

Türkiye’de Yaşayan Suriyelilerin Türkiye Ekonomisine Etkisi

Impact Of Syrian People Living In Turkey On Turkish Economy

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ÖZET

2011 yılında başlayan rejim karşıtı gösterilerin ardından yaşanan iç savaş nedeniyle çatışma ortamından kaçan Suriyeliler, 29 Nisan 2011’de Hatay ili Yayladağı ilçesinden 260 kişilik bir grup olarak Türkiye sınırına gelmişlerdir. Türkiye, açık kapı politikası ve geri göndermeme ilkeleri çerçevesinde geçici koruma sağlayarak Suriyelilerin Türkiye’ye girişini kabul etmiştir. 2011 yılından bugüne kadar geçen süre içerisinde Türkiye’de yaşamaya başlayan Suriyeli sığınmacı sayısı yaklaşık 4 milyon kişiye ulaşmıştır ve resmi makamların açıklamalarına göre bugüne kadar Suriyeli sığınmacılar için harcanan para 30 milyar dolardan fazladır ve bu tutar Türkiye’nin Gayri Safi Milli Hasılası içinde önemli bir orana ulaşmış durumdadır. Türkiye GSMH’sına oranla dünyada göçmenlere yardım açısından 1.sıradadır. Tüm bu yaşananlar Türkiye Cumhuriyeti vatandaşlarının ortaya koyduğu olağanüstü fedakârlıklarla bugüne kadar dünyada çok da benzeri olmayacak şekilde, çok ciddi sorunlar ile karşılaşmadan büyük oranda başarı ile yönetilebilmiştir. Bu derece yoğun göç olayı neticesinde Türkiye’nin her bölgesine yerleşen Suriyeli sığınmacıların yaşadıkları topluma ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel birtakım etkilerinin olmaması mümkün gözükmemektedir. Bu çalışma ile, Suriyeli sığınmacıların Türkiye Ekonomisi üzerindeki etkilerine yapılan araştırma neticesinde elde edilen verilerin analizi ile ulaşılmıştır. Böylece Suriyeli Sığınmacıların hangi sektörlerde ve hangi büyüklükte Türk Ekonomisi içerisinde yer aldığı ortaya çıkarılmıştır.

Anahtar Kavramlar: Suriyeli Sığınmacı, Gayri Safi Milli Hasıla, Ekonomik Etki

ABSTRACT

260 Syrian asylum seekers fleeing the conflict, arrived in Turkey as a group on 29 April 2011 to Hatay Yayladağı border because of the civil war that took place after the demonstrations against the regime that began in 2011. By providing temporary protection within the framework of the open-door policy and the principle of non-refoulement, Turkey has accepted the entrance of Syrian asylum seekers. In the period from 2011 until today the number of Syrian asylum seekers living in Turkey reached approximately 4,000,000 people. According to official authorities, the amount of money spent on Syrian Refugees up to now is more than \$ 30 billion. This amount has reached a significant proportion of Turkey's Gross National Product. Turkey is in the first place in the world as GDP ratios in terms of assistance to migrants. With the extraordinary sacrifices put forward by the citizens of the Republic of Turkey, to a great extent, it has been successfully managed without encountering very serious problems in a way that is unlike any other in the world. As a result of this intense migratory incident, it seems impossible not to have social, cultural and economic effects of Syrian asylum seekers who settled in each region in Turkey. In this study, the effects of the Syrian asylum seekers on the Turkish Economy were obtained by analyzing the data acquired from the research. Thus, with this research it has been found out, in which sectors and in what size the Syrian asylum seekers are in the Turkish Economy.

Keywords: Syrian Asylum Seekers, Gross National Product, Economic Impact

Related article “The Migration Management Strategy of Turkey and The Perception of Syrian Asylum Seekers Living in Turkey “is developed within the scope of unpublished doctoral thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Because of its geopolitical position, Turkey is a transit country not only for some immigrants who want to go European countries to live but also for some immigrants who want to stay there to live and work.

