

# THE CONTRIBUTION OF HALİDE EDİB ADIVAR TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN TÜRKİYE AND HER INFLUENCE IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDER EQUALITY

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## Abstract

Halide Edib Adıvar, a prominent literary figure, holds a significant place in Turkish political scenes and Turkish literature during the Republican era. Her personal life, activities she participated in, and particularly her views on women's rights distinguish Halide Edib in a unique position. During *the National Struggle*, Halide Edib actively engaged in Anatolia and was among the first female speakers to emphasize the need for Turkish women to attain a dignified position in modern societies through her speeches, literary works, and writings. Acting as an educator advocating for active female participation in the education sphere, Halide Edib portrayed modern and educated female models in her works. Through her novels and writings, she made substantial contributions to the Turkish women's movement by presenting strong representations of women and questioning societal gender roles. Halide Edib Adıvar used various media outlets such as columns, articles, and books to promote gender equality. Drawing attention to women's education in her novels and writings, she encouraged awareness on the subject. In accordance with the directive of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, she co-founded *the Anadolu Agency* with Yunus Nadi Abaloğlu in Ankara on April 6, 1920, seventeen days before the inauguration of *the Grand National Assembly of Turkey* on April 23, 1920. Halide Edib actively engaged in journalism by translating the political content of newspapers published in English at the agency. Halide Edib also played a role in *the Women's Defense of Homeland Society*, one of Turkey's first women's associations, striving to empower women for greater societal and political involvement. This study employs qualitative research methods to comprehensively examine Halide Edib Adıvar's role in societal change, her contributions to the women's rights movement, and her impact on empowering and raising awareness among women in Turkey and globally.

**Keywords:** Halide Edib Adıvar, Gender Roles and Women, Women and Media, Women and Literature

**JEL Codes:** Z00, N40

## TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET EŞİTLİĞİ BAĞLAMINDA HALİDE EDİB ADIVAR'IN TÜRKİYE'DEKİ KADIN HAREKETİNİN GELİŞMESİNE KATKISI VE MEDYADAKİ ETKİSİ

### Öz

Halide Edib Adıvar, Cumhuriyet dönemi Türk siyaseti ve edebiyatında önemli bir yere sahip tanınmış bir edebiyat figürüdür. Kişisel hayatı, katıldığı faaliyetler ve özellikle kadın hakları konusundaki görüşleri onu ayrıcalıklı bir

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konuma taşımıştır. Milli Mücadele sırasında Anadolu'da aktif rol alan Halide Edib, konuşmaları, edebi eserleri ve yazılarıyla Türk kadınlarının modern toplumlarda onurlu bir konuma ulaşması gerektiğini vurgulayan ilk kadın konuşmacılardan biri olmuştur. Eğitim alanında kadınların daha aktif bir şekilde yer almasını savunan bir eğitimci olarak, eserlerinde modern ve eğitilmiş kadın modelleri sunmuştur. Romanları ve yazılarında güçlü kadın temsilleri yaratarak Türk kadın hareketine önemli katkılar sağlamış ve toplumsal cinsiyet rollerini sorgulamıştır. Kadın haklarını teşvik etmek amacıyla makale, köşe yazıları ve kitaplar aracılığıyla sesini duyurmuş, özellikle kadınların eğitimi konusuna dikkat çekerek farkındalık yaratmıştır. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün talimatıyla, Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi'nin açılmasından 17 gün önce, 6 Nisan 1920'de Yunus Nadi Abaloğlu ile birlikte Ankara'da Anadolu Ajansı'nı kurmuştur. Bu ajans bünyesinde İngilizce yayın yapan gazetelerin siyasi içeriklerini tercüme ederek gazetecilik yapmıştır. Ayrıca, Türkiye'nin ilk kadın derneklerinden olan Kadınları Müdafaa-i Vatan Cemiyeti'nde de yer almış ve kadınların toplumsal ve siyasal alanda daha fazla yer almaları için çaba göstermiştir. Bu çalışma, nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanarak Halide Edib Adıvar'ın toplumsal değişimdeki rolünü, kadın hakları hareketine katkılarını ve Türkiye ile dünyadaki kadınların güçlenmesine yönelik etkilerini detaylı bir şekilde incelemektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Halide Edib Adıvar, Toplumsal Cinsiyet Roller ve Kadın, Kadın ve Medya, Kadın ve Edebiyat

