

# A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT ON THE CONDITIONAL CASH TRANSFER PROGRAMME IN THE CONTEXT OF GENDERED POVERTY IN TURKEY

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## Abstract

This article attempts to critically discuss the relation between the gendered nature of poverty and outputs of Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme of Turkey, a poverty reduction programme that has been designed to break the intergenerational transmission of poverty by investing long-term development of human capital in poor families since the CCT programme is argued to have a strong gender perspective. Therefore, this article will first address the discussions on relation between poverty and gender from the perspective of feminisation of poverty and gendered poverty approaches which are used synonymously in this article. Later, the article will attempt to picture gendered nature of poverty in Turkey using various resources. This article will be concluded a critical discussion on whether or not the CCT programme in Turkey could be a significant remedy to the problems caused by gendered nature of poverty.

**Keywords:** *Conditional Cash Transfer Programme, Feminisation of Poverty, Gendered Poverty in Turkey*

## TÜRKİYE'DE TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET TEMELLİ YOKSULLUK YAKLAŐIMI KAPSAMINDA ŐARTLI NAKİT TRANSFERİ PROGRAMI ÜZERİNE ELEŐTİREL BİR DEĐERLENDİRME

### Özet

Bu makale, yoksulluĐun toplumsal cinsiyet temelli doĐası ile güçlü bir toplumsal cinsiyet vurgusuna sahip olduĐu savunulan ve yoksul hanelerin uzun dönemli insani sermayesine yatırımda bulunarak yoksulluĐun nesiller arası geişine engel olmayı amaçlayan Şartlı Nakit Transferi (ŐNT) programının ıktıları arasındaki iliŐkiyi eleŐtirel bir Őekilde tartıŐmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu alıŐma öncelikle eŐanlamlı olarak kullandıĐı yoksulluĐun feminizasyonu ve toplumsal cinsiyet temelli yoksulluk yaklaşımları baĐlamında yoksulluk ve toplumsal cinsiyet iliŐkisini tartıŐacak, sonra eŐitli kaynakları kullanarak ölkemizdeki toplumsal cinsiyet temelli yoksulluĐa dair genel bir resim oluŐtırmaya alıŐacaktır. Makale ölkemizde uygulanan programının toplumsal cinsiyet temelli yoksulluĐun neden olduĐu sorunlara etki bir are olup olmayacaĐını tartıŐan bir bölümlle sona erecektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Őartlı Nakit Transferi Programı, YoksulluĐun Feminizasyonu, Türkiye'de Toplumsal Cinsiyet Temelli Yoksulluk*

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## 1. Introduction

This article aims to critically discuss Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme that is currently being implemented in Turkey to combat poverty and break the inter-generational transmission of poverty by investing long-term development of human capital in poor families. The CCT programme is argued to have a strong gender perspective. Therefore, this article will examine the design, implementation and impact of the CCT programme in Turkey in details.

To establish a sound conceptual framework, this article will firstly address the discussions on relation between poverty and gender. In this context, feminisation of poverty approach and gendered poverty approach or gendered nature of poverty will be debated. At this point, it is important to remind that gendered poverty or gendered nature of poverty have been used synonymously in this article. Then, this article will focus on Turkey and use official statistics and international comparative reports on poverty and development to picture gendered nature of poverty in Turkey.

After presenting information about the development of worldwide CCT programmes and the CCT programme in Turkey, the article will examine distinguishing aspects of the CCT programme compared to other social assistance programmes in Turkey. Therefore social assistance system and social assistance programmes will be explained very briefly. However, this article will ignore the programmes or projects that are carried out by local governments or institutions to prevent any digression while describing social assistance system and social assistance programmes in Turkey. In fact, these local programmes are quite similar to traditional social assistance programmes of the General Directorate for Social Assistance (GDSA) that is the main public institution responsible for carrying out countrywide social assistance programmes.

To picture impacts of the CCT programme over gendered nature of poverty or gendered poverty, findings of previous impact assessment studies of International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) on the CCT programme will be reviewed and discussed.

In the conclusion section, an assessment on general policies and strategies, social assistance system of Turkey and CCT programme will be presented so as to reveal whether the CCT programme per se constitutes a remedy to problems, triggered by gendered nature of poverty in Turkey.