Turkey is one of the target countries for immigrants who escaped from their countries especially after in 1980 because of war, economic problems and etc. The number of immigrant who wanted to live in Turkey or go to the Europe increased in this period (Demirdezen, 2013: 328)

When evaluated the diversity of immigrants in terms of Turkey, we can classify them as immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers. While some of them arrive in Turkey in order to pass European countries others arrive in Turkey to get education or work. At the same time relatives of immigrants who work in Turkey can come to live together and this lead to regular migration. When the same person enters and exits more than one time in the same country, this causes shuttle migration. (İçduygu, Erder, Gençkaya, 2009: 69).

According to İçduygu and Damla (2012: 86), issues and hot clashes in the geography where Turkey is located cause the target country for illegal immigration and asylum. With Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq crisis, with the collapse of the USSR as the Turkic Republics and with the Syrian Crisis, Turkey found itself inevitably among these problems. In 2011, with the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, millions of Syrian asylum seekers came to the Turkey. This study focuses on the impact of Syrian asylum seekers on the Turkish economy.

METHOD

The purpose of the study is to examine the effects of Syrian refugees living in Turkey on Turkish economy. From this point of view, at first, provinces in general especially where the Syrian population is concentrated, and then other provinces were included in the study. By examining the economic reports prepared by non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce and public institutions, and published economic data, the findings obtained were presented in tables. Through this study, it can be seen in which sectors the Syrian Refugees are in percentages. Thus, their contribution and participation in Turkish economy can be understood in general.

The cost of the war in Syria has got a multidimensional effect on Turkish Economy. When we consider inflation, labor market, informal economy, changes in import-export, net economic profit and loss, it is not easy to calculate all these issues exactly.

According to the statement of Turkish authorities more than 40 billion United States dollar has been spent for Syrian asylum seekers living in Turkey so far. As a result, this situation has got both positive and negative, direct and indirect impacts on Turkish economy inevitably.

In this study, economic reports and published economic data prepared by non-governmental organizations, chambers of commerce and public institutions were examined and the findings obtained were presented in tables. Likewise, the impact of Syrian asylum

seekers on inflation has been evaluated according to region where they live by using Turkey's average inflation rate.

FINDINGS

Economic data used in this study were analyzed regarding the demographic characteristics of the Syrian asylum seekers, the provinces they live in, the business sectors and the kind of corporations they operate in.

1. ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND COMPONENTS

Although studies have been conducted in the literature on the effects of migrants on the labor market of the country of they migrate, these evaluations have been made on the basis of voluntary migration, not forced migration. The common conclusion of these studies is that the impact of migrants on wages and employment in the host country is limited. There are relatively fewer studies on these forced migration issues (Binatlı and Esen, 2016:5).

A study was carried out by Ceritoğlu et al. (2017:25) “The Impact of Syrian Asylum Seekers on Natives’ Labor Market Outcomes in Turkey: Evidence from a Quasi - Experimental Design”. They found that Syrian asylum seekers have some, relatively limited effects on the labor market, but do not have a significant impact on wages, and as a result of the flow of asylum seekers, limited employment losses were observed in local informal workers.

It is seen that Syrian asylum seekers offer cheap, unregistered labor, thus pushing unregistered local workers out of the labor market, especially in the informal labor-intensive sectors and putting with unemployment risk for local employee. It is understood that Syrian asylum seekers do not cause a significant change in the registered sectors but provide cost advantages in the informal labor-intensive sectors. (Balkan and Tumen, 2016: 2).

A study was conducted by Akgündüz et al (2015: 48) in 10 cities where Syrian asylum seekers live intensively; There was no significant change in food prices, housing prices increased, internal migration movements to the region decreased, output did not change and no significant effect on employment was observed.

The common effect of asylum seekers in all cities where they settle economically is the increase in rents. This creates opportunities for landlords and is seen as a problem for tenants. (Oytun, 2015: 21). In addition to the increase in rents, increase in prices is inevitable as there is an increase in the demand for food etc. and this situation may negatively affect the perspective of the people living in the region towards Syrian asylum seekers.

