Women Poverty And Women In Secondary Labor

Duygu Yücel∗
Trakya Üniversitesi

Poverty is multi dimensional, relative concept that is difficult to measure and is a situation can't afford the requirements both as economic end as non economic. In addition illness, disability, death, naturel disasters as well as the risks that affect the economic situation, cause the poverty further and its generate safety need. In other words poverty is become a problem both as economics as social and spiritual qualifications. One of the basic reasons of poverty is, inequity taken place to sharing the increasing income to the person. Nowadays, poverty problem become a prior problem need to be solved in any case of the development degree in a whole world. Economical politics, economic and political unstabilities implemented in Turkey and prior world, deepen the poverty and increase the social inequality and these negations affect the women in a maximum degree. Society see the women only as a housewife, good mother, good wife in division of labour based on gender, causing a secondary status in business life and earning money. No cost studies and social security in the House, of course, also for the support of women makes it worthless. Some women prefer not to be imported into some stuff, wage discrimination, it is subject to different treatment in the workplace and at the entrance of the eclipses, they extracted the first work and issues such as women's work in the informal sectors, not included in the working life. One of the most important factors in the formation of women's poverty in the absence of human development. The value of the human development index of women in Turkey is quite low. This ratio of the elements at the beginning of the training that comes back. Women benefit from training opportunities fully. In this case, women and hence the child enough and accurately enough to share the development of education cause inability of improperly. There's not enough emphasis on the education of women is increasing poverty, inequality in the distribution of income, further deepening. Methodology of labour productivity and employment and working life, thus increasing the proportion of women's education, crucial resource poverty and opportunity equality is required. The study will focus on gender-based inequality, women's poverty will be presented in a consistent policy to forestall the causes and that.

Keywords: Poverty, Women, Labor, Unemployment.

Introduction

Poverty becomes an economic and sociological problem as it covers the social and moral needs as well as economical ones. While the globalization and the economic policies implemented in Turkey and all over the World deepen the poverty, it also increases the social inequality and these negativities affect women and children the most. Regional differences, unavailability of equality of opportunities, inequality of distribution of wealth, gender apartheid, extravagancy, policies carried out for the sake of political concerns or short term interests, successive financial crises, rapid increase of population, rural depopulation, low

∗Yrd.Doç.Dr., Trakya Üniversitesi, Edirne Sosyal Bilimler Meslek Yüksekokulu, Öğretim Üyesi, duygu@trakya.edu.tr.
level of education, high inflation have thoroughly worsened the distribution of wealth and become one of the most important reasons of the poverty. In order to ensure the equality in distribution of wealth and to prevent poverty as soon as possible, compatible policies are to be carried out.

**Concept of Poverty**

Poverty refers to the status of being in lack of vital possibilities. This concept is based on both moral and materiel human needs such as nutrition, sheltering, health, education, clothing, culture, resting etc. (Aktan, Vural, 2002, p.40). According to Pete Alcock (1993, p.3), poverty is a political concept and has no definition scientifically agreed. With respect to another definition, poverty is “the inability of furnishing human beings with economical, physical and social sources as desired” (Dumanlı, 1995, p.1). Another definition says that poverty refers to low income, living in neighborhoods with lower statuses, inability to benefit from the urban sources, urban marginalization, inability to benefit from judicial, health, educational services exactly, (Tekeli, 2000, p.145). The fact that poverty has different definitions leads to the formation of different types of poverty.

Absolute poverty is refers to that the individuals cannot reach the minimum level of income and expenditure for their food, sheltering and clothing needs necessary for them to survive (TÜSIAD, 2000, p.96). Relative poverty is defined in the Report of the Development Program of the United States (UNDP) for the year 2000 as follows; the inability to have income required for meeting one’s mandatory needs such as clothing, sheltering, heating, energy apart from food needs (UNDP, 2000, p.20). Once poverty is defined in this way, whether one is poor or not will depend on not only the income of that individual but also the income of other individuals in the society (Wagle, 2002, p.156). Therefore, relative poverty allows for the opportunity of comparing living standards in line with the cultural structure of the society where individuals live and with respect to the other segments (Kalaycıoğlu, 2010, p.258).