## 2. Gender and Poverty: Feminisation of Poverty or Gendered Nature of Poverty?

As mentioned above, this article neither focuses on the definition of poverty nor measuring it. However, as the poverty is closely linked with growth, income distribution and mainly deprivation, it is inevitable that impact of poverty is more devastating over women than men. Poverty studies made significant contribution to reveal that

poverty is not gender-neutral. Since women's roles, including their participation in social life and employment, are limited differently compared to men by social values and norms of the society that they live in and economic limitations and government policies, these differences underpins disparities and extend the gap between women and men as Bellamy and Rake point out (2005, p.2).

Among these major differences are very intensive participation of women in unpaid work, including child or elderly care and domestic work, that prevents them to participate properly in paid work (Bellamy and Rake, 2005, p.2) and unequal distribution of income within households (Bugra and Keyder, 2005, p.6). These differences consequently resulted in more women falling into poverty and face the risk of social exclusion. That situation does not differ for the industrialised and developed nations. For instance, women "...tend to be poorer than men and more women than men are poor..." in Britain (Bellamy and Rake, 2005, p.48).

In the poverty literature, two main concepts and approaches regarding women in poverty were introduced gradually. These are "feminisation of poverty" and "gendered poverty" which is also defined as "gendered nature of poverty". The term of feminisation of poverty firstly appeared in the debates on the single mothers and welfare in 1970s. It was used to emphasize that "...women have a higher incidence of poverty than men...[and]... their poverty is more severe than that of men...[and]...there is a trend to greater poverty among women, particularly associated with rising rates of FHHs [female-headed households] ..." (Bridge, 2001, p.1 ).

The term of feminisation of poverty took place in a global policy papers for the first time in 1995 at the action plan of the fourth World Conference on Women due to the fact that poverty came into prominence in the international development agenda and new approaches and indicators were strongly needed (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2008b, p.5). However, a clear definition on the feminisation of poverty was not included in this action plan. Instead, this action plan mainly required all relevant parties including governments, international organisations, academic institutions and private sector to develop a methodology incorporating "gender perspective" into process of economic policy making and collect gender based data on poverty (UN Women, 2011a). Despite of this uncertainty on the definition of feminisation of poverty in the conference documents, promoting "women's economic independence, including employment" and eradicating "the persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women" were also listed in the critical areas of the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) in the closing declaration of the conference which is known as the Beijing Declaration (UN Women, 2011a).

Although feminisation of poverty was widely discussed and included in international policy papers, there were also criticisms towards it. An article that was written by

Sylvia Chant included these main critiques. According to Chant, the main problems on the feminisation of poverty are related its definition and assumptions. Firstly, the feminisation of poverty approach presents women as a “homogenous mass” by ignoring the differences among them or it differentiates women only on the basis of “household headship”. Secondly, only the criteria of monetary deprivation is used to describe poverty under the feminisation of poverty approach (2006, p.3) and even though this approach focuses on income and monetary deprivation, relevant “sex-disaggregated statistics” are deficient (2006, p.3). She also points out a dilemma of the feminisation of poverty approach on its focus on women that she considers deflecting “attention from men and gender relations”. She argues that there should be “masculinisation” of wealth if the poverty feminises as formulized in the feminisation of poverty approach. However, empirical evidence presented that men has fallen behind women in attaining education and accessing employment in some countries. Hence, according to Chant, the feminisation poverty approach is insufficient to explain “crisis of masculinity” and these empirical findings (2006, p.7).

Therefore, a more holistic approach that is known as gendered poverty and includes gendered nature of deprivation, different capabilities, livelihoods, experience and social exclusion of men and women started to substitute the feminisation of poverty.

The most significant contribution to the development of gendered poverty approach has been made by the United National Development Programme (UNDP). In 1990, UNDP published the first issue of its human development report. Since then, this report has been published regularly and annually under the name of UNDP Human Development Reports. In addition to comparing different “well-being outcomes” for different genders, gendered poverty approach that was initiated by these reports, depending on capabilities approach, addresses the processes and mechanisms on the contrary of the feminisation of poverty approach that mainly focused on the outcomes (Jackson and Palmer, 1999, p.558).

In 1995, UNDP Human Development Report developed two new measures, which are considered as a very important contribution to gendered poverty approach (UNDP 2011a). First of them is the Gender-related Human Development Index (GDI) which simply presents the differences among women and men in the indicators of Human Development Index (HDI). The second, Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) aims to assess the improvement in women’s participation in political environment and economic sectors. These two measures are intensively used to reveal and monitor the disparities in analysis and discussions that focus on the gendered nature of poverty.