**JEL Kodları:** Z00, N40

## 1. Introduction

Halide Edib Adıvar, described by Peyami Safa as the "the Sole Turkish War Novelist" and by Şerif Mardin as the "the First Significant Ottoman Female Writer" carved out a unique identity with her approaches to Turkish modernism and feminism. Despite the pioneering women writers of the Ottoman Empire preserving their impact and contributions in Turkish literature, Halide Edib Adıvar is recognized as one of its esteemed female novelists. She stands out as a prominent figure in Turkish modernism, activism, and feminism. Halide Edib made significant contributions to the onset of the Turkish women's movement and played a crucial role in its development. She advocated for women's education, their right to continue their education, and gender equality from the early stages. She emphasized the importance of women receiving education and argued for substantial changes in this regard. During the Ottoman era, Halide Edib was among the first and significant advocates for women's rights. She actively participated in various platforms to advocate for women's social, political, and personal rights. Halide Edib also played a pioneering role in the establishment of one of the first women's associations and emerged as an important and respected figure during the years of the Turkish War of Independence.

After the occupation of İzmir, Halide Edib actively participated alongside Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during the years of the National Struggle. She encouraged and supported women in joining the national liberation movement, playing a key role in motivating their involvement. Halide Edib made foundational and significant contributions to the Turkish women's movement through her literary works. In her novels and writings, she portrayed strong female characters and openly challenged traditional gender roles in society. These works pioneered discussions on women's rights, gender, and equality of opportunity in Turkish literature. Halide Edib became a figure who inspired and set an example for Turkish women through her achievements, courage, vision, and determination. Under her leadership, women gained more freedom in areas such as education, employment, and political participation, and they freely advocated for their rights.

Halide Edib put forth revolutionary ideas on women's rights and gender equality from the final years of the Ottoman Empire to the early years of the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye. She argued that education for women was not a luxury but a fundamental right and she wrote extensively on this issue and delivered numerous lectures on the subject. Her steadfast stance on this issue served as an inspiration to many women of her time, encouraging them to continue their education and empowering them to do so.

Halide Edib's struggle for women's rights shook the traditional structure of Ottoman society and paved the way for women to become more visible in social life. By participating in various platforms to advocate for women's political and personal rights, she led the establishment of women's associations

and contributed to the formation of organized efforts to defend women's rights. Through these associations, she supported women in taking on more active roles in societal life and continued to lend her support for them to advocate for their rights.

Halide Edib's role in the Turkish War of Independence was highly significant and noteworthy. Following the Greek occupation of İzmir, she rallied the people to the national struggle through speeches in Istanbul, revitalizing the spirit of resistance among the populace. Joining Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his comrades, she became a civilian hero of the National Struggle. Serving on the front lines during the Turkish War of Independence, she earned the title of “Halide Onbaşı” (Corporal Halide), symbolizing her courage and resilience in battle.

Halide Edib also made significant contributions to the Turkish women's movement through her literary works. In her novels and writings, she portrayed female characters as strong and independent individuals who challenged societal gender roles. These works not only had a literary impact but also created substantial social and political influence, raising awareness about women's rights.

Under Halide Edib's leadership, women gained more prominence in education and the workforce. Additionally, women achieved greater freedom in political participation and freely advocated for their rights. Halide Edib's vision and courage served as a source of inspiration for many women of her time, enabling them to take active roles in societal life. Following the Greek occupation of İzmir in 1919, Halide Edib delivered speeches in Istanbul urging the public to resist the occupation. These speeches vividly demonstrated her influence on the national struggle and the populace. During the Turkish War of Independence, she served on the front lines alongside Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his comrades, known as a civilian hero of the war. Her recognition as “Halide Onbaşı” (Corporal Halide) after the war underscored her significant role and contribution to the struggle. Halide Edib, recognized as the first war novelist in Turkish literature, became a significant figure in Turkish history through her literary works and contributions to the establishment of the Anadolu Agency. Her works not only had a literary impact but also exerted a profound social and political influence, inspiring Turkish women to advocate for their rights. In Halide Edib's literary works, there is a significant emphasis on women's education. From her first novel to her last, nearly all of her works highlight the education of children, women, and society as a fundamental issue (Enginün, 1998: 416).