According to the approach of subjective poverty, the way of reaching the poverty line is to determine the opinions of society on this issue. Those, who do not find themselves poor, are considered above the poverty line and those finding themselves, poor are considered below the poverty line (Şenses, 2001, p.94).

Income poverty refers to the status of those who have income below the minimum income level necessary for meeting the basic requirements in order to obtain the minimum living standard (Aktan, 1992, p.81)

Human poverty is being in lack of not only the financial possibilities but also the opportunities. Income and consumption are not enough to define poverty as an indicator of welfare and remains incapable to demonstrate human welfare (Neumayer, 2004, s.2). The concept of human poverty is based on the fact that it is necessary to have economical, social and cultural possibilities in order to meet basic requirements as well as monetary possibilities for human development and living humanly (Aktan and Vural, p.45).

**Significance and Reasons of Women’s Poverty**

Although it is not proper to consider poverty based on gender, it is a fact that poverty affects women and children the most violently. Even though the concept of women’s poverty has become a current issue after the second half of the 20th century, it is not a new fact. Some researches carried out in the developed countries in the 20th century show that the majority of people receiving poverty aid are women. With the increase of poverty, it comes into view that
women become impoverished more than men do and women has more risk of becoming impoverished (conveyed from Alcock by Kardam and Yüksel, 2004, p.45). The term of “Feminization of poverty” was first used by Diane Pearce who observes that poverty is a rising problem of women (Strahan). Pearce emphasized that the most of women in America became a part of labor force and achieved economic independence between the years of 1950-1976, but yet their economic status increasingly worsened (Pearce,1978, p.28). In the most of studies performed up to day, it is presented that the women’s poverty is higher than men’s poverty.

Poverty of women who have started to play a role in the world’s economy also negatively affects the economic growth. Women both take an active part in business and act as a spouse and mother at home. The distribution of working and leisure time varies for women. The working hours of women increases due to the decline of the family’s income level and rising of the number of children. Working women having children more than they can look after and having a low level of education transfer the childcare to their elder daughters, if any, and lead their daughters to push education into the background. The fact that the women cannot receive adequate education causes the poverty to pass down and to become a permanent issue (Güzel, 2011, p.82).

First of all, sexual division of labor, trivialization of women’s labor, the inability of women to achieve the sources and opportunities on an equal basis with men, the inability of women to have equal rights with men in the way of joining employment, property and income are fundamental reasons for the deepening of women’s poverty. (Ulutaş, 2009, p.25).

**Education Level of Women in Turkey**

“Education is a means which develops the one’s spiritual and intellectual capacity, increases his communication with the environment, furnishes knowledge, skills and specialization and makes one more effective and productive”(Serter, 1994, p.140). There is a positive relation between education and personal distribution of income. In education to be received by children, average education and professional status of parents plays a determinative role. However, the social status of parents is also influential in determination of the education to be received (Carnoy, 1992, p.349). The influence of educational investments on personal distribution of income is related to having a job that brings high or low level of income. (Katz, 1998, p.33).

Women constituting approximately the half of the world population cannot benefit from educational possibilities adequately. Today, two third of the illiterate population consists of women (Mercan and Çetinkaya, 2009, parag.13).