In addition to these measures, UNDP introduced a Gender Inequality Index (GII). GII aims to quantify gender related inequality that women encounter. GII is a “composite measure” that focuses on inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment of

women in political forums and education attainments and women's participation in labour market. To sustain a sound index, GII also uses different types of indicators varying including maternal mortality ratio, adolescent fertility rate, shares of parliamentary seats and education attainment levels and women's participation in the work force (UNDP, 2011b). This article will again refer again these measures and index so as to picture gendered poverty in Turkey.

## **2.1. Gendered Nature of Poverty in Turkey**

In the context of gender equality and gendered poverty, Turkey has showed a very poor performance compared to its economic development level. For instance, it ranked 83rd among 169 countries which the relevant data was available according to GII in UNDP Human Development Report 2010. As mentioned above, GII includes specific indicators to measure inequality and reveal gendered nature of poverty. The labour force participation ratio which is one of these indicators and very important to expose discrimination against women in labour market has remained quite low as 26.9 percent (UNDP, 2010, p.157). Similar to GII in UNDP Human Development Report 2010, Turkey has placed 99th out of 134 countries in participation ratio of women in political forums in the Gender Gap Report 2010 (World Economic Forum, 2010).

Except above mentioned comparative data, there is a serious constraint in obtaining relevant empirical study to picture the gendered nature of poverty in Turkey (Candas and Bugra, 2010, p.29). The main underlying reason of this scarcity is that existing official statistics are generally based on household and ignore disparities in these households. That these statistics are unable to contribute policy making process has formed other reason (Sener, 2009, p.6). Consequences of limited empirical studies and insufficient statistics on gendered nature of poverty in Turkey will be debated in details in the conclusion section of this article. However, there is, at this stage, a need to address on several selected official statistics in order to reveal gendered nature of poverty in Turkey.

Table I shows the poverty rates in last five years according to education levels of male and female members of households in Turkey. These official statistics reflect that women, on the average, experience poverty more frequently than man in Turkey. Despite that, the risk of falling into poverty for the women decreases as the education level of women improves.

**Table I. Poverty Rates in Turkey According to Gender and Educational Status of Household Members between 2005 and**

Educational Status	2005 (%)		2006 (%)		2007 (%)		2008 (%)		2009 (%)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
TURKEY	19,97	21,01	17,32	18,27	17,33	18,26	16,70	17,52	17,10	19,03
Household members who are younger than 6 years old	27,86	27,56	25,12	24,43	24,91	24,10	22,86	22,18	22,87	25,27
Illiterate or literate without a diploma	30,94	31,92	27,73	28,34	29,13	28,88	30,77	30,31	30,34	29,52
Primary school	19,92	14,51	16,52	12,05	15,87	12,68	15,91	11,22	16,86	13,83
Elementary school	21,79	23,02	16,47	19,66	19,79	18,55	18,67	15,66	17,19	18,39
Secondary school and equivalent vocational school	9,72	5,62	9,69	4,89	11,06	5,57	9,85	5,78	10,89	7,82
High school and equivalent vocational school	7,98	5,14	6,06	4,05	7,05	4,09	6,00	5,11	5,71	4,76
University, faculty, masters, doctorate	0,83	0,72	1,28	0,56	0,97	0,53	0,88	0,43	0,92	0,40

Source: TURKSTAT, 2010b

Table II shows the labour force participation rates of women and men. This table presents explicitly that participation of women into labour is considerably low. Interestingly, the gap between women's and men's labour force participation rates widens enormously in urban areas compared to rural areas. In parallel with the findings of Table II, Graphic I on unemployment and gender relation and Graphic II on gender related unemployment in non-agricultural sectors reveal that women in Turkey experience a higher level of unemployment than male counterparts. Especially in non-agricultural sectors, female unemployment rate surpasses male unemployment rate dramatically. Low unemployment rate among the women in Turkey is considered to represent "...a rare exception to the worldwide increase in female employment in that during the last two decades..." (Bugra and Yakut, 2010, p.518)

