. This paper provides descriptive analysis to the gender gap development in the area of economic participation and opportunity, and gives some insights on the gender gap Sub-indexes for economical participation. Such a Gap can be attributed to a number of social and economic factors which are addressed in this paper, followed by some suggested recommendations on how to enhance the role of women in Algeria's economy.

Keywords: Gender Gap, Gender Economic Participation and Opportunity Gap, Algeria

JEL Classifications: J16, J71, O15

1. INTRODUCTION

Closing the gender gap between men and woman is one of the largest challenges facing countries worldwide. Although some countries are able to achieve acknowledgeable steps in empowering women in all fields, a huge gap needs to be addressed, for achieving more ideal advancement. There have been some attempts to address the large disparities between men and women, yet there is still room for improvement to be made when it comes to closing the gender gap.

Many studies conducted on women and their right to equal opportunities concluded that gender inequality contributes to the rise of poverty rates among women especially in underdeveloped countries. Besides, researches and development experts stressed the necessity for nations worldwide to realize the importance of women's empowerment and its significant effect on living standards and contribution to Economic growth, given the undeniable fact stated through all literal articles on women's rights that; "Women are more than half of the world population."

Therefore, it could be argued that no country will be able to fully develop to its maximum capacity until women are equally enrolled in all aspects of life.

In light of its importance, the World Economic forum which has published an index to measure the gap between both genders in 2006, which covers economic, Political, education and health areas. As an indicator to examine the effort of countries in bridging the gap between genders in regard of available opportunities (Argawal, 2010).

Women are a fundamental component in building societies with competitive markets, which stresses the necessity of women empowerment. In this respect, it is worth mentioning that Algeria has dealt with a number of challenges and obstacles that face the empowerment of women, counteracting with legislative, political and constitutional reforms as a step to reaffirm women's economical participation. In an attempt to deal with the issue at hand, Algeria has undertaken number of reforms to combat the inequalities between men and women. However, despite all the measures and

procedures made in Algeria, a notable diversion between theory and practice was noticed which called for a work frame and regulations to insure the empowerment of women and give her the ability to contribute in society’s economical development especially in underdeveloped countries (Sutton and Pollock, 2000).

Despite of all its endeavors to empower women and create equal opportunity in alignment with the United Nations objective, Algeria it is still far behind, where Algerian women still suffer from major marginalization. Hence this study aims to evaluate the current Gender Gap index for Algeria by taking a comparative approach. In order to fully understand the different social and economic factors at play, this paper will compare Algeria to the rest of North Africa “Maghreb.” The paper consists of two parts; the first part is an overview on the progress of the overall gap and sub-gaps worldwide. The second part of the paper is a comparison between the (overall gap/sub-gaps) in Algiers and the; “Maghreb,” Arab world and international community, accompanied with descriptive analysis to the gap’s development in the area of economic participation and opportunity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Economic Gender Gap is one of the recent topics that became an interesting debate for researchers, especially after the emergence of gender gap index in 2006 by the World Economic Forum.

For example the study of Shamlawi and Saqfalhait (2016) of 15 Arabic countries aimed to investigate women empowerment through a comparative investigation by using the analytical descriptive methodology. The data used in this study from the Global Gender Gap reports (GGG) for the years 2006-2015. This study found that the major Arab accomplishment is in bridging the gender gap in health and education, countered by the breadth of the political and economic participation gaps.

A study of Sellami (2016) concluded that despite Algeria adopting strategies and setting an organized legislative framework that works to improve the status of women and enabling them economically without barriers, but these efforts did not achieve the desired level. Another study by Lamharher (2018) found that many aspects of the lives of women and girls around the world have improved considerably. In most rich and developing countries, enrollment rates for women and girls were increasing and their average age was high. These women and girls had rights and legal protection and their access to better jobs was improved.

Fellahi and Rechidi (2020) study evaluated the efforts of Algerian policymakers in the social, political, and economic empowerment of women. This study indicated that these efforts stimulated many benefits for women in Algeria including the improvement in well-being, self-efficacy, self-efficacy, and economic gains.