The net rate of schooling in the academic year of 2015-2016 in Turkey is 94.54 percent for boys and 95.22 percent for girls at primary schools; 79.36 for boys and 80.24 for girls in secondary education; 37.95 for boys and 41.10 for girls at higher education (Ministry of National Education, 2015-2016, p.1). The figures demonstrate that the schooling ratio in Turkey has reached a remarkable level. However, according to the Population System Based on Addresses (ADNKS), considering the gender and literacy status of the population at and over 6, we encounter a sad picture. For the year 2014, the total number of illiterate population was 2.663.096 and 2.208.336 out of them were women and the remaining 454.760 were men. (TÜIKa, ADNKS). Considering the population at and over 15, it is not different. For the year 2014, while a total number of 2.622.084 persons were illiterate, 2.191.302 out of them were women and the remaining 430.782 were men (TÜIKb, ADNKS). The proportion of illiterate women population to the total population 7.6% and it is 4.6% for men (TÜIKb, ADNKS). As a result of such a picture, it makes no sense that the schooling ratio in Turkey is increasing.
The ratio of involvement in formal and non-formal education was 20.4% in 2012 for the population at and over 18 throughout Turkey. 23.7 of men and 17.72 of women involved in formal or non-formal education (TÜİK, Haber Bülteni, 2013). In the distribution of man and woman population, the ratio of involvement university was 5.8% for women and 9.4% for men in 2006 (World Bank, DPT Report, 2009, p.7). Considering the cities, the city where the highest ratio of illiterate woman population is seen is Şırnak by 18.2%, and it is Mardin by 4.1% for illiterate men. The city where the population of higher education is lowest is Hakkari by 2.6% for women and Ağrı by 4.7%% for men (TÜİKd, News Release, 2014). The ratio of persons and particularly women in Southeastern and Eastern Anatolia who have not been introduced to schools is quite over the average of Turkey and this forms the basis for poverty (Bakırtaş, 2010, p.314 ). Furthermore, it is seen that women whose educational level is low have higher number of births. According to the results of Population and Dwelling Research of 2011, while 74.9% of illiterate women who are at and over 15 and gets married at least for once have 4 and more children, this ratio decreases to 4.8% for high school graduates and equivalents. Only 1.9% of university graduates have 4 or more children (TÜİKd). As the educational level rises, the number of children given birth to substantially decreases. Education develops the consciousness of having children as many as women can look after.

As is seen, there is remarkable inequality between women and men in achieving education. Women’s domestic roles responsibilities, gender-based roles prevent their education to be continuous. Considering that a woman who gets married and has a child gives a break to her work or totally gives it up, they cannot be expected to achieve education on equal basis with men in a knowledge society based on continuous education (Mercan, and Çetinkaya, parag.13).

**Place of Women in Turkish Society**

Social gender refers to the relation between men and women, boy and girls and how this relation is socially established. Therefore, the roles of social gender are dynamic. The content of these roles varies by time and place and creates a power relationship in which men are dominant and women are of secondary importance in many spheres of life generally (T.R. Prime Ministry General Directorate of Women’s Status, 2008, p.15).

Since the moment that boys and girls are born, they gain a social gender identity with the influence of environment and education. The socially stereotyped judgments bear expectations depending on gender. Accordingly, men are expected to be strong, to bring up their family, to ensure influence and control on the environment; and women are expected to patient, empathetic and to regulate human relations (Güney and Bener, 2011, p.158-159). While the duty assigned to men in social gender roles is to open up to the outside world, to earn money, to earn a living for the family, women are led to the role of meeting the food, heating, health, education and cleaning requirements of the family members with the income brought to the house as a good spouse and mother (Ulutaş, p.35-36). Women should ensure the maintenance of family life in a more regular, organized and stable manner through the domestic economy (Erkal, 2009, p.374). This male-dominated approach is regarded as a general rule for the whole of society and reflects to all the structures and policies of the society. Therefore, policies and structures are shaped based on men and lead to social gender inequality (T.R. Prime Ministry General Directorate of Women’s Status, p.15).

Women in Turkish society are involved in business life on an unequal basis due to the roles provided for them. The main reason why women do not work is their responsibilities for housework, childcare, elderly care, etc. In the 2013 Report of Global Social Gender Inequality
of the World Economy Forum, Turkey ranked 120th among 139 countries under the titles of economic involvement, education, health and life expectancy, political in 2013 (World Economic Forum, 2013, p.360-361). In the 2016 Report of Global Social Gender Inequality of the World Economy Forum, Turkey ranked 131th among 144 countries under the titles of Economic Involvement and Opportunities. The unemployment ratio of female adults was 10%, labor force participation ratio of women was 33%, women in parliament ratio was 15% and the ratio of unregistered employment was 20% and those working as a senior manager at companies were 13% (World Economic forum, 2016, p.345-346). Although that the women are involved in business life in Turkey paves the way for a number of changes, social roles have not been changed so much. Men’s role of earning money and women’s role of being a homeowner still continue. In this case, women are forced to undertake both the roles of traditional housewife and business woman outside the house (Ankara Association of Business and Professional Women, 2010, parag.14).

Women share the obligation of maintaining the house with men but men do not share the housework similarly (Ankara Association of Business and Professional Women, 2010, parag.14). Men “help” women in housework that is regarded as the principal duty of women only as a good spouse. Even though it seems that there is equality in domestic responsibilities, women spent most of their time in washing the dishes, cooking, cleaning and similar routine works.