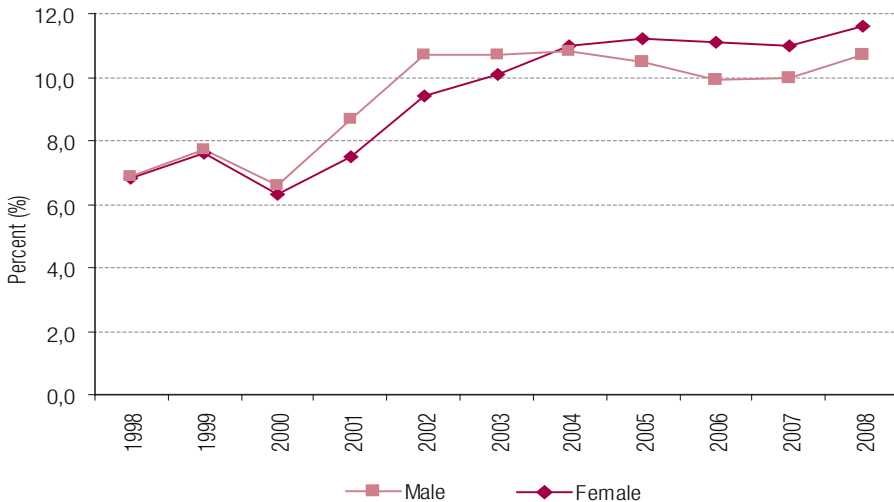
**Table II. Labour Force Participation Rate by Household Population (%)**

Years	TURKEY		URBAN		RURAL	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
1998	29,3	76,7	16,8	72,8	46,9	82,5
1999	30,0	75,8	17,8	72,2	47,5	81,2
2000	26,6	73,7	17,2	70,9	40,2	77,9
2001	27,1	72,9	17,4	70,6	41,7	76,4
2002	27,9	71,6	19,1	69,8	41,4	74,5
2003	26,6	70,4	18,5	68,9	39,0	72,9
2004	23,3	70,3	17,9	69,1	36,7	73,3
2005	23,3	70,6	17,0	70,0	33,9	72,0
2006	23,6	69,9	16,4	69,3	33,1	71,3
2007	23,6	69,8	16,1	69,3	32,5	71,0
2008	24,5	70,1	16,6	69,5	32,9	71,6

Source: TURKSTAT, 2010a

The findings of Graphic I and II also confirm the phenomenon, noted by Bugra and Yakut, that structural changes in employment obstruct recruitment of female labour force in non-agricultural sectors when they are vacated from agricultural sectors due to de-ruralisation in Turkey (2010, p.519)

**Graphic I. Unemployment and Gender**



Source: TURKSTAT, 2010c

**Graphic II. Unemployment and Gender (Non-Agricultural)**



Source: TURKSTAT, 2010c

Therefore, it may be concluded that women are economically left depended on their families or husbands' incomes due to low female employment, their significantly low incomes compared to men and other factors like their dominant roles in non-paid domestic work and family care. Women and girls also represent the most vulnerable to disparities and inequalities in income distribution (Candas and Bugra, 2010, p.30).

Similar disparities and exclusion exist in the education as observed in female unemployment rate. Table III represents a basic statistic on education levels of women and men who were 25 years old or older in 2008 according to data in national education database. This table reveals that more men are more advantageous than women in attaining higher levels of education. Especially, rate of women who attend to junior high school institutions and higher education institutions including universities and postgraduate programmes are dramatically lower than men. Hence, it may easily be argued that women encounter a kind of exclusion from higher education programmes.



**Table III. Formal Education Levels and Gender in 2008 according to National Education Database**

2008 (%)	Illiterate	Literate without diploma	Primary School	Elementary	Junior high school & equivalent	High school & equivalent	Higher education	Master Degree	PhD	Unknown
Female*	18,0	7,4	42,7	0,7	4,9	12,2	6,5	0,5	0,1	7,0
Male*	4,5	4,9	42,8	1,0	9,0	18,8	10,2	0,8	0,2	7,7

\*Percentage of population who were 25 years old and over in 2008

Source: TURKSTAT, 2008

Even though the statistics on health and gender relation are inadequate and most of data are outdated, several studies indicate that gender differences in Turkey constitute one of major factors disrupting the utilisation of health care system (Akin, 2003, p.54). These studies also reveal that health status of women is worse than men (Akin, 2003, p.55) and women are unable to enjoy the existing rights and services duly and properly (KSMG, 2008, p.5).