Halide Edib Adıvar, an important figure in Turkish literature and the women's movement, continues to inspire not only her own time but also serves as a source of inspiration today. Her works and struggles mark a significant turning point for Turkish women to advocate for their rights and create awareness about gender equality. With her broad vision and determination, Halide Edib enabled Turkish women to take more active roles in social, political, and economic life, empowering them to courageously defend their rights. In the context of shared living experiences, the concept of identity is shaped and solidified by various factors, including nationality, politics, religion, society, culture, ethnicity, gender, race, tradition, and ideology. (Akova, 2023 : 198) The need to strengthen the position of women in the workforce and to address their protection needs has become increasingly evident. (Kan , 2022: 235)

In the first part of the study, Halide Edib's personal life and education will be discussed. The remaining sections of the study will focus on her views on women's rights, her association with the women's movement, perspectives on gender equality, her role in social change, the influence of the women's movement in media, and her contribution to the establishment of the Anadolu Agency.

## **2. Historical Background of Halide Edib Adıvar’s Life**

Halide Edib Adıvar embraced a more liberal and egalitarian lifestyle independent of the societal norms of her time. Advocating for equal social rights for men and women in societal structures, she emphasized the belief that both genders should have equal social rights under the same conditions. Throughout her literary works, she consistently highlighted this struggle for equality. She argued that for society to progress and achieve social advancement, all individuals, regardless of gender, should be included in the education and learning process.

Halide Edib Adıvar, born in Beşiktaş, Istanbul in 1884 and passed away in Istanbul on January 9, 1964, is not only a prominent novelist in the literary world but also stands out as a strong personality

who made significant impacts on the lives of many women. Although legal equality and gender equality have been established in the modern workplace and in all areas of life, there are still significant challenges in truly achieving these equal rights, despite men and women having the same opportunities and responsibilities. Throughout this process, formidable obstacles, unimaginable to some, were encountered. Considering the distance covered in achieving these rights, it is difficult to underestimate Halide Edib's significance. As an important observer of Turkey's *Second Constitutional Period* and the *Republic* eras, she is one of the leading figures in Turkish literature of the *Republic* era with her works that address women, women's rights, and *the National Struggle*.

Halide Edib's father, Mehmet Edib Bey, was one of the secretaries of *the Imperial Ottoman Court*. Halide Edib lost her mother, Bedrifam Hanım, at a young age and spent much of her childhood in her grandmother's traditional Turkish home. It was during this time in her grandmother's home that she developed her artistic and literary inclinations, laying the foundation for her life. Halide Edib vividly detailed the influences of her grandmother and grandfather on her life in her memoirs. Halide Edib's father placed great importance on his daughter's education and sent her to modern educational institutions. She was enrolled in *the Üsküdar American Girls College*, where she was registered as older than her actual age of seven. However, due to a complaint by another student, she was forced to pause her education at the school after a year under the orders of *Sultan Abdulhamid II*, continuing her studies through private tutoring at home.

During the period when she was learning English, Halide Edib translated a book that was published in 1897. The book she translated was "*Mother*" by the American author *Jacob Abbott*, known for his children's books. For this translation, in 1899, *Sultan Abdulhamid II* honored Halide Edib with *the Order of Charity (Şefkat Nişanı)*. Established by *Sultan Abdulhamid II* on July 16, 1878, through a decree, *the Order of Charity* was originally awarded in three grades to successful philanthropic women. It began as an award for women supporting war and disaster victims. Over time, the order evolved into an honor bestowed upon queens, princesses, female members of the dynasty, and the wives of diplomatic envoys.

In addition to her school lessons, Halide Edib also received private tutoring at home. After receiving this award, she earned the right to attend *the Üsküdar American Girls College* and became the first Turkish girl to successfully complete her education at this institution. Alongside English, music, Quranic studies, and Arabic, she studied with Salih Zeki, the era's renowned mathematician, and learned mathematics; literature, and philosophy from Rıza Tevfik. Her literary and philosophical lessons from Rıza Tevfik increased her interest in folk literature and also sparked her fascination with mystical subjects. Salih Zeki, a positivist, played a crucial role in her life during her education in learning the natural sciences. Combining these two distinct influences in her educational journey contributed to Halide Edib developing a balanced intellectual framework. Her interest and talent in literature became more pronounced during high school, leading her to start writing. Halide Edib later went to England to continue her education in London. During this period, she became closely acquainted with English literature and Western culture. After her educational career, Halide Edib focused on her academic work, delivering lectures at various universities both in Turkey and internationally. Additionally, she actively engaged in educational reform and took leadership roles in various projects.