It is of quite importance that the individuals should be provided with the education to develop an egalitarian approach for female and male roles in the society through both formal and non-formal education since their childhood (Günay and Bener, p.168). Women’s existence as an individual in the society as well as in the family will be possible by changing the social norms that ignore women.

Current Status of Women’s Poverty in Turkey

Social gender inequality causes negativities in every aspect of women’s life including poverty in particular.

According to the TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute)’s Income and Life Conditions Research of 2015, in the groups of 20%, the share of those having the highest level of income within the total income is 46.5%, the share of those having the lowest income by 20% within the total income is 6.1% (TÜİK, 2016). The lowest segment that is one fifth of the society due to the imbalance of income distribution lives below the poverty line. According to the results of TÜİK’s Poverty Studies for the Year 2009, 17.10% of men and 19.03 of women live below the poverty line in 2009 (TÜİKf, 2009).

The women’s ratio of involvement in labor is lower than men’s. This ratio for women was 28.8% in 2011; 29.5% in 2012; 30.8% in 2013; 30.3% in 2014; 31.5% in 2015 throughout Turkey. And this ratio for men was respectively 71.7%; 71.0%; 71.5%; 71.3% and 71.6% (TÜİKg, 2014; TÜİKh, 2016, TÜİKı, 2017).

Women mostly work as an unpaid family worker in agriculture in Turkey and are pushed behind the business life with the rural depopulation. The non-agricultural ratio of unemployment in Turkey was 12.3 and unemployment ratio was 10.4% in June 2015-2016. For men, the non-agricultural ratio of unemployment was 10.5% and the unemployment ratio was 9.3%. For women, the non-agriculturel ratio of unemployment was 16.8% and the unemployment ratio was 12.7%. The unemployment ratio of women is higher than men (TÜİKj, 2016).

As the educational level rises, the risk of becoming impoverished decreases. According to the results of TÜİK’s Poverty Studies for the Year of 2009, the poverty ratio of women who are
illiterate or cannot finish the school was 29.52%; this ratio for secondary schools and equivalents was 7.82%, 4.76% for high schools and equivalents, and 0.40% for colleges, faculty and upper education (TÜİKf).

Women’s Business Life and Secondary Labor Force in Turkey

The existence of women in business life is confined to the secondary labor force” behind the men. The secondary roles of women in labor is related to traditional work division generally based on gender (Ankara Association of Business and Professional Women, 2010, parag.9) The fact that a woman with no economic independence and fully depending on a man performs unpaid housework makes the women labor valueless. Almost the whole of works performed in the house is presented as a natural part of women and hides their amount of labor. Childcare, elderly care, patience care, housework, gardening and farm works performed by women are totally unpaid. (Ulutaş, p.27). 2074 out of 3130 thousand women at and over 15 employed and 2020 out of 2507 thousand women employed in agriculture in Turkey in 2013 work as an unpaid family worker (TÜİKk, 2014).

Domestic obligations limit the women’s involvement in income-generating activities. Women’s part-time involvement in labor due to their care obligations, employment of them at poor quality and low-paying works deemed suitable for the gender roles provided to them, providing less right and less opportunity to progress, employment of them in routine, labor-intensive works and works that require manual skills, a smiling face and sexual attraction, bring women to a disadvantageous position. While this system protects the base of male-dominant understanding, it strengthens the lower position of women in labor and enables them to be pushed back to the secondary position (Tokşöz, 2012, Ulutaş, p.28).

Changing conditions in economic order, ambition, competition, desire for high profit have caused switching to flexible type of production and accordingly flexible type of employment. Governments consider flexible employment a solution for unemployment, thus encouraging it (Karadeniz, 2011, p.85). Recruitment of women for some works and non-recruitment of them for some others, wage discrimination, treating them differently when getting a job and at the workplace, their being the first in dismissal, poverty and immigration, etc. also cause women not to be involved in professional life and to work in informal sectors.

The main reason why flexible employment is higher for women is considered to be the women’s domestic responsibilities. However, this results from the desire of employer to easily dismiss and to pay them a low wage (Karadeniz, p.89). Flexibility and removal of job security gives rise to regarding female workers as substitute labor force. Women are always the first ones dismissed in case of any crisis. (Ulutaş, p.30).