3. GENDER GAP, THE CONCEPT

The United Nations defines gender equality as: The equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and

boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality is regarded as one of the 17 goals set by the United Nations drafted in its sustainable development plan for the year 2030, as an endeavor to tackle gender inequality in all areas to its limit until 2023.

Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large. (United Nation, 2012)

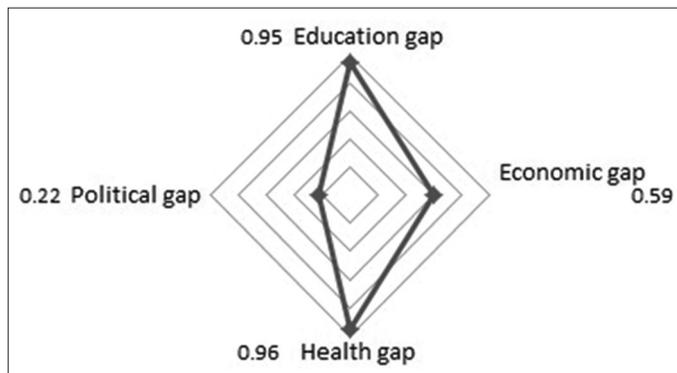
4. GENDER GAP INDICATORS FOR 2018: A BRIEF LOOK AT WORLD’S ACCOMPLISHMENT

Across the four sub-indexes, as illustrated in Figure 1 the largest gender disparity is on political empowerment, which today amounts to 78%. The economic participation and opportunity gap is the second-largest at 41%, while the Educational Attainment and Health and Survival gaps are significantly lower at 4% and 5%. The Economic Participation and Opportunity gap has slightly reduced during 2018 as comparison to 2017, (World Economic Forum, 2018). On the other hand, political empowerment gap is the widest gender gap and only 22% of it has been closed, it remained unchanged since 2017, and no country has yet fully closed political empowerment gaps. Even the best performer in this sub-index, Iceland, only closed 67%, and this gap has widened significantly during 2018 (in comparison to 2017).

According to the 2018 report, there are only six other countries (Nicaragua, Norway, Rwanda, Bangladesh, Finland and Sweden) which have closed at least 50% of their gap. On the other end of the spectrum, almost one-quarter of the countries has closed <10% of their gender gap, and the four worst-performing countries (Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman and Yemen) have yet to bridge over 97% of their gap.

The global Economic index shows that the gender gap remains very large. Just 59% of this gap has been closed since 2017, with

Figure 1: Gender parity globally, 2018



minimal progress. Only 14 countries were able to close 80% of the gap, and they are fairly distributed among five regions: two are from the East Asia and the Pacific (Lao Peoples Republic and the Philippines), two are from Eastern Europe (Belarus and Latvia); two are from Latin America and the Caribbean (Barbados and Bahamas); six are from Sub-Saharan Africa (Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Cameroon, Guinea and Namibia); and two are Nordic countries (Sweden and Norway). With Lao Peoples Democratic Republic scoring the best performance in this index, having closed 91% of the gap. And there are nineteen countries—predominantly from the Middle East and North Africa region—have yet to close over 50% of their gap, a 94 countries have yet to close 30% gap or more. (World Economic Forum, 2018)

In contrast to the economic and political empowerment sub-indexes, the Educational Attainment gender gap is significantly smaller, with only 5% of the gap remains to be closed. Thirty-six countries have now achieved 100% parity and another 49 countries have

closed at least 99% of the gap. Even the worst performer (Chad) is more than half way to parity (57%), with constant developing progress in most countries.

As for Health and Survival index, it is where the global gender gap is the smallest with 4% on average. Since no country has yet achieved full parity during 2018, where 74 countries have already closed 98% of their gap, and all 149 countries have closed at least 90% of their gap. (World Economic Forum, 2018)

5. DEVELOPMENT OF CLOSING GENDER GAP IN ALGERIA DURING THE PERIOD 2006-2018

An analytical look of Tables 1-5 can offer a progress of gender parity in Algeria and comparing it to: “Maghreb,” Arab countries and global index.