In 1901, the year she graduated from college, Halide Edib married Salih Zeki, and their marriage lasted for many years. From this marriage, she had two sons named Ayetullah and Hikmetullah Zeki. Halide Edib's family life frequently intertwined with her professional endeavors. Particularly during the years of *the Turkish War of Independence* and afterward, she and her husband Salih Zeki actively supported *the National Struggle*. Additionally, Halide Edib's children supported her intellectual and social efforts. Her family life was a significant factor that unified her individual and societal endeavors. The support and understanding of her family influenced her advocacy for women's rights and her literary pursuits.

Salih Zeki expressed a desire to remarry despite being married to Halide Edib, leading to their divorce in 1910. From this point onward, Halide Edib began using her maiden name, Halide Edib, instead of Halide Salih. In 1910, she wrote and published the novel "*Seviyye Talip*" which is considered a feminist work, depicting the main female character, Seviyye, leaving her husband Talip for another

man, Cemal, whom she loves. The classification of the work as a feminist piece stems from the emphasis on the main character Seviyye's challenge to gender roles and the traditional perception of women in her time. Seviyye emerges as a strong female figure, striving for independence and making her own decisions. The pursuit of women's individual freedom, education, and social equality is strongly emphasized throughout the work. Moreover, while highlighting women's rights to determine their own destinies, the novel also sheds light on the women's movement of the era. The work was subjected to many social criticisms at the time of its publication because it differed from the societal family structure.

In 1911, Halide Edib returned to England and lived there temporarily. In later years, due to her profession as a teacher and academic, Halide Edib became closely involved with education and began writing a book on the subject. Inspired by the pedagogical work “*The Psychological Principle of Education*” by American educator, philosopher, and writer *Herman Harrell Horne*, she penned her own work titled “*Talim ve Edebiyat*” (*Education and Literature*). During the same period, she joined the *Turkish Hearth (Türk Ocağı)* organization, where she formed friendships with writers such as Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Hamdullah Suphi. Through these friendships, she adopted the ideology of *Turanism* and wrote the book *Yeni Turan* which reflected this ideology. In 1911, she wrote and published the novels *Harap Mabetler* and *Handan*.

In 1913, following the conclusion of *the Balkan Wars*, Halide Edib left her teaching profession and was appointed as *the General Inspector of Girls' Schools (Kız Mektepleri Umumi Müfettişi)*. During the onset of *the World War I*, she continued to fulfill this role. In 1916, upon receiving an invitation from *Cemal Pasha* to establish schools, she went to *Lebanon* and *Syria*. She played an active role in the establishment of two girls' schools and an orphanage in the *Arab* countries. During her time in *Lebanon*, she granted power of attorney to her father and married *Adnan Adıvar*, a family doctor living in *Bursa*. Additionally, during her time in *Lebanon*, Halide Edib published the libretto for a three-act opera titled *Kenan Çobanları* which was composed by *Vedi Sebra*. The work, which tells the story of Prophet Joseph and his brothers, was performed 13 times by orphanage students despite the challenging conditions of the war at that time.

Halide Edib returned to *Istanbul* on March 4, 1918, after *Lebanon* and *Syria* were evacuated by the *Turkish* armies. Her return coincided with a period of significant social and societal change in *the Ottoman Empire*, marked by the beginning of *the Balkan Wars*. During these years, women began to assume more active roles in social life as the societal impacts of *the Balkan Wars* became apparent. During the war years, Halide Edib, one of the founders of *the Teali-i Nisvan Society (the Society for the Promotion of Women's Welfare)*, actively participated in the society's relief efforts. *Teali Nisvan Society* was an important women's organization that defended the social, economic and educational rights of women in the *Ottoman Empire* (Keyfev, n.d.). Inspired by the life story of her close friend, the young artist *Müfide Kadri*, who passed away at a young age, she wrote a love novel titled *Son Eser (The Last Work)*. This literary work, based on the forbidden love between a female artist and a writer, which she penned while accompanying her friend during *the Balkan War* era, was serialized in a newspaper in 1918.

Halide Edib detailed her life from childhood to the year 1918 extensively in her book *Mor Salkımlı Ev (The Purple Vineyard House)*. In her literary works, Halide Edib emphasized that she did not belong to a single place and described her life as consisting of two different living spaces, which she referred to as her two homes. She openly expressed the processes of coping with and accepting the changes in her neighborhood, country, and home in her writings. In 1919, Halide Edib became remembered for her memorable speeches at rallies where she participated as a speaker to mobilize the people of *Istanbul* against the occupation of the country. Her speeches supported the development of resistance against the occupation in her writings for *Büyük Mecmua* and *Vakit* magazines.