It is thought that the state of women will get better as household welfare increases with the economic development. However, as long as the women economically depend on men, serious problems may occur concerning the sharing of sources (Tokşöz). Since the income gained cannot be distributed between family members proportionally, women and children which are the weakest group are influenced by the increase in income the least. (Durgun, 2011, p.145).

A professional woman employs a paid woman to help in housework generally without insurance and security. Therefore, the roles of producer and employer are also added to the roles of being a mother, a wife and a housewife (Ankara Association of Business and Professional Women, 2010, parag.14). However, this brings the other problems. Even though the woman working for another woman as a house worker is offered a chance to independently gain income as long as she works, she won’t have any social security and retirement rights.
Today, urbanization and educational process have ensured women to find more paid jobs comparing to the past. Traditional value judgment for women and changing value judgment for professional women exist together (Ankara Association of Business and Professional Women, 2010, parag.22).

Solution

For women to have the position they deserve in the society, there should not be any inequality of opportunities at several stages of education before all (Erkal, p.376). Having a job and becoming economically independent thanks to education should be as important as the women’s roles within the family. Women acquire a right of having a voice in decision making mechanism through the knowledge and facilities they obtain by education. The victimhood of women and children should be ended in order to develop the country and to fight against poverty. Integration of women in economy and development is a pre-condition for development of a county. And this will be enabled by raising the educational level, employment opportunities and work force efficiency of women. For this purpose, opportunities and resources should be created for women (Sevindi, 1998, p.196).

Beside the gender inequality in Turkey, regional inequality is also in question. Women the in underdeveloped regions are the group which is influenced by this inequality the most. The Human Development Index (HDI) value of women in Turkey is quite lower than men’s. In 2015 The Gender Development Index (GDI), women HDI value for Turkey was 0,724 and men HDI value was 0,797 (UNDP, Birleşmiş Milletler Kalkım Programı). This value becomes much more serious in terms of interregional inequality. The most important factor which draws back the development index of Turkey is education. Women cannot benefit from educational possibilities exactly. This causes women and children not to be educated adequately and accurately and results in that they cannot make use of the development sufficiently. When women are in lack of education, children are in lack of education, as well. Also, non-governmental organizations for women should be strengthened in order to decrease the women’s poverty and measures that ensure man-women equality in business life should be taken.

One of the most important requirements for ensuring and improving the women’s working conditions is to extend nursery schools where children can be educated and taken care of. Opening nursery schools for working mothers will relieve them and enable them to be more productive at work.

Educational assistance (Conditional Cash Transfer) is granted to all poor primary school students in Turkey through their mothers and to be spent for their education. This implementation should be continued and the educational assistances should be increased. Especially girls should be encouraged for studying and receiving education (Dural, Ekizceleroğlu, Can, 2007, p.326-327).

Cash income support providing credits for poor people, negative income tax and micro-credit implementations are also very important in fighting against poverty. These implementations help the poor decrease their life risks, integrate in economic and social life, and increase their living standards and are supported by the majority of human.

Conclusion

The patriarchal approach which regards women only as a housewife, a spouse and a mother set the limits of the women’s integration in labor force. The works performed by women are generally those which have a usage value but are not considered an activity intended for the
market. The fact that women generally work without any social security and protection leads them to the economic and social unreliability. As a result, the most important factor that causes women’s and children’s poverty is the inability to ensure human development adequately. What to do is to provide educational and employment opportunities for women, children and youth. If the mother is educated, children will be educated, as well and thus the society will develop. However, the society’s point of view for women is of importance. First, the point of view of ideologies and institutions for women need to be changed. It is not enough alone to carry out policies that improve the income level of women and children. All individuals, institutions and managements in the society should cooperate on this issue. Furthermore, the policies to be followed should deal with the real problems of humans, ensure women, children and youth to be integrated in social and cultural life and create educational and employment possibilities.

References


Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı, Milli Eğitim İstatistikleri, Örgün Eğitim, 2015-2016.


Strahan, Thomas W. J.D, Studies Suggesting That Induced Abortion May Increase the Feminization of Poverty, http://www.fnsa.org/v1n3/strahan1.html, 06.05.2014.