Table 1: General gender gap indicator in Algeria during the period (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank												
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Algeria	0.602	97	0.611	111	0.605	119	0.611	120	0.618	126	0.642	120	0.629	128
Average/Moroccan	0.599		0.607		0.606		0.602		0.611		0.624		0.622	
Average/Arab	0.583		0.597		0.596		0.599		0.605		0.607		0.602	
Average/Global	0.65		0.68		0.67		0.67		0.68		0.68		0.68	

*The averages were calculated by researchers Source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018. *The report was only conducted on 4 countries of 5 in the “Maghreb” region which were: Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia with the exclusion of Libya at the time due to the lack of data

Table 2: Education general gender gap indicator in Algeria during the period (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank												
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Algeria	0.944	84	0.949	96	0.953	99	0.95	103	0.936	113	0.962	104	0.957	112
Average/Moroccan	0.892		0.902		0.908		0.894		0.909		0.926		0.931	
Average/Arab	0.904		0.927		0.934		0.938		0.940		0.946		0.943	
Average/Global	0.92		0.95		0.93		0.93		0.94		0.95		0.95	

*The averages were calculated by researchers Source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018

Table 3: Health general gender gap indicator in Algeria during the period (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank												
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Algeria	0.971	78	0.971	86	0.966	106	0.966	108	0.966	124	0.966	127	0.962	137
Average/Moroccan	0.971		0.973		0.969		0.972		0.967		0.969		0.966	
Average/Arab	0.97		0.969		0.972		0.970		0.967		0.966		0.968	
Average/Global	0.96		0.96		0.96		0.96		0.96		0.96		0.96	

*The averages were calculated by researchers Source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018

Table 4: Political participation general gender gap indicator in Algeria during the period (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank										
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Algeria	0.049	98	0.056	115	0.036	123	0.151	57	0.177	60	0.056	56	0.145	85
Average/Moroccan	0.062		0.095		0.098		0.114		0.139		0.17		0.1667	
Average/Arab	0.037		0.057		0.055		0.057		0.10		0.084		0.091	
Average/Global	0.14		0.16		0.18		0.20		0.21		0.23		0.22	

*The averages were calculated by researchers Source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018

Table 5: Economic participation general gender gap indicator in Algeria during the period (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank	Score	Rank										
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Algeria	0.443	103	0.468	115	0.467	119	0.378	119	0.393	136	0.435	134	0.452	132
Average/Moroccan	0.47		0.456		0.448		0.429		0.430		0.432		0.4257	
Average/Arab	0.42		0.435		0.426		0.429		0.44		0.43		0.4087	
Average/Global	0.65		0.62		0.59		0.60		0.60		0.59		0.59	

*The averages were calculated by researchers, Source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018. *in 2012 When the Moroccan average was calculated, it was divided by 3 instead of 4 and this owes to the lack of data in Tunisia during the period of Arab Spring

Clearly, Algeria like its counterparts, had accomplished a significant advance in closing the Health and Educational gaps. However, a lot should be done to close the gaps of economic and political areas. A look at the tables shows the low rank Algeria acquired in the overall Gender Gap index, where it ranked 128 out of the 149 countries that the Report targeted, while it only was successful at closing 63% of the overall gap during the 13 years.

According to sub-indexes illustrated in the five tables, results of both Political and Economic Gap were low, closing 45% of the economical Gap to rank 132 among the 149 countries, and achieving only 14% in the Political index to rank 85. This indicates the poor political participation among women which can be attributed to a number of cultural, social and religious factors that inhibit women from occupying high positions where they can be decision makers. In contrast, the Education and health Index's, show positive results, closing up to 96% in both the Education and Health Index, ranking 112 and 137 for these indexes as shown in Figure 2.

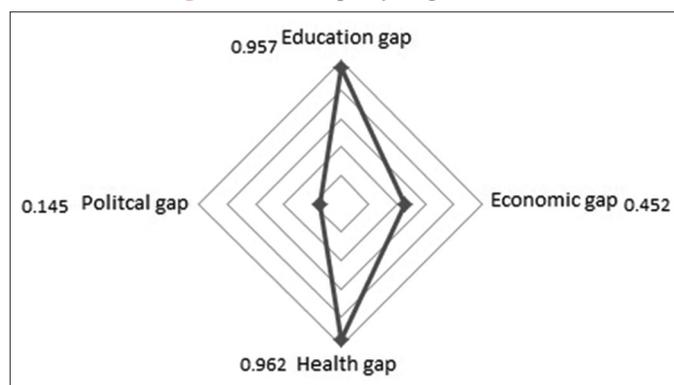
The Development of the Index during (2006-2018) cannot be considered as something regardable, where it only progressed 3% during the 13 years, which is only an indicator of the slow paces of progress made in closing the gap. Moreover, it even showed some inconstancy at times during this period and its highest was 64% in 2016.