Halide Edib expressed her thoughts on women's ability to continue their education and gender equality in her works. During *the Ottoman* era, she became one of the first advocates for women's education and fought for women's rights, advocating for reforms in this regard. She actively took part in advocating for women's political and social rights on various platforms and contributed to the establishment of one of the first women's associations. Halide Edib emphasized the importance of education in her works on women's education, consistently highlighting this issue to strengthen women's

roles in society. Her writings on women's education and independence struggles have served as an inspiration to society. By addressing the role of Turkish women in social life, she also brought attention to the significance of women's social and political rights. *Teali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti* (the *Society for the Promotion of Women's Welfare*), which aimed to enhance the knowledge and cultural level of Turkish women, is one of the women's associations in which Halide Edib was a founding member. This association organized various campaigns to advocate for women's social, political, and economic rights. Halide Edib actively participated in this organization, contributing to the achievement of its objectives.

Halide Edib pioneered the discussion of women's rights and equality in Turkish literature. Believing that women's rights in areas such as education, work, and politics needed to be strengthened, she advocated for women to enjoy equal rights and live under equal conditions in all aspects of social life. Known as a writer, politician, academic, and teacher, Halide Edib's efforts in women's rights and during the national struggle made significant contributions to Turkish literature and societal movements.

During *the Turkish War of Independence*, Halide Edib, despite serving in a civilian role alongside Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and his comrades, Halide Edib was recognized as a war hero due to her bravery in the conflict. She became ingrained in memory as "*Halide Onbaşı*" the corporal of *the Turkish War of Independence*. Beginning her literary career during *the Ottoman Empire's Second Constitutional Era*, Halide Edib went on to become one of the most prolific writers in Turkish literature during the *Constitutional* and *Republican* periods.

### 3. Halide Edib Adivar's Thoughts on Women's Rights

Halide Edib's thoughts on education are based on extremely deep and comprehensive foundations. She emphasized themes of education as a means of individual liberation and argued that it is a fundamental tool for achieving social equality. She placed great importance on women's education and conducted various efforts to increase women's participation in educational processes. In her novels and writings, she focused on themes that raised awareness about women's education, highlighting its importance. Halide Edib, in her works *Ateşten Gömlek* and *Vurun Kahpeye*, critiques the challenges women face in social life and the patriarchal structure of society, while highlighting their struggles for education and social rights. Through female characters, the importance of education and independence is clearly emphasized. Halide Edib Adivar believed that women's rights in areas such as education, work, and politics should be built on strong foundations and strengthened. She advocated for equal rights for women in all aspects of social life, asserting that women's education and self-fulfillment are crucial for societal progress.

Halide Edib encouraged women to become more active in social and political arenas and raised awareness about women's rights. In her literary works, she emphasized the importance of women's education, professional life, and societal roles. The ideas she introduced became one of the ideological foundations of the women's movement in Turkey. Through her personal life and achievements in education, Halide Edib served as a role model for women, inspiring many with her courage and determination to take action both socially and individually. She became a source of inspiration for women to increase their visibility in society and advocate for their rights.

Halide Edib actively participated in women's associations established during her time, particularly in pioneering organizations like *the Ottoman Women's Defense of Homeland Society*, encouraging women to become more visible in social and political spheres. In her novels and writings, she addressed women's rights issues and advocated for them, reaching wide audiences. Expressing her emotions and thoughts through the characters in her works, Halide Edib contributed to the empowerment of women in social life, thereby promoting a healthy continuation of the socialization process and enhancing their self-confidence.

#### 3.1. Gender Equality and Her Impact On The Women's Movement

Halide Edib, transcending the societal norms of her time, adopted a libertarian and egalitarian lifestyle, and through her struggle for gender equality and women's rights, she has been etched into Turkish literary and political history as a significant figure. Her works and thoughts continue to illuminate the fight for gender equality today. Halide Edib, who emphasized that the social status of women is the foundation of modern civilization, openly expressed her views on women's education and

social equality. To promote gender equality, she made her voice heard through various literary genres, including columns, articles, and books. In addition to advocating for social equality, Halide Edib stressed that women and men should have equal rights without facing discrimination in political and social spheres and should actively participate in all areas of society. Furthermore, by calling for increased political and social involvement of women, she emphasized the need to redefine women's roles in society.