These above mentioned inequalities and disparities in employment, education and health sectors that women are exposed and higher risk of falling into poverty of women have pronouncedly exhibited that poverty has clear gendered nature in Turkey. In practise, detailed national action plan equality and several strategy papers have accordingly been prepared to ensure gender equality (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2008a). However, this article does not aim at assessing and criticising general policies and strategies for gender equality. On the other hand, it will discuss the impacts of a specific poverty reduction program which was designed to remedy gendered poverty and to break intergenerational transmission of poverty through by strengthening women's role in poor families. Therefore, the next sections of this article will focus only on this specific programme.

### 3. Social Assistance Programmes versus Gendered Nature in Turkey

This section will provide very brief information on the social assistance programmes and especially focus on Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) programme carried out in Turkey by the General Directorate for Social Assistance (GDSA) that is the main public institution responsible for planning, financing and implementing countrywide poverty reduction and social assistance programmes. In order to prevent any digression, other relatively small and narrow scoped programmes or activities of local institutions will be excluded. Before descending to particular aspect of the CCT programme, it is necessary to mention generally about social assistance programmes which will be referred as traditional poverty reduction or social assistance programmes henceforward.

In addition to the right-based and regular in-cash benefit programmes, some of which used to be managed by various governmental institutions before the creation of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy, GDSA also carries out mainly three types of traditional poverty reduction programmes. These are:

Project Support Programme that include supporting income generating local projects, employability trainings for disadvantaged individuals or groups and community development projects

Social assistance programmes for individuals who are not covered by the social security system. These programmes include the CCT programme, family support programme, health and education supports and in kind and cash supports for handicapped people.

Financial and technical supports for other poverty reduction programmes that are jointly carried out with the participation of different public bodies through protocols.

As of December 2010, it has been reported that GDSA used 1,5 billion United States (US) dollars in total to finance these poverty reduction programmes in 2010 (GDSAS, 2011a, p.159). Despite the fact that comprehensive reports and impact assessment studies were prepared for each type of programme and project support, there is not a significant number of reference on the impacts of GDSA activities on gendered poverty, excluding CCT programme. However, several academic studies provided precious clues, highlighting that social assistance system or “welfare regime” in Turkey is a type of “... gendered institutions which both reflect and influence the attitudes that determine female employment ...” (Bugra and Yakut, 2010, p.519). It is also noted that the social assistance system basically exclude men and women who are not expected to participate in the labour market are the main recipients of benefits under social assistance system (Bugra and Keyder, 2006 and 2008). The rationality behind this situation seems to be related to a pre-acceptance that women use the benefits for the needs of their family while men are tend to trifle away (Bugra and Yakut, 2010, p.532).

### **3.1. Conditional Cash Transfer Programmes**

This section of the article aims to present detailed information about CCT programmes and initiation of a CCT programme in Turkey. The findings of impact assessment studies on the CCT programme in Turkey will specially be discussed from gendered poverty perspective.

It is widely argued that CCT programmes are innovative tools for the social assistance programmes that aim to mitigate poverty and foster social inclusion. CCT programmes aim to link a cash transfer to a behaviour change which is generally a minimum

investment in children's human capital such as regular school attendance or regular check-ups. In fact, labour and employment-requirements that aimed to establish a link between a cash transfer and behaviour change were already introduced in the welfare reforms through the "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families" in the United States of America (USA) and the "New Deal" in the United Kingdom (UK) in the mid-1990s before CCT programmes (De la Brière and Rawlings, 2006, p.7). CCT programmes still represent a departure from the traditional welfare programmes not only by responding short-term needs but also aiming to improve human capital development (De la Brière and Rawlings, 2006, p.6). In addition this, there are also very practical and innovative mechanisms in structure of CCT programmes:

CCT programmes introduced unique targeting mechanisms, based on scoring formulas and means tests to identify beneficiaries. These mechanisms enable to prioritize the household below a particular income level and a specific geographical region more precisely than in traditional social assistance programmes;

Payments are made on the condition of fulfilling specific programme requirements; and

Payments or stipends for the girls are higher than boys. They are usually paid to mothers (International Poverty Centre, 2008, p.3).

As the payments are made to mothers and stipends of girls are higher than boys under CCT programmes, it is argued that CCT programmes have a strong gender aspect as a kind of poverty alleviation and social assistance programmes.

The first CCT programme is the Mexican CCT programme which was firstly called Progressa, then Opportunades and was launched in 1997. This programme was later followed by other CCT programmes in various countries Brazil, Chile, Honduras, Colombia, Nicaragua, Jamaica, Panama, Indonesia, Zambia, Malawi, Turkey and New York City, USA (Fernald, et al., 2008, p.828 and Ricco, 2010).