The General Index for gender gap scored 68% on the global level, which was consistent for a period of 6 years and was is not very far from Algeria's score of 63%. Only the slow paces of Algeria on closing the gap make it far less achievable taking many more years, which requires a reconsideration of the implemented regulations and policies in all areas that can be regarded as a barrier from women's political and economic participation.

On the regional level, contrarily, Algeria excelled its "Maghreb" counterparts by 0.8%, and its Arab counterparts by 2% which was at 60%. Although Algeria scored a positive growth rate in 2018, it was still lower than the score during 2016, which can be attributed mainly to the significantly low sub-index in the area of Political participation sub-index.

By observing Table 2 and Figure 3 a remarkable increase in the gender gap index in education is obvious, it is getting close to 1 yet the progress is not consistent, the values of this index have been unsteady since 2006 to 2018, the index peaked in 2016 at 96%, and scored its lowest in 2014 at 93.6% to rise back to 96% in 2018, scoring as the highest index rate among Algeria's "Maghreb"

Figure 2: Gender parity, Algeria, 2018



and Arab world counterparts whose indexes were estimated 93%, 94%, 95%.

Table 3 and Figure 3 clearly indicate some constancy for the Gender gap sub-index in Health, with only a slight drop from 97% to 96% between years 2006 and 2018, which was not very different from the "Maghreb" and Arab Indexes that scored 96.6% and 96.8% when the global index was at 96%.

Unlike the Health and Education indexes (nearly the same), Algeria failed to close the gap in economic participation for more than 50%, the same index ranging between decreases and increases between the years (2006 and 2018), peaking at 46.8% in 2008 and recording its lowest score at 37.8% in 2012. The Economic gap index scored 45% at 2018, outscoring its "Maghreb" and Arab counter parts whose index was 42% and 40% consecutively, but were very far behind from the Global index which scored 59% as indicated in Table 5. It is likely that the large gap in Economic participation in the year 2012 is attributed to the gap in earned income which was 36% to 16% in addition to the wide gap in equal pay from 64% to 57%.

As for the political gap index illustrated in Table 4, Figure 3, it has scored the lowest score and rank compared to the other sub-indexes. An index that also had exhibited inconstancy between the years 2006 and 2018, when it peaked at 20% in the year 2016 and scoring its lowest at 3.6% in the year 2010, settling at 14% in 2018. This large defect can be the result of the low female quota in parliament that even witnesses a decrease from 32 members in 2016 to 25 members in the year 2018, even acting female ministers decreased from 20 ministers in 2016 to 13 ministers 2018.

Algeria's performance in the World Economic Forum was described as stable to a large degree, since Algeria narrowed

the gap in the “Professional and technical workers” sub-index, which is aligned with the sub-index “healthy life expectancy”. In comparison to its Arab counterparts, Algeria placed 5th amongst 16 Arab countries mentioned in the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, 11th in closing the educational gap index, 13th in the health gap index, and 4th on both the economical and political gap index. Also, in comparison to “Maghreb” counterparts it placed 2nd after Tunisia according to the 2018 Global Gender Gap Report, and placed 2nd for education, last in health, 3rd in politics and placed first in Economics.

6. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECONOMIC GENDER GAP PARTICIPATION IN ALGERIA (2006-2018)

Like the rest of underdeveloped countries, Algeria still suffers from gender economic inequality as the previous tables have illustrated. Consequently, the economic gap is quite notable compared to the health and education gaps. Table 6 gives some insights on the Gender gap Sub-indexes for economical participation.

