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## KALKINMA BAĞLAMINDA TÜRKİYE'DE KIRSALDA YAŞAYAN KADINLARIN SOSYAL VE EKONOMİK DURUMLARININ İNCELENMESİ

A REVIEW OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS  
OF RURAL WOMEN IN TÜRKİYE IN THE CONTEXT  
OF DEVELOPMENT

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### Anahtar sözcükler

Kadın; Kırsal; Ekonomi;  
Kalkınma; İstihdam; Kırsal  
Kadınlar.

### Keywords

Women; Rural; Economy;  
Development; Employment; Rural  
Women.

### Öz

Kırsal kesimde yaşayan bireyler ülkenin kalkınmasında önemli görülmektedir. Bu bağlamda, kırsalda yaşayan kadınların tarım faaliyetlerindeki etkisi ile kırsal bölgelerin kalkınmasındaki rolü çalışmalar tarafından vurgulanmaktadır. Fakat, bu noktada kırsalda yaşayan kadınların erkeklerden farklı sosyal ve ekonomik koşullar altında yaşamını sürdürmesi kalkınma açısından rollerini farklılaştırmaktadır. Cinsiyet eşitliği üzerinden yapılan tartışmalar şehir ve kırsalda yaşayan kadınların farklı deneyimleri olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu anlamda, bu çalışma kalkınma bağlamında Türkiye'de kırsalda yaşayan kadınların sosyal ve ekonomik koşullarının incelenmesini ve ayrıca bu koşulların Birleşmiş Milletler Milenyum Kalkınma Hedefleri ile Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Hedefleri doğrultusunda tartışılmasını amaçlamaktadır. Türkiye'de kırsalda yaşayan kadınların görünürlük sorunu olduğu dolayısıyla kayıt dışı ve ücretsiz çalışma riskleri altında bulunduğu literatür tarafından belirtilmektedir. Hakları konusunda farkındalık eksikliği görülen kırsalda yaşayan kadınlar için istismar riski ortaya çıkmaktadır. Kırsalda yapılan kalkınmaya yönelik faaliyetlerin merkezinde bulunan kırsalda yaşayan kadınlar için farkındalık artırma kampanyaları, eğitimler ve rehberlik önemli görülmektedir, böylece cinsiyet eşitsizliği ile kadının çalışmasına karşı olan toplumsal normların baskısından sıyrılarak aktif ve verimli bir şekilde kalkınmada rol üstlenmeleri sağlanabilir.

### Abstract

Individuals living in rural areas are considered critical in the country's development. In this context, numerous studies emphasize the impact of rural women on agricultural activities and their role in development. However, at this point, the fact that rural women live under different social and economic conditions than men differentiates their roles in terms of development. Discussions on gender equality suggest that women living in cities and rural areas have different experiences. In this sense, this study aims to examine the social and economic conditions of rural women in Türkiye in the context of development and discuss these conditions in line with the United Nations Millennium Development Goals and Sustainable Development Goals. It is emphasized in the literature that women living in rural areas in Türkiye have a visibility problem and, therefore, are at risk of working unregistered and unpaid. There is a risk of abuse for women living in rural areas, where there is a lack of awareness about their rights. Awareness-raising campaigns, training, and guidance are essential for rural women, who are at the center of development activities in rural areas, so they can be freed from the pressure of gender inequality and social norms against women's work and take an active and productive role in development.

## Introduction

Agriculture is one of a country's primary sources of income. It is a very important activity that should be supported in the course of development in proportion to the other branches, either as a source of income or to satisfy the need for nourishment appropriately (Erbay, 2013). In the context of the Turkish economy, it also occupies a significant proportion. According to the Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change statistics (2021), agriculture makes up %8 of the Turkish economy, which is approximately 60 billion USD. Moreover, agriculture makes up %16 of the labor force in Türkiye. The statistics show that %23 of the Turkish population is rural, which is a falling statistic (World Bank, 2020).

On the other side, the gender equality question is also a crucial issue in the context of development as well. In this regard, The United Nations has determined 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to be achieved by 2030, and the 5th SDG targets gender equality and empower all women (Carlsen & Bruggemann, 2022; Halkos & Gkampoura, 2021; Kroll et al., 2019). Gender equality is often perceived as a narrow concept and neglected (Kantola & Verloo, 2018). The perception of gender equality differs even between men and women, which can be seen as a big problem in solving the issue with a shared understanding (Tominc et al., 2017). Furthermore, gender equality issues are not the same in rural as in urban because even policies' effects reflect differently in both urban and rural (Wang, 2021). Also, gender equality is a broad concept that includes numerous issues, so it cannot be reduced to one area (Rismilda, 2023; Sultana & Chowdhury, 2016). However, many inequalities may be on the rise in rural areas because the literature shows concerns regarding rural women (Fombad & Jiyane, 2019; Lichter, 1989; Pallikadavath, 2004). For example, rural women are found at high risk of poverty (Hooks et al., 2016; Sinclair et al., 2019). Rural women are unaware of their inequalities due to the influence of traditional and established beliefs in their surrounding region (Parveen, 2007), so this may be another reason why the inequalities suffered by rural women remain unresolved. Clearly, rural women will be affected by cultural characteristics and state policies, so country-specific evaluations may be helpful. For example, in Türkiye, there are concerns that rural women are employed in agriculture as unpaid family workers (Marangoz et al., 2016; Şahin & Develi, 2021). As it was mentioned above, significant part of the population in Türkiye lives in rural areas (Eştürk & Kılıç, 2016) (%23) (World Bank, 2020), so rural women can be considered as an important group that needs to be addressed in Türkiye. In this sense, even though Türkiye shows improvement in several issues, rural women in Türkiye should be investigated by considering current literature in order to suggest implications and policy recommendations. Especially in Türkiye, the agricultural

