



## TÜRKİYE'DE KADININ GÜÇLENDİRİLMESİNDE SORUNLAR VE STRATEJİK ÖNERİLER

Nuray KIZILASLAN<sup>1\*</sup>, Halil KIZILASLAN<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Prof. Dr., Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University, Agriculture of Faculty, Department of Agricultural Economy, Tokat-Turkey

\* nuray.kizilaslan@gop.edu.tr, \* halil.kizilaslan@gop.edu.tr

<sup>+</sup>ORCID: 0000-0002-8535-0100, <sup>-</sup>ORCID: 0000-0002-4642-0030

**Öz-** Kalkınma ve büyümenin sürdürülebilir duruma gelmesi, barış ve güvenliğin sağlanması, dengeli toplum oluşumu açısından kadının güçlendirilmesi temel araçlardan biridir. Bu nedenle, kadının güçlendirilmesi konusu siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal boyutlarıyla sürekli gündemde kalan önemli konulardandır. Bu çalışmada kadının güçlendirilmesindeki işleyiş ortaya konularak bu süreçte toplumda varlığını hissettirecek kadınların güçlendirilmesine yönelik stratejik öneriler neler olmalı sorusu tartışılmıştır. Bu amaç kapsamında literatür taraması yapılacak, çeşitli istatistiksel kaynaklar, raporlar ve kitaplardan yararlanılmıştır. Kadının güçlendirilmesi, kapsamlı bir çerçevede düşünülmelidir. Toplumsal cinsiyet konusunda bilinçli bir toplum haline gelmek gerekmektedir. Kadını güçlendirmek, çevresini ve olayları değiştirebilecek bir pozisyona getirmekle söz konusudur. Yaşamını yönlendirme gücü, yaşamı ile ilgili seçeneklere sahip olma, fırsat ve kaynaklara erişme, kendine güven ve saygı bu pozisyonlardan bazılarıdır. Eğitim, iş geliştirme, liderlik, eşit fırsat, sağlık, güvenlik, şiddet görmeme, toplumsal katılım, şeffaf anlayış, krediye erişim kadının güçlendirilmesinde içinde bulunulması gereken işleyişi ifade eder. Bu işleyiştaki iyileşme bir başlangıç olup toplumun sosyal ve kültürel yapısında da kadına bakış açısının iyileşme yönünde değişmesi gerekir. Kadının güçlendirilmesinde; toplumdaki kadının pozisyonunu da dikkate alarak stratejik öneriler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler-** Kadın, Güçlendirme, Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma, Türkiye.

## PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN IN TURKEY

**Abstract –** In terms of the formation of stable society, development and sustainable growth, ensuring peace and security, women's empowerment is one of the main tools. Therefore, the empowerment of women's remains on the agenda in political, economic and social dimensions. In this study strategic recommendations at women's empowerment are aimed to be identified and discussed by clarifying the mechanism for empowerment the women in the community. Within this objective literature scan, various statistical sources, reports and books have been used. Women's empowerment should be considered in a comprehensive framework. A consciousness about gender issues, women's empowerment and bringing a position to change the environment and events shall be required. Self-confidence and respect, power to change their live, having choices about live, access to opportunities and resources are some of these positions. Education, business development, leadership, equal opportunities, health and safety, to avoid violence, social inclusion, access to credits and transparent approach refer to the operation in empowerment of women. Improvement in this operation is a start point at the functioning of the need to change the direction of improvement of women's perspective through social and cultural structure of society. Strategic advices have been offered about women's empowerment by taking into account the position of women in society.

**Keywords –** Woman, Empowerment, Sustainable Development, Turkey.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education is the most important element in the economic development process in terms of all women and men. The backwardness of the woman or man should be seen as the cause of the backwardness of the society. The balanced development of societies requires that women play a role with men.

Sex and gender stand in a very important place in the construction of individual identities. These two concepts, which are linked to each other, are often used interchangeably but have different meanings. Sex refers to the biological direction of being a woman or a man and corresponds to a biological structure, while gender refers to the meaning and anticipation of the society and cult of being a woman or a man (Dokmen, 2014).