Figure 3: Evolution of closing gender gaps in Algeria (2006-2018)

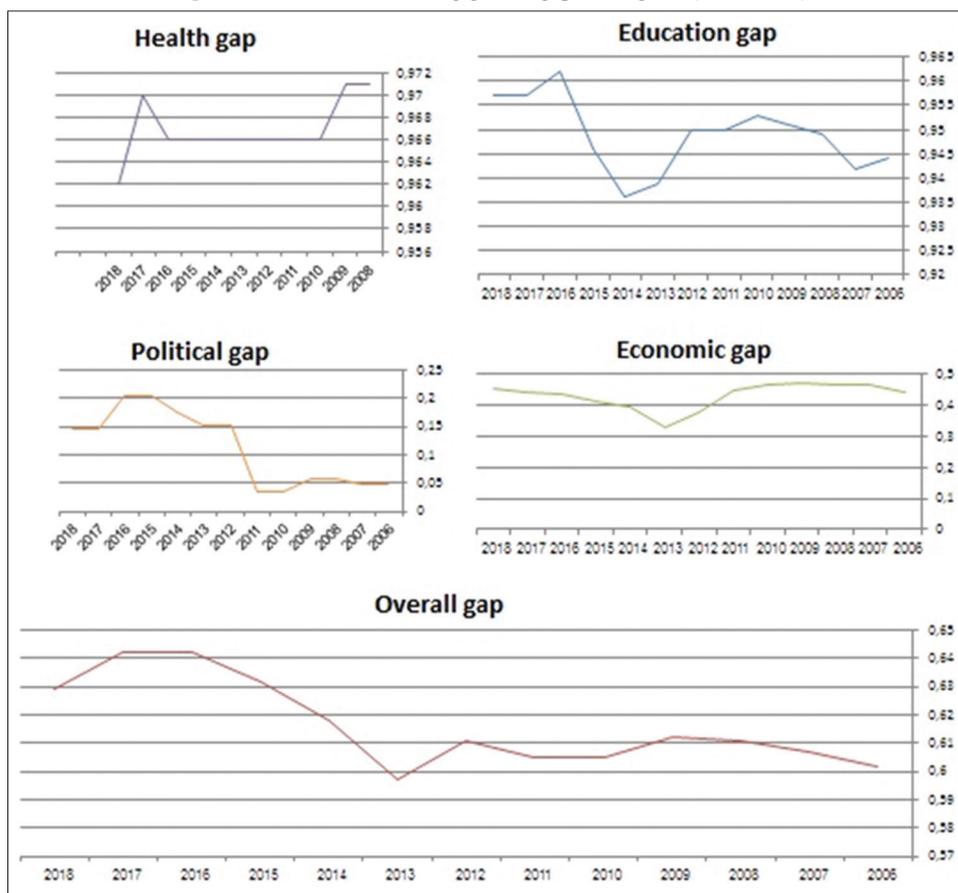


Table 6: Economic participation and opportunities gender gap indicators in Algeria (2006-2018)

Years/Indicators	2006		2008		2010		2012		2014		2016		2018	
	Score	Rank												
No. of countries	114		130		134		135		142		144		149	
Global economic indicator	0.443	103	0.468	115	0.467	119	0.378	119	0.393	136	0.435	134	0.452	132
Participation in the workforce	0.44	102	0.46	114	0.47	119	0.47	120	0.21	141	0.24	141	0.23	146
Wage equality for similar work	0.74	24	0.73	31	0.71	40	0.57	109	0.78	13	0.76	22	0.78	15
Estimated Earned Income	0.31	106	0.34	114	0.36	117	0.16	133	0.17	139	0.18	141	0.18	148
Ratio of females to males in jobs of legislators, senior officials and managers	0.06	98	0.05	115	0.05	122	0.05	111	0.05	123	0.11	116	0.09	138
Ratio of female to male in professional and technical workers	0.39	85	0.55	85	0.55	93	0.55	92	0.55	105	0.79	91	0.92	88

The source: Gender Gap Report for years 2006-2018

The table illustrates that closing the gap between genders in “Labor force participation” between the years (2006 and 2018) did not increase above 50%, and underwent turbulent increases and decreases, where during 2006-2012 it was improving towards closing the gap until it peaked at 47% in 2010 and held a steady pace until 2012, then suddenly dropping to 21% for 3 years before rising again to 24% and settling at 23% in the year 2018.