According to Caprio and Wagner (2015: 117), Syrian asylum seekers have changed the structure of employment in the labor market. While the employment of unregistered, female, part-time, unskilled Turkish workers has decreased, the employment of registered men has increased. Also the wages in the informal sector have been reduced. They found that this situation affected women and those with low levels of education more, and that they had an effect in the formal sector and that every 10 asylum seekers in the formal sector created 3-4 new jobs in the formal sector.

According to a report by the Turkish Republic Central Bank, the local labor employed Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey is significantly adversely affected, but this effect was mostly seen in the informal work area. Business owners may prefer to work with asylum seekers workers who agree to work at a lower wage instead of increasing lower local workers' wages. Thus, they prefer to do the same work on immigrants without paying any more wages to the local worker.

In the provinces where especially Syrian asylum seekers densely populate, the increase in rental properties price and food prices occurs more than Turkey's average inflation rate. Öztürkler and Türkmen searched the answer of the question as to if there would not been war in Syria and Syrian asylum seekers were not in Turkey, how could the economic situation be in provinces where Syrian asylum seekers live densely. They found out that the most significant impact on the economy is seen in inflation.

The annual inflation rate in Gaziantep increased from 6.8% in 2010 to 8.8% in 2013. The average inflation rate in Turkey in 2013 was 7.4%. This means that the inflation rate in Gaziantep was 1.4 basis points above the Turkish average in 2013. Moreover, Gaziantep's inflation ranking increased from eighteen in 2010 to first place in 2013. These figures show that local people's perceptions of the increase in food prices are based on a real observation, at least in Gaziantep (Öztürkler and Türkmen, 2015: 20).

The study, which analyzed the effects of Syrian asylum seekers on prices of goods and services in areas where they live heavily, using the “difference of differences” method, found that Syrian asylum seekers migration caused a 2.5% decrease in consumer prices in the regions included in the study. The findings in the study were obtained by examining regional price movements rather than the consumer basket. It is suggested that the lowering effect is directly linked to the low cost and informal labour participation of Syrian asylum seekers. In the sectors where informal employment is more intensive, the decrease in production factors costs was found to be 4%.

Official labor prices based on informal employment remained at the same level. The biggest decrease was in the informal employment in hotels and restaurants (5.4 %) and food (4.4). The main reason for the 10.5 % decline in the education sector is not informal employment but government aid and incentives to the region due to migration. (Balkan and Tumen, 2016).

Even if the decline and losses in the economic area are determined by the available statistical data, the opportunity cost cannot be calculated when considering possible new steps to be taken, new relationships to be established, and trade agreements. Given that it is unclear when the internal turmoil in Syria will end, it is not possible to predict the economic cost that the crisis will cause in real terms. (Altundeğer and Yılmaz, 2016: 298)

2. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SYRIAN PEOPLE IN TURKEY

Turkey is a passage gate to immigrants who want to go European Union countries especially up to 2011 but after the civil war in Syria started, this situation reversed and lots of Syrian started to live in Turkey.

Table 1: Distribution of migration by years in Turkey

	2001	2003	2006	2009	2010	2011
Undocumented Migration	92.400	56.200	51.983	34.345	32.667	42.576
Illegal Entries	57.300	30.348	18.876	22.975	25.637	30.700
Outstay	35.100	25.852	33.107	11.370	7.030	11.876
Application for Asylum	5.200	3.966	4.548	7.834	9.226	16.020
Residence permit	161.254	152.203	186.586	163.326	176.944	219.217

Source: European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre For Advanced Studies, Migration Policy Centre, EU Neighborhood Migration Report 2013, s. 247.

Turkey has undergone an intensive migration flows with the start of civil war in Syria. There are 3.552.303 immigrant from Syria according to data which was published by General Directorate of Migration Management on 29 August 2018 in Turkey.