Since gender inequality is a developing concept against women, it is seen as a source of all problems in society. Gender relations include unequal power relations where men are dominant intellectually and women are usually promoted to the second plan. Men-oriented societies alienate women according to gender perception. Woman who is unable to take part in communal areas and wants to change her social status face a female glass ceiling obstacle.

Within the field of femininity, it is necessary to be strengthened by education and conscious to fulfill their duties as "a good business woman, spouse, mother" in the best way.

It was decided that each member state should hold meetings to address their own women's problems in the world, at the first World Women's Conference held in Mexico City in 1975 by the United Nations. Later, the United Nations prepared a Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, briefly known as CEDAW in 1979. The second World Women's Conference was held in Copenhagen in 1980; The third in Nairobi in 1985; The fourth was in 1995 in Beijing. At the last World Women's Conference in Beijing, the Beijing Declaration and Action Plan was adopted and targeted issues such as education, health, and gender equality. Turkey also signed this plan (UNICEF, 2018).

It was possible after the Republican period to take concrete steps to raise the social status of women in Turkey. Acting on the fact that women's social status constitutes the cornerstone of contemporary civilization, Atatürk made radical moves in this field as revolutionary. His initiatives in this problem are the products of forward vision that will set an example for developed countries and international organizations in the coming years. The main turning point in the process of obtaining the rights of women in Turkey is the War of Independence. The role of women can not be denied in winning the war. Turkish woman fought shoulder to shoulder, side by side with men in the struggle for independence against imperialism (Kaymaz, 2010).

It has been accepted that the concept of the state of law in the world after years of taking the rights of Turkish women is to protect the social, political and cultural rights of women. After the 1980s, women's movements increased their sensitivity with the contributions of organizations and associations. However, women's problems and the actions taken to strengthen women continue to be one of the important issues bearing the many problems that have not yet reached the desired level by the influence of social, political and cultural structure.

## 2. PROBLEMS AT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT ISSUES IN TURKEY

### Education

The issue of education and continuity of girls at all levels of education is still a problem in Turkey. This issue is more serious in rural areas. In Turkey, the proportion of the population with age of 25 years or older and illiterate population is 5.1% in 2016, which is 1.6% for males and 8.5% for females. The percentage of high school and graduate school graduates age of 25 years or older is 19.1% of the total population, which is 23.2% for males and 15% for females. The ratio of the total population of graduated from college or faculty is 16.5%, which is 18.8% for males and 14.2% for females (TURKSTAT, 2018). This behavior for girls is related to social structure and cultural factors and will decrease over time due to social change. But social change is taking many years. Regulations, such as 8 years of compulsory education, are broken in the face of girls and are not sent to the school. Awareness of the society needs to be raised. In addition, the inclusion of gender training in adult education programs should encourage the participation of adult women in programs, raise awareness, and ensure that programs remain sustainable.

### Working Life and Social Security

Female labor force is always seen as cheap labor. Despite the increase in women's labor force participation rates in Turkey over the years, working conditions have been hampered by unfavorable low wages, lack of social security, glass ceiling, and patriarchal thoughts.

In Turkey, the employment rate among the population age of 15 years and over is 47.8% in 2018, which is 66.4% for men and 29.7% for women (TURKSTAT, 2018a). The rate of female employment is lower at professional jobs and decision-making and management levels. The labor force participation rate in Turkey at age of 15 years and over is 54.0% in 2018, which is 73.5% for males and 34.9% for females (TURKSTAT, 2018a).

When the labor force participation rate is examined according to the educational status, it is seen that as the level of education increases, the women participate more in the workforce. The participation rate of non-literate women is 16.0%, the participation rate of under-education women is 25.8%, the participation rate of high school graduates is 31.9% and the participation rate of female vocational or technical high school graduates is 39.8% while graduates of higher education at the labor force participation rate of women is 71.3%. According to the results of the Income and Living Conditions Survey 2014, the average annual average basic job income of a female employee at the level of higher education graduate is 1.3% lower than the annual average main job income of a male employee at the same education level and the lowest difference is below 1.8% at high school (TURKSTAT, 2016).