This value ranked Algeria amongst the last 146 out of 149, where the labor force of qualified males was 73% against 16.7% of qualified females out the total sum of the working labor force in the year 2018 as illustrated in Figure 4. Therefore, it can be said that Algeria has failed in closing the Gender gap in the labor force, and instead, it has increased notably since the year 2006. Even though Algeria scored good ratios in education equality between genders, it did not reflect or increase on women’s participation in the market. Where according to capital investment theories, education is conditional to increase participation, something that did not align with Algerian model.

As illustrated in Figure 4, male participation in the workforce exceeds Female participation throughout the years 2006-2018, whereas before 2013, it was at its highest at 39% until it significantly decreased to reach 16.7% at the year 2018.

According to gender wage gap Algeria closed 78% of the wage gap in the year 2018, with very good rankings regarding this index where it placed 15 among the 149 countries in the study.

Considering the statistics illustrated in the table, it becomes clear that Algeria has closed more than 50% of the gap throughout the 13 years. Despite the constant frequency of increase and decrease of the ratios, it gained a steady increase closing the gap after 2015, where the lowest rate of the index was at 57% in 2012 due to the drop of the wages gap compared to the workforce as a result of amendment of work laws in Algeria that support gender equality in wages.

It is notable that between the years (2006 and 2010), concerning the sub-index gap of “earned income” had a decrease from 0.31 to 0.36 when the values of this index did not exceed 50% during the time between 2006 and 2018, where after the year 2010 there was a significant increase in the gap scoring 20% closing only 16% in the sub-index of earned income, leaving 84% of the gap unclosed. This was seen as an indicator of gender inequality in the area of earned income. Also, The gap reclined only at a gradual pace to reach only 18% the year 2016 and hold at the same value till the year 2018, ranking Algeria 148 out of the 149 countries targeted by the report.

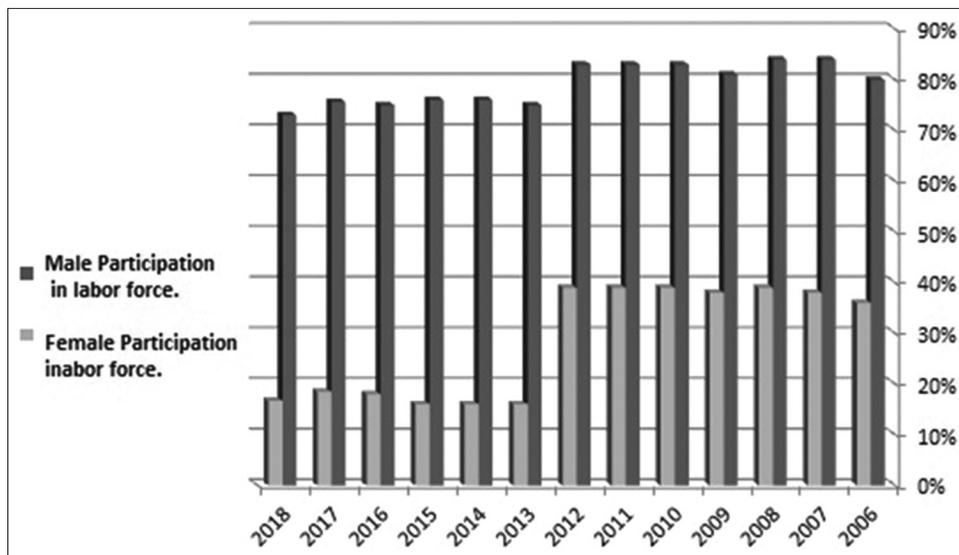
The sub-index gap of “Legislators, senior officials and managers” had gone through its own turmoil during the time of study, where Algeria was able to close 6% of the gap ranking it 98 among 114 countries in the year 2006, but only to stay without change on the same rate for seven consecutive years at 5% which was from 2008 to 2014, making far from an even number 1. After 2 years of constancy, Algeria was able to achieve the highest value of 11% in closing the gap, when in the year 2018 the gap was closed by a rate of 9%, ranking Algeria in very far behind, 138 from 149 countries.