In Halide Edib's *Ateşten Gömlek*, the role of women during the war is prominently featured. Halide Edib explores concepts such as courage, independence, and social responsibility through her female characters. By emphasizing that women should actively participate in the war effort, she draws attention to their egalitarian roles in society. In *Vurun Kahpeye*, she criticizes the patriarchal structure of society while also highlighting the challenges women face in social life. Halide Edib brings to the forefront women's struggles for education and independence, emphasizing the importance of women expressing themselves and fighting for social equality.

Halide Edib advocated for the necessity of women being more active in the social sphere and participating in political arena, encouraging awareness about women's social rights. In her works, she emphasized norms required by social functioning, such as women's education, participation in the workforce, and societal roles. Halide Edib's support significantly contributed to shaping the ideological and sociological foundations of the women's movement in Turkey. Halide Edib played an important role in the struggle for gender equality with her contributions to *the Turkish Women's Movement*. Through her life and works, she continues to be a valuable source of inspiration for the fight for women's rights both in Turkey and around the world today.

Deeply believing in the impact of education on social change and individual development, Halide Edib particularly emphasized the education of women. She thought that education would contribute to the empowerment of individuals both personally and socially. By reflecting her thoughts in her works, Halide Edib continuously kept the struggle for education and equality in the spotlight.

Halide Edib took significant steps towards achieving gender equality by working to make women more visible in the education process. She continued to address these themes in her novels and writings with the aim of raising awareness about women's education. With her struggle for gender equality and women's rights, Halide Edib carved out an important place in Turkish literature and political history. She clearly reflected her belief that education is one of the most important tools for individual liberation and achieving social equality in her works and thoughts.

### **3.1.1. Role in Women's Associations**

Halide Edib played an active role in raising awareness about women's social rights in Ottoman social life and in advocating for women's rights through the first women's associations established for this purpose. She held significant positions in *the Ottoman Women's Defense of Homeland Society* and *the Turkish Women's Aid Society*, founded in Istanbul in the 1910s. These women's associations emphasized women's education and their social rights, aiming to enable women to take more active roles in society. Through her role in these associations, Halide Edib became a significant figure in the fight for women's rights by supporting women's education and their participation in social life. Serving as an example to women through her life experience, Halide Edib's faith, courage, and determination encouraged many women to join the movement. She inspired women to gain more visibility in society and to achieve and defend their social rights.

### **3.2. The Role in Social Change, the Impact of the Women's Movement in the Media and the Anadolu Agency**

Halide Edib Adıvar, as a significant figure in Turkish literature and social change, thoroughly examined social change and the effects of the media. Through both her writings and contributions to the development of the social women's movement, she shed light on the social changes occurring during the transition from the final years of *the Ottoman Empire's* dissolution to the early years of the establishment of *the Republic of Turkey*. Halide Edib argued that social change is possible through equal opportunities in education and the role of women in social life. According to Halide Edib, by achieving gender equality in education and society, women would play a significant role in laying the foundations of modern

Turkey. Seeing women's education as one of the cornerstones of social progress, Halide Edib stated that social development is possible through equal opportunities in education. Observing the impact of media on social change in her works and speeches, Halide Edib contributed to the establishment of *Anadolu Agency*, aiming to effectively use the power of media to inform and raise awareness among the public. During *the War of Independence*, particularly, Halide Edib used the power of media as an effective tool to accelerate social change and raise public awareness with her motivational writings and speeches that served as a source of inspiration for the national struggle. As a reflection of social change and media influence, Halide Edib's novels, through their strong female characters and social critiques, challenged readers to question gender inequality and the issues it brings. Her works, which reflect social change and modernization, reached a wider audience through the media.

On April 6, 1920, at the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Halide Edib, together with Yunus Nadi Abalıoğlu, founded *the Anadolu Agency* in Ankara, 17 days before the opening of *the Grand National Assembly of Turkey*. The establishment of *the Anadolu Agency (AA)* had a significant impact during and after *the War of Independence*, as it spread the spirit of the national struggle and helped to form this consciousness. Contributing significantly to the history of Turkish press, *Anadolu Agency* continues to operate today as one of Turkey's leading news agencies. The main purpose of establishing *the Anadolu Agency* was to deliver accurate and reliable information to the public and to support the national struggle. With the establishment of the agency, the importance of an independent and national press organ in *the National Struggle* was emphasized. *Anadolu Agency* is a national media organization that conveys events in Turkey and around the world in a reliable, impartial, and rapid manner. Working in coordination with the world press, *Anadolu Agency* is recognized in many parts of the world as well as in Turkey. With a comprehensive news network covering political, economic, cultural, and social developments in Turkey, *Anadolu Agency* has reached a wide audience by broadcasting in many languages such as Turkish, English, Arabic, German, French, Spanish, and Russian.