They are located at the bottom of the rankings of social class poor families income distribution, the share of families with at least education and health facilities. They have job security and do not make plans for the future. The environment also consists of other poor families in which they are located. These families are bad health conditions, nutrition, inadequate and unbalanced. Poverty, the lack of nutrients that enters the home in the home due to early discontinuation of breastfeeding the mother's stress and chronic fatigue, and assess the health of the mother as the main determinant of low birth weight babies as a cause of malnutrition in children plays a role. Malnutrition all over the world, can result in more than a third of child deaths under the age of five. Turkey is among the

most corrupt countries in the distribution of income (Kızılaslan, 2016).

When data of the compulsory insurances in 2014 covered by Article 4 of Law No. 5510 are examined, the rate of female insured persons is 26.61% and the rate of male insured persons is 73.39%. In social security umbrella, the woman is still at low level (SSI, 2016).

### Political Rights

The Gender Inequality Index (GII), which the United Nations has developed to address sexually based inequalities, reflects sex-based inequalities in three dimensions. These dimensions; Reproductive health, female empowerment and economic activities. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates, while female empowerment is measured by the number of seats of women parliamentarians in parliament and by the rate of secondary and tertiary attainment of both sexes. Economic activities are assessed by the participation of both genders, both men and women, in the workforce. Turkey ranks 69th out of 149 countries with a GII of 0.360 in the 2013 index. 14.2% of the parliamentary seats in Turkey are female parliamentarians (UNDP, 2014). In Turkey, women's interest and political participation in politics is generally very low. The decisive factor here is culture. Apart from actual participation in political life, men in many parts of Anatolia determine and direct women's political preferences. The ability of a woman to earn her individual identity is possible by changing her social status.

### Civil Rights

Although civil rights were granted to Turkish women long before many countries, the problems still has remained unresolved. Non-official marriages, polygamy, marriage at childhood, social unrest and the increase in divorces show this dilemma. According to the divorces made in 2015, the average divorce age of women is 34.8, while this age is 39.1 at men (TURKSTAT, 2016). In these matters, the state is required to take legal measures. The regulations in the Turkish civil code have been prepared in accordance with international agreements on equality. However, men's dominant culture and values stand against the equality. The gender perspective of society needs to be changed. The social role should be reorganised in order to promote gender of men and women and positive discrimination should be used to maintain equality in society.

### Violence and Discrimination

According to the results of the Research on Domestic Violence Against Women conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in 2014; The proportion of women who are exposed to physical violence by their spouse or partner in any period of life in the country is 35.5% (TURKSTAT, 2016). Violence against women is associated with social culture and is seen in low or high culture and educated individuals. Threat, intimidation, coercion, physical violence, mobbing are used as a means of keeping woman under control. Mechanisms such as the inadequacy of women's shelters for the protection of women and the ineffective use of notice lines remain inadequate in this respect. Education related to gender discrimination should be provided to women and men.

### Health

Turkey has pledged full and equal access to women's right to health through international conventions and accepted international instruments that women are a party to human rights. According to the results of the 2013 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS), the total fertility rate is 2.26. In the TDHS-2013, the highest age-specific fertility rate was observed in the 25-29 age group. While the highest age-specific fertility rates emerged in the

20-24 age group in previous studies, the highest age-specific fertility rate in the TDHS-2008 survey for the first time advanced to the 25-29 age group. This result shows that the age-specific fertility pattern has changed in Turkey and births have been postponed to older ages. 5 percent of the women in the adolescence period in Turkey (15-19 age group) already have children or expect their first children. Adolescent fertility rate tends to decline over the years. According to the 1993 survey, this ratio was 10.2 percent between 1988 and 1993, while it was 4.6 percent in 2013 survey covering the years 2008-2013 (MFSP, 2016). Again, for every 100,000 live births, 20 women lose their lives and the fertility rate among adolescents is 30.9 per 1000 live births (UNDP, 2014). Life expectancy is 78 years generally in Turkey, 75.7 years for men and 80.7 years for women. Broadly, women live longer than men, and the difference in life expectancy at birth is 5.4 years. One out of every four females is obese (TURKSTAT, 2016).