Although these programmes are designed for and implemented in different countries, they basically transfer cash benefits for poor families depending on fulfilment of certain conditions either regular school attendance of their children or regular health check-ups to strengthen human capital of the poor families. The primary objective of enforcing such conditions in CCT programmes is rationalized to eliminate "the inter-generational transmission of poverty" through investing long-term development of human capital in poor families while traditional social assistance programmes attach a priority to short-time poverty alleviation (Rawlings and Rubio, 2005, p.29).

### 3.2. The CCT Programme in Turkey

The CCT programme in Turkey was firstly launched by the Social Risk Mitigation Project (SRMP) in 2003. The SRMP was a part of responses by the Government of the day to devastating earthquakes and severe financial shocks that struck Turkey at the end of 1990s and beginning of 2000s. The SRMP was designed to serve for two essential goals as contributing to mitigate the destructive impact of these natural disasters and financial crisis over poor families and fostering their capacity to overcome similar possible crisis (The World Bank, 2008, p.7). The project was financed mainly by World Bank through loan agreement. However, Government of Turkey made a significant financial contribution for the SRMP. SRMP activities were coordinated by a Project Coordination Unit (PCU), embedded to the Prime Ministry General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity (GDSAS), which is predecessor of GDSA. Following the closing of the SRMP in March 2007, the programmes, including the CCT programme, that were carried out by SRMP PCU were operationally and financially undertaken by GDSA. From the beginning of SRMP, there were and are two types of benefits under the CCT programme in Turkey as education and health benefit. Similar to other CCT programmes, applicants are assessed by mean tests and they are required to perform certain conditions in order to maintain their status once they are granted beneficiary status. These conditions which are vital for the maintenance of beneficiary status will be respectively detailed for each type of benefits.

In order to benefit from CCT education or health component, applications should be made to local Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundations (SASFs) located in each province and sub-province. Applicants are usually mothers and expectant mothers or legal carers of children in exceptional conditions. GDSA benefits from a proxy means scoring formula to examine applicants. This formula was generated by a model that aims to estimate “per capita household consumption expenditure” as a function of household assets, demographics, geographic location, and other relevant variables. Relevant data of applicants regarding these variables are collected through an application form at the beginning of application. Then, the data on this application form is verified by using Social Assistance Information System (SOYBIS), run by GDSA and random house visits. After data verification phase, children of applicant or expectant mother are granted beneficiary status if the result of scoring formula is below the predetermined cut-off score. The eligibility of the beneficiary status is checked once in a year (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007, p.79).

CCT education and health benefits have specific target groups, conditions and they also cover different age groups. For instance, CCT education benefits target the children of the families who are among the poorest six percent of the population. After being granted CCT education beneficiaries as result of similar process above, children are required to have eighty percent of school attendance rate and not to repeat the

same grade more than once to maintain their beneficiary status. CCT education benefits are paid for a period of time that starts with enrolment to primary school and ends with high school graduation.

CCT health benefits aim to reach the pre-school children who aged between zero and six or pregnant women, in the poorest six percent of the population, as in CCT education component. To maintain beneficiary status for CCT health benefits, children should be brought to regular check-ups monthly, bi-monthly or semi-annually depending on their age. Similar conditions are applied for pregnant women. In addition to these regular checks-up conditions and CCT health benefits, an extra cash benefit is paid to each beneficiary woman to prevent the risks of pregnancy on the condition that delivery and post-treatments must be realized in hospitals and post-pregnancy follow-ups must be fulfilled regularly (SYDGM, 2011b).

Since the CCT programme in Turkey was designed particularly to increase school enrolment and attendance rate of girls and strengthen position of mothers in poor and disadvantageous families, payments for both CCT education and health benefits are usually made to mothers. Similarly, the amount of benefits or stipends is higher for the girls than boys. According to GDSAS data, number of CCT beneficiaries, as of September 2010, was 3.002.214 and 2.103.589.781-TL, equivalent to 1,5 billion US dollars was transferred to the CCT beneficiaries since the beginning of programme in 2003 (Esenyel and Torun, 2010, p.13).