### 3.2.1. First Sultanahmet Rally

*The First Sultanahmet Rally*, held on May 23, 1919, was the largest of the four rallies due to the large number of participants and the significant impact it had in the media. Halide Edib described the crowd on the day of the rally as so dense that people could not move from *Sultanahmet Square* to *Hagia Sophia*. At the rally, Halide Edib delivered a powerful speech, later reflected in her literary work *The Shirt of Flame* (1923). Having spoken at previous rallies, Halide Edib attracted attention with her statement, "Governments are our enemy, nations are our friends, and our righteous rebellion is our strength in our hearts." during this rally (Gümüş, 2020). At the conclusion of her speech, Halide Edib urged the audience to remain committed to justice and swore them to never submit to any power or force in difficult times. She stated, "Until the day Turkey secures its independence and right to life, we will not flinch from any fear or hardship. Under the weeping minarets of our seven-hundred-year history, swear allegiance: we will not betray our flag or the honor of our ancestors." Thousands of people attended the Sultanahmet Rally, where Halide Edib defined herself as a true Muslim adhering to democratic principles with the words, "Nations are our friends, governments are our enemies." (Adıvar, 2007, pp. 41-42).

Halide Edib delivered a speech emphasizing the importance of appealing to the natural sense of rights in individuals and trusting in this sentiment. Believing her voice could only reach a certain distance in the crowd, Halide Edib stated that when she stepped onto the podium at the rally, she listened to the voices within the crowd, which encouraged her. She described the day of the rally as follows: "I believe that the Halide in Sultanahmet was not the everyday Halide. Sometimes, I believed that a modest and unrecognized person could represent the great ideals of a great nation. The heart of that day's Halide beat with the feeling that came from all Turkish hearts and announced to Halide the catastrophe of the years to come."

## 4. Conclusion

With the visible impact of women's education activities that began in Europe and the Ottoman Empire, Halide Edib's Western-style education increased the opportunities for women in Turkish society to establish themselves in the political and social spheres. Having received a rigorous traditional education at home and completing her Western-style education at *the American College for Girls*, Halide



Edib emphasized the synthesis of *Eastern and Western* cultures in her works. Directly experiencing these differences in her own life, Halide Edib reflected this experience in her writings.

Halide Edib continues to be an inspirational figure today with her ideas about women's participation in education, professional life, and societal roles. Her literary works and thoughts serve as guiding principles in the struggle for women's rights. Halide Edib's efforts have contributed to empowering and raising awareness among women in Turkey and around the world. Significant progress has been made in the fight for women's rights, providing a strong foundation for women to articulate their demands for equality and justice more forcefully. Women's associations and civil society organizations established under Halide Edib's leadership continue to advocate for women's rights to this day. These organizations advocate for and support women's rights in social, economic, and political spheres. Halide Edib's literary works and ideas continue to have an enduring impact in education and cultural realms. Her rich literary legacy is utilized in educational and cultural activities to raise awareness about women's rights. Women continue to draw inspiration from Halide Edib's legacy, supporting the progress she made in the struggle for equality, justice, and freedom. To resolve current issues and overcome barriers, greater collaboration and solidarity are essential in the fight for women's rights. As the women's rights movement strengthens, women will begin to gain more rights in social, economic, and political spheres. Halide Edib argued that women's aspirations and roles extend far beyond the traditional confines of motherhood and child-rearing. She emphasized that women are not only central to the family unit but are also essential contributors to the empowerment and advancement of society as a whole. According to Edib, women's involvement in education, the workforce, and public life is fundamental to societal progress. By challenging the prevailing notion that a woman's value is primarily tied to domestic roles, she sought to redefine their place in society, advocating for a broader recognition of their intellectual and professional capacities. Her insights highlight the urgent need to raise awareness among all members of society regarding the invaluable contributions and potential of women, framing gender equality as a key driver of societal development.

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