Table 2: Number of Syrian Asylum Seekers in Turkey

Age	Male	Female	TOTAL
TOTAL	1.926.067	1.626.236	3.552.303
0-4	279.938	261.367	541.305
5-9	247.534	232.308	479.842
10-18	349.753	303.221	652.974
19-24	312.136	221.516	533.652
25-34	357.755	262.041	619.796
35-44	189.086	155.643	344.729
45-59	135.600	130.103	265.703
60-90+	54.265	58.037	112.302

Source: General Directorate of Migration Management (www.goc.gov.tr)

3. The Impact of Syrian Asylum Seekers on Turkey Economy

According to calculations made by using international data between 1960-2010, 10 % increase in cultural diversity increased the gross domestic product per capita by 2.1 percentage. When only the developing countries are considered, the contribution increases to 2.8 percent. (Turkey Grand National Assembly on Migration and Integration Report (T.B.M.M), 2018;259).

Syrian asylum seekers entering Turkey and being taken under temporary protection cannot work and set up business in the first place. As of January 2016, they were allowed to take work permit

in the province where they were registered for at least 6 months in case an application is made by the employer. In addition, they have the right to open a business and bank account.

According to official figures, Syrian asylum seekers who took refuge in Turkey have opened 7,243 companies in the last 7 years. In addition, this number is estimated to be more than 10,000 together with unregistered companies.

Table 3: Overview of foreign capital companies with Syrian asylum seekers (as of May 2018)

Company Type	Number of Companies	Total Capital (Million Turkish Lira)	Syrian Joint Venture (Million TL)	Syrian Joint Venture Rate (%)
Incorporated company	4	4,7	0,6	13,4
Limited Company	158	46,9	27,5	58,6
Total	162	51,5	28,1	54,5

Source: TOBB, TEPAV Report of Syria Capital Companies (www.tepav.org.tr)

Table 4: Number of companies established with Syrian asylum seekers joint capital by provinces (as of May 2018)

Cities	Number of Companies	Total Capital (Million TL)	Syrian Joint Venture (Million TL)
İstanbul	101	26,6	14,6
Mersin	30	8,5	5,2
Bursa	13	3,8	1,9
Hatay	10	10,2	5,2
Kilis	3	1,1	0,5
Şanlıurfa	2	0,4	0,1
Ankara	1	0,1	0,1
Antalya	1	0,2	0,2
Kocaeli	1	0,6	0,4

Source: TOBB, TEPAV Report of Syria Capital Companies (www.tepav.org.tr)

Table 5: Fields of activity of Syrian asylum seekers joint capital companies

Activities (Nace Rev.2)	Number of Companies	Total Capital (Million TL)	Syrian Joint Venture (Million TL)
Wholesale trade	65	28,4	14,4
Real estate production	22	6,2	2,9
Building construction	16	5,4	2,7
Retail trade	10	1,3	1,0
Travel agency, tour operator and other reservation services and	7	1,4	0,8

related activities			
Education	5	0,8	0,5
Manufacture of clothing	4	1,2	0,9
Road transport and pipeline transport	4	1,8	1,7
Headquarters design; administrative consulting management	4	0,9	0,8
Wholesale and retail sale and repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	3	0,6	0,2
Food and beverage service	3	0,5	0,3
Other service options	3	0,3	0,2
Manufacture of chemicals and chemical products	2	0,3	0,2
Manufacture of rubber and plastic	2	0,2	0,1
Architecture and engineering technology; technical inspection and analysis	1	0,3	0,3
Manufacture of food products	1	0,5	0,3
Printing and reproduction of recorded media	1	0,4	0,2
Collection, treatment and disposal of waste; illustration recovery	1	0,1	0,1
Telecommunication	1	0,1	0,1
Computer programming, consulting and related activities	1	0,1	0,1
Advertising and market research	1	0,1	0,1
Other professional, scientific and technical activities	1	0,1	0,1
Public administration and defense, compulsory social security	1	0,2	0,1
Sports-oriented, entertainment and leisure	1	0,1	0,0
Repair of computers, personal and household goods	1	0,3	0,1

Source: TOBB, TEPAV Report of Syria Capital Companies (www.tepav.org.tr)