GDSA uses impact assessment studies to evaluate the impacts of its social assistance and poverty reduction programmes. Therefore, a quantitative and two qualitative studies were materialized by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in 2006 and 2007 in order to assess and analyze the impact of the CCT programme. An additional final report on impact assessment of the CCT programme was also prepared by IFPRI for GDSAS in 2007. These studies represented highly interesting findings and assessments on impacts of CCT programme and different factors that affects the programme.

These findings of impact assessment studies will be discussed in details so as to reveal contributions of CCT programme to mitigate devastating of effect of gender poverty or gendered nature of poverty over women in Turkey. It seems more practical methodologically to align the findings of these studies from specific ones to general ones. Hence, findings of impact assessment studies on the CCT education benefits will be assessed firstly.

These impact assessment studies examined CCT education benefits depending on various aspects, including operational performance, targeting efficiency at national and community levels, impact of CCT education benefits over education sector, the role of the programme as complementary support for education, local understanding

of the programme and understanding of target audience on the fairness of beneficiary selection criteria of the CCT programme. These studies also assessed information source and channels of the CCT programme applicants and beneficiaries and their knowledge level on benefits and understanding of programme conditionality in addition to their opinions on the CCT education benefits and particularly the factors that are deemed to influence their decisions on the schooling of children.

As mentioned above, it is frequently emphasized by the policy papers and implementing agency, GDSA, that CCT education benefits were designed to increase school attendance rate and decrease the dropout rate by linking cash transfer to behaviour and CCT programme had also a particular priority to increase school attendance rate of girls and to strengthen position of mother in poor families. To test this assertion, impact assessment studies used a Regression Discontinuity Design (RDD) and tried to measure impacts of CCT education benefits on school enrollment rate (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006b).

These studies revealed that the CCT programme does not seem to produce a positive impact on primary school enrolment rates. Furthermore, they were unable to present any evidence that the CCT programme has an influence over the rate of progression from primary school to secondary school (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006b, p.63). However, they found out that CCT programme contributed to raise the secondary school enrollment for girls who are aged 14-17 by 10.7 percent (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006b, p.63). According to these studies, CCT programme raised school attendance rate of girls by 5.4 percent in secondary schools (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007b, p.10).

These impact assessment studies also identified and revealed the basic economic, social and cultural factors that are considered to influence parents' schooling decision (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a, p.60). These factors are listed below :

Parents' expectations on the role of education in their children's future, particularly for girls,

- I. Amount of school expenditures,
- II. Understanding of gender roles,
- III. Success or performance children at school,
- IV. Problems created by location of schools and transportation to and from schools,
- V. Feelings and attitudes of children towards school,
- VI. Safety concerns and social influences at schools,
- VII. Degree of help needed at home, and
- VIII. Income expectations in the cases that children work

Although CCT education benefits were found to have increased schooling and attendance rate of girls, these impact assessment studies also revealed understanding of gender role is still an important factor influencing other factors and schooling decision of parents (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a and International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007b, p.xi)

These impact assessment studies also assessed the success and impacts of CCT health benefits. Although the level of CCT health benefits payment were considered to be low, especially when the beneficiaries or parents need to reach a health centre in other towns, CCT education benefits were found to encourage the poor families to make effective use of existing health facilities (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006a, p.vii). In addition to this, RDD estimates revealed that CCT health benefits caused an increase of 13,6 percent in the full-immunization rate for preschool children (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007b, p.xii). CCT health benefits, together with education benefits, were found to reduce the probability of a woman of child-bearing age by around 2-3 percent. This pregnancy discouraging effect of CCT programme is originated by the additional income from the CCT programme and visits to health clinics on fertility decisions (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007b, p.xiv).

When the CCT programme is assessed from the perspective of its success to target women and strengthening women's position and capabilities, these impact assessment studies found that women were effectively targeted by the programme as planned (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2006a, p.viii). Additionally, the CCT programme was also found to have opened opportunities for women to participate in the public life and made gender-specific roles less restrictive by giving CCT benefits to mothers (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a, p.xviii). However, there are several regions and provinces where women can not take advantage of all benefits and opportunities provided by CCT programme as management of money is still considered as a male responsibility (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a, p.169).

Surprisingly, the impact of the CCT programme on child labour appeared modest according to these impact assessment studies. These studies found that increases in school enrolment, triggered by the CCT programme, caused reductions in the frequency and number of working hours of children during the school year rather than the prevalence of children who work (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a, p.xviii and International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007b, p.74).