### 3.STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN TURKEY

Some strategic recommendations for strengthening women in Turkey can be given as below:

- New business areas can be created starting from local and employment opportunities can be improved for women. For this, alternative fields of business (such as the production and construction of traditional products, opening restaurants) can be established and the market can be pioneered by defining the investment areas and creating women's markets and presenting house productions to the market.
- Vocational programs can be developed and disseminated exclusively to women. There are many activities such as reading and writing, jewelry, furnishing, sewing, diction, English, computer use, in vocational training centers in many municipalities in Turkey. Women train themselves in these centers, and they are able to earn income and sell their entrepreneurial spirit by organizing and selling what they produce. It is possible to work on bringing these programs to a sustainable position in cooperation with other institutions.
- Local investment models, especially co-operative entrepreneurship, can be improved by prioritizing women's organizations. They can enter the market through their own organizations. Product exchanges, traditional product markets can be created where they can evaluate their products.
- It is possible to apply for social security, which is prepared for women and can only be paid according to the business and income situation that women can benefit. Time and premium payment timing can be made considering working time and conditions. Fee equality can be determined by the performance of men and women.
- Local agencies and organizations can act in the service delivery, taking into account the different needs of male and female individuals. They can create a ground for a woman-friendly and safe living environment by creating awareness in the sense of gender equality.
- Identification of problems related to women at local, development of alternative policies for solution proposals, participation of women living in problems, inclusion of ideas can provide healthy solutions.

- The removal of violence against women requires that the concept of femininity is the one of two genders, such as masculinity, and that the absence of one of the genders is contrary to the laws of nature. Social education programs can be organized for both men and women to ensure that they can create alternatives that will serve to break traditional attitudes such as threat, intimidation, coercion, physical violence, mobbing, which are tools for controlling women.
- Informing about civil, political and social rights can be performed and can be overcome by legal regulations. Especially legal decisions and policy-level decisions can lead to structural transformation.
- Intensive information channels and mobile health services can be offered to reach women's health services. Intensive health education programs should be organized and these education programs should be made sustainable through repeat and reinforcement programs.
- Development policies can be developed by placing emphasis on women priorities nationally.
- Informative and persuasive dissemination exercises can be made before the work started by increasing the acceleration of development work for women. These publishing studies may lead to the ownership of the program or the project, the increase of participation and the creation of consciousness. The strategy of publication is based on the knowledge and consciousness of the individuals before the work begins.
- Rights and opportunities can be improved by allowing women to participate at all levels of planning and implementation of development projects.
- Projects prepared for women can be prepared and the prepared projects can be monitored by efficiency analysis and turned into sustainable projects.
- Work with regard to women's poverty dimensions can be performed at regional analytical level. In this sense, the policy priorities can be determined by creating a database.
- Micro-credit projects for sustainable development in Turkey have begun to be implemented at the local level. These projects are not the only solution to reduce women's poverty. But it is a tool that will make a significant contribution to the empowerment of women. Priorities can be taken into consideration by making micro-credit applications available to women, making information work more intensive.
- Increasing the activities of women in social life and making them actively involved in local decision-making mechanisms are linked to social culture, education, income, and family situation, so that changing the perspective on women can be done by creating the perception that women are the other side of gender as well. It is necessary to carry out educational activities in a sustainable manner.
- The development of support mechanisms for child, elderly, handicapped care and even the opening of women's associations which can help in these matters can be achieved by demolishing the male and female work-

style mindset, reducing the domestic responsibilities of women. Women will be able to afford another obstacle in front of their participation in political and economic life.

- Women councils can be formed in the provinces and the data obtained from the field can enable women to actively communicate quickly with their thoughts and create solutions on the spot.
- It is possible to work with all the relevant persons, institutions and organizations to correct the working conditions of women, to regulate working hours, to provide adequate and balanced nutrition, to increase the education opportunities and make them compulsory, to carry out health checks and to improve environmental hygiene conditions and to teach legal rights.

#### 4.CONCLUSION

Throughout the world in recent years, women have achieved success in the sense of equality in many areas. However, these achievements are far from having an important effect in terms of equality in education, in economic life, employment, social security, civil rights, political power, prevention of violence.