To follow on the same turbulent pace was the Sub-index for gender gap of the “Professional and Technical workers” ratio, which can be seen throughout the Table, where the minimum index rate was 23% in the year 2007, and sustained a stable pace at 55% during (2008-2014) until it decreased to 92% in the year 2018 making it the highest value Algeria scored in this Sub-index during the period of (2006-2018), ranking 88 out of the 149 countries in the report

7. RESULT ANALYSIS

Throughout the data it was quite clear that Algeria was successful in its endeavours to close the Gender Gap in the areas of Health and Education up to 96% and 95.7% consecutively, unlike the Sub-index of the Economical Gender Gap where Algeria could have done a better performance, leaving the political Sub-index as the worst score at 14%.

Figure 4: The development of the labor force participation rate among male and female from 2006 to 2018



Source: Gender gap reports, (2006-2018)

Algeria's participation in a number of international treaties such as (CEDAW) has led to an increase of women's role in the economical productive process. It is even reflected on constitutional reforms and other laws, like labour, social security and retirement laws. Besides, the government made resolutions that aim to integrate women in the political arena through supporting their role in government. Also, the allocation of 5 senior positions to women that the government adopted is considered as an unprecedented step even in advanced countries.

The establishment of a ministry dedicated and specialized in women's issues is regarded as a major accomplishment for the Algerian government. Also, the implementation of various strategies and economic programs results in achieving women's entitlement in different fields. This is reflected positively on women's role in the economic process and education, ensuring better work opportunities in different sectors.

Algerian women's political empowerment witnessed significant development as Algeria worked on widening the female quota in public councils, and also the diplomatic corps give a fair share of female representation as a testimony on women's competency. However, this does not rule out the fact that women still suffer from unemployment rates that are aligned in a relation of proportionality with education levels. Women still face many obstacles regarding economic empowerment, where a study of Gender Gap in opportunities showed the obstacles women face from reaching effective economical involvement, such as women leaving the work market earlier which prevents them from reaching senior positions and unequal pay to their male counterparts, shadowing a significant negative impact on the goal of gender equality listed in the sustainable development plan of 2030.

Women's economic participation is a variable that Algeria had failed to address competently, rendering women's participation in Algerian economy and job market weak and such a Gap can be attributed to a number of Social and Economic factors:

- A woman's partner is considered as one of the reasons that decrease the probability of her participation in the workforce, especially if the partner had a very substantial income for life necessities.
- Giving Birth to children in most cases leads a woman to prefer staying home, especially if her mother is deceased, where daycare houses are not trusted.
- Traditions and norms that still view women's role is only exempt on housekeeping and raising children. (Angel and Tanable, 2012)
- Far work positions can discourage women's participation in the workforce. (Chamlou et al., 2011)
- Limited transportation and expensive transportation fairs. (Chamlou et al., 2011)
- Sexual harassment in the workplace and lack of security.
- Working hours that conflict with the time children leave their schools because women prefer to excel as housewives and businesswomen.
- Restrictions on the kind of jobs for women since Algeria is considered as a state with religious and conservative tendencies.

- Women's preference for the general sector over the private sector because of its stability.
- The general deteriorating state of the Algerian economy and state of austerity which decreased job positions and wages.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Yearly Gender Gap reports manifest that Algeria witnesses a huge extent of Gender discrimination on the economical level, and absence of equal opportunity for women. They also highlight social and cultural perspective as the main obstacles for women's economic participation, where authors recommended the following measures to increase women's economic participation in Algeria:

- Increasing awareness among men on the importance of women's participation in society in all aspects, where spouses are obligated to encourage their wives and support theirs inside and outside the house.
- Providing adequate conditions such as transportation and day-care centres that are close to job posts.
- Encouraging women to upstart development projects that mainly benefit them and reflect positively on the national economy.
- Increasing legal protection for women, and providing punishments against gender discrimination and sexual harassment at workplaces.
- Improving work conditions in the private sector regarding work hours and stable income.
- Involving Algeria in large investment projects in order to provide job positions for women.

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