Table 6: Overview of companies established with foreign capital (As of May 2018)

Company type	Number of Companies	Total Capital	Foreign Share Capital (Millions TL)	Foreign Share Capital Ratio (%)
Incorporated company	104	43.4	33.5	77.3
Limited company	1.174	386.1	315.4	81.7
Total	1.278	429.5	348.9	81.3

Source: TOBB, TEPAV Report of Syria Capital Companies (www.tepav.org.tr)

Table 7: The top 10 provinces with the highest ratio of companies established with foreign capital to the total number of companies (As of May 2018)

Cities	Number of Companies with Foreign Capital	Ratio to Total Number of Companies Established (%)
Kilis	5	38.5
Hatay	59	35.1
Yalova	11	23.9
Mersin	53	18.8
Şanlıurfa	27	18
İstanbul	795	16.7
Gaziantep	58	16.3
Bursa	51	12.4
Antalya	62	11.4
Düzce	2	8.7
Total	1.278	10.9

Source: TOBB, TEPAV Report of Syria Capital Companies (www.tepav.org.tr)

Table 8: Change in consumer price index by 12-month averages as of year-end (%),2003=100

Year	Region Code	Region Name	General Rate
2018	TR	Türkiye	16.33
2018	TR62	Adana-Mersin	21.94
2018	TRC1	Gaziantep-Adıyaman-Kilis	17.05
2018	TR63	Hatay-Kahramanmaraş-Osmaniye	22.09

Source: TÜİK 2018 (www.tuik.gov.tr)

Looking at these charts, it can be discovered that Syrian asylum seekers have established mostly Limited Companies and lots of companies are in İstanbul, Mersin and Bursa. When it comes to their company kind; wholesale trade, real estate production and building construction are coming in top three sequence.

The province with the highest ratio of companies established with foreign capital to the total number of company is Kilis with the rate of % 38.5. With regard to inflation rate, it can be said that in the provinces where there are intensive Syrian asylum seekers, inflation rates are higher than Turkey's average.

CONCLUSION

Looking at the economic impact of Syrian asylum seekers, there is a combination of both risks and opportunities. It can be said that Syrian asylum seekers contribute to Turkish economy in certain aspects, especially in certain provinces. This situation can sometimes have negative consequences due to changes in demand and supply balance.

According to research conducted so far on the effects of Syrian asylum seekers on Turkish economy, it is believed that Syrian asylum seekers contributed 0.5 to 1.7 percent of gross domestic product in 2015. As a result of Syrian asylum seekers who took refuge in Turkey transporting market relations along with them, there is a significant increase in exports to the Middle East, especially from the provinces in the southeast. (Turkey Grand National Assembly on Migration and Integration Report, 2018: 260)

According to the findings of the report analyzing the economic impact of the Syrian asylum seekers in Turkey which is based on ORSAM's survey in 2018, from 40% to 100% of those who lost their jobs in border provinces believe that "they lost their jobs because of Syrian asylum seekers"(Oytun, et al, 20015: 74).

According to World Bank, Syrian asylum seekers are informally employed intensively; therefore, their entry into country creates a bounded supply shock on the informal workforce Also, the calculations show that indigenous people in the informal sector have shifted on a large scale (Hürriyet Daily News. 2016). Syrian asylum seekers who work as indifferent and cheap labor force can cause many different problems. Especially for Syrian asylum seekers who work as unskilled workers in jobs that the local people do not want to work, occupational accidents and related injuries are one of the problems that needs to be solved.

In addition, Syrians living in the border provinces and doing business contribute positively to the regional economy and the national economy by exporting Turkish goods to the Middle East countries from the provinces they live. For example, according to TEPAV's 2018 data, Gaziantep's exports to Syria increased from 133 million dollars in 2011 to 405 million dollars in 2015.

In the light of all these data, it is seen that Syrian Refugees have positive and negative effects on Turkish Economy. Increasing the number of registered Syrian workforce and strengthening their professional qualifications will allow their contribution to Turkish economy to come to a better level and will facilitate their adaptation to the society in which they live.

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