To participate in the decision-making process, to develop their capacities, and to be able to apply the decisions they make are the main elements of women's empowerment. Personal development, education, access to resources, participation, elimination of gender inequality, and active involvement in the development process are the main steps at women strengthening. The norms, rules and values of the society are the most important obstacles in the empowerment of women. Long-term, decisive and sustainable non-formal education programs covering the entire community for gender equality issues need to be developed.

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## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

A consciousness about gender issues, women's empowerment and bringing a position to change the environment and events shall be required. Self-confidence and respect, power to change their live, having choices about live, access to opportunities and resources are some of these positions.

In this study strategic recommendations at women's empowerment in Turkey are aimed to be identified and discussed by clarifying the mechanism for empowerment the women in the community.

It was possible after the Republican period to take concrete steps to raise the social status of women in Turkey. Acting on the fact that women's social status constitutes the cornerstone of contemporary civilization, Atatürk made radical moves in this field as revolutionary. His initiatives in this problem are the products of forward vision that will set an example for developed countries and international organizations in the coming years. The main turning point in the process of obtaining the rights of women in Turkey is the War of Independence. The role of women can not be denied in winning the war. Turkish woman fought shoulder to shoulder, side by side with men in the struggle for independence against imperialism.

It has been accepted that the concept of the state of law in the world after years of taking the rights of Turkish women is to protect the social, political and cultural rights of women. After the 1980s, women's movements increased their sensitivity with the contributions of organizations and associations. However, women's problems and the actions taken to strengthen women continue to be one of the important issues bearing the many problems that have not yet reached the desired level by the influence of social, political and cultural structure.

The issue of education and continuity of girls at all levels of education is still a problem in Turkey. This behavior for girls is related to social structure and cultural factors and will decrease over time due to social change. Awareness of the society needs to be raised.

Female labor force is always seen as cheap labor. Despite the increase in women's labor force participation rates in Turkey over the years, working conditions have been hampered by unfavorable low wages, lack of social security, glass ceiling, and patriarchal thoughts. In Turkey, women's interest and political participation in politics is generally very low. The decisive factor here is culture. Apart from actual participation in political life, men in many parts of Anatolia determine and direct women's political preferences. The ability of a woman to earn her individual identity is possible by changing her social status.

Although civil rights were granted to Turkish women long before many countries, the problems still has remained unresolved. Non-official marriages, polygamy, marriage at childhood, social unrest and the increase in divorces show this dilemma.

Violence against women is associated with social culture and is seen in low or high culture and educated individuals. Education related to gender discrimination should be provided to women and men.

Turkey has pledged full and equal access to women's right to health through international conventions and accepted international instruments that women are a party to human rights.

Some strategic recommendations for strengthening women in Turkey can be given. New business areas can be created starting from local and employment opportunities can be improved for women. Vocational programs can be developed and disseminated exclusively to women. Local investment models, especially co-operative entrepreneurship, can be improved by prioritizing women's organizations. It is possible to apply for social security, which is prepared for women and can only be paid according to the business and income situation that women can benefit. Local agencies and organizations can act in the service delivery, taking into account the different needs of male and female individuals. Identification of problems related to women at local, development of alternative policies for solution proposals, participation of women living in problems, inclusion of ideas can provide healthy solutions.

The removal of violence against women requires that the concept of femininity is the one of two genders, such as masculinity, and that the absence of one of the genders is contrary to the laws of nature. Informing about civil, political and social rights can be performed and can be overcome by legal regulations. Informative and persuasive dissemination exercises can be made before the work started by increasing the acceleration of development work for women. Rights and opportunities can be improved by allowing women to participate at all levels of planning and implementation of development projects. Increasing the activities of women in social life and making them actively involved in local decision-making mechanisms are linked to social culture, education, income, and family situation, so that changing the perspective on women can be done by creating the perception that women are the other side of gender as well. Women councils can be formed in the provinces and the data obtained from the field can enable women to actively communicate quickly with their thoughts and create solutions on the spot.

To participate in the decision-making process, to develop their capacities, and to be able to apply the decisions they make are the main elements of women's empowerment.