#### 4. Conclusion

To conclude this article, this section will critically discuss policies and strategies for gender equality and social assistance system in Turkey and the CCT programme. In order to find a remedy to problems, triggered by the gendered poverty, conceptualization should be constructed depending updated and credible data to reflect existing station. Similarly, conceptualization, per se, should be based on updated concepts and tested causation. As mentioned in previous sections of this article, there are not detailed and qualified statistics which are available to access of researchers and professionals (Candas and Bugra, 2010, p.29). Even the official statistics on gender indicators, provided by TURKSTAT that was re-organized to produce official statistics convenient to the European Union standards in 2005 remain unsatisfactory. The existing statistics are also found to ignore the differences and inequalities in households that they are based. This situation leads statistics not to contribute adequately to policy-making process and statistics, as a result, are unable to reflect the dynamics of poverty and gendered nature of poverty. This gap, especially on gendered nature of poverty, is endeavoured to replenish through statistics on women's participation into labour force or experiences of women, revealed by qualitative researches on employment (Sener, 2009, p.6). Therefore, general policy and strategies are generally focused on the relation between women and labour market to mitigate the devastating effects of poverty over women while gendered nature of poverty is multidimensional.

Another problematic area in the formalisation of general policies and strategies is the understanding of feminisation of poverty and gendered nature of poverty approaches. Policy papers or strategy documents seem to refer to feminisation of poverty approach rather gendered poverty or gendered nature of poverty concepts which represent a wider and comprehensive perspective to conceive the dynamic of poverty and exclusion (General Directorate on the Status of Women, 2008b, p.5). Despite the fact that referring to feminisation of poverty approach is partially useful, this creates a misunderstanding on the poverty and gender link that the main problem is the number or ratio of women who experience poverty and ignorance on the exclusion of women because of their genders. Undoubtedly, the exclusion of women from decision making mechanisms and process and discrimination against women in all sectors are as important as ratios and numbers. Therefore, it can be argued that general policies and strategies seem to focus on qualitative aspects of poverty rather exclusion of women that leads to a wider deprivation and a deeper poverty due to out of date conceptualisation.

When the social assistance system is assessed, an interesting finding has appeared that all of social assistance programmes seem to target women while excluding able-bodied men. However, targeting especially women in the social assistance system still remains inadequate to struggle with poverty as women are unable to access sufficient public care services and early school facilities for their children (Bugra and Yakut,



2010, p.532). In addition to this, there is a concern that targeting women in social assistance programmes may make them beneficiaries of welfare rather than labour market participants due to lack of complementary labour policies (Bugra and Yakut, 2010, p.520).

If the CCT programme in Turkey is assessed in the context of findings of this article, several gaps in programme design and implementation have become more apparent. Undoubtedly, the CCT programme is the first social assistance programme that was particularly designed with an emphasis on gender and women in Turkey. Despite this emphasis and nature of the CCT programme necessitates otherwise, there is not a monitoring or reporting mechanism that regularly follows up gender related issues in CCT programme.

The impact assessment studies on the CCT programme in Turkey found significant contributions by the programme to raise especially school enrolment rate of girls and to strengthen position of women in disadvantageous households. However, these studies were not able to manifest mere impact of the CCT programme, isolated from other social assistance programmes or policy changes on these improvements.

More importantly, the impact of the CCT programme on child labour was founded to be modest. It is highly worrying that the CCT programme has a very limited impact on child labour that affects girls harshly and leads them into poverty. However, impact assessment studies highlighted the different nature of works between girls who are exclusively employed as unpaid family workers and boys who are employed as wage workers. A comprehensive assessment on impact of CCT programme over wage and non-wage child labour was recommended by these impact assessment studies (International Food Policy Research Institute, 2007a, p.xviii). But, these kind of special impact assessments have not been initiated so far.

Even though the CCT programme is a pioneer social assistance programme that addresses gendered nature of poverty in Turkey, it does not singly have enough competence to remedy all problems of women who experience a deeper poverty and deprivation due to gendered nature of poverty.

Consequently, it is also important to note the circumstances of men who are experiencing poverty when gendered nature of poverty is addressed. Bellamy and Rake pointed out that "...as anti-poverty strategies and initiatives continue to be 'gender blind' they can have negative impacts on men as well as women..." (2005, p.52). The case of Turkey and discussions on gendered nature of poverty in Turkey seem to verify this finding as no specific reference was found to address the particular circumstance of men who live in poverty in policy papers and academic studies.

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