sector has one of the highest proportions of women's employment (Gökdemir & Ergün, 2012; Kızılaslan, 2023), which is %37 (Ministry of Family and Social Policies, 2014). Since it is aimed to empower all women, looking at the current status of rural women in Türkiye is of great importance for gender equality. Thus, this article aims to investigate rural women's social and economic conditions in Türkiye under the context of development.

The problems of women living in rural areas are thought to be more complex. When evaluated in the context of intersectionality theory, it is important to address rural women as a specific group whose problem situations are emphasized by the literature as different from those of individuals living in cities and other women. It is emphasized that women who are individualized in city life live a more traditional life in rural areas (Bescher-Donnelly & Smith, 2019). Understanding the dynamics of rural women, who are more attached to their extended family and therefore sensitive to the needs of the wider environment, is vital in terms of solving their current problems. While the rural population in Türkiye used to be larger, it is increasingly migrating to cities, and development problems in rural areas are striking (Yılmaz, 2015). In rural areas where the patriarchal structure prevails, their relatives affect women's attitudes and behaviors (Özkan & Kaylı, 2022). It can be thought that in a patriarchal system with limited opportunities, boys will be educated more than girls, and in case of limited employment, men will be employed more than women. On the other hand, there are findings that in today's Türkiye, where opportunities have increased, girls are also allowed to go to school (Kurt & Çakır, 2014). The changing social and economic conditions from the past to the present are apparent. Therefore, it is crucial to examine rural women's changes in Türkiye and propose solutions to existing problems.

The United Nations Millennium Declaration was accepted at the Millennium Summit and in September 2000 at the UN General Assembly. With this, 189 member states accepted the "responsibility" for increasing human dignity, equity, and welfare globally (UN, 2000). Following the summit, eight goals were determined to achieve this condition, and it has become the compact for development in a global context under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (Keyzer & Van Wesenbeeck, 2006). This commitment was set to reach up to 2015. After 2015, with more specified and underlined targets, the UN set sustainable development goals (SDGs) under the 17 goals with sub-targets to reach these by 2030 (UN, 2017). These goals represent the global goals for reaching the development context, which is why they are significant. Several goals are directly or indirectly related to "rural women," which can be seen as a vulnerable intersection of gender and socio-economic conditions. While investigating rural women's social and economic conditions in Türkiye, this article addresses MDGs and SDGs.

As mentioned above, this research will benefit from the light of MDGs for the era between 2000 and 2015 and try to benefit from the light of SDGs for post-2015. Moreover, especially in understanding the context of the early 2000s, Yıldırak's (2003) work will shed light on the early 2000s condition since it is an in-depth work with an inside perspective on that era. It is a comprehensive work conducted with 1300 participants in 9 cities (Yıldırak et al., 2003). The SDGs and MDGs which will be focused as follows (United Nations, 2017);

MDGs:

Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger

-Target 1A: Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people living on less than \$1.25 a day - Rural

-Target 1B: Achieve Decent Employment for Women, Men, and Young People

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education

-Target 2A: By 2015, all children can complete a full course of Primary education/primary schooling, girls and boys

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women

SDGs:

Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Proportion of the population living below the international poverty line by sex, age, employment status and geoGraphicic location (rural)

Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

2.3.1 Volume of production per labour unit by classes of farming/pastoral/forestry enterprise size

2.3.2 Average income of small-scale food producers, by sex and indigenous status

2.4.1 Proportion of agricultural area under productive and sustainable agriculture

2.a.1 The agriculture orientation index for government expenditures 2.a.2 Total official flows (official development assistance plus other official flows) to the agriculture sector

2.b.1 Agricultural export subsidies

Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

4.5.1 Parity indices (female/male, rural/urban, bottom/top wealth quintile and others such as disability status, indigenous peoples and conflict-affected, as data become available) for all education indicators

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

5.a.1 (a) Proportion of total agricultural population with ownership or secure rights over agricultural land, by sex; and (b) share of women among owners or rights-bearers of agricultural land, by type of tenure

## 1. Importance and Role of Women in Rural Development

Women are a significant driving force of agricultural development not only by means of agriculture but also through other cross-cutting issues. Food And Agriculture Organization Of The United Nations (FAO) (2011) suggests that globally, women represent %43 of the labor force in the agriculture sector. However, studies argue that labor force statistics underestimate the contribution of women to agricultural work because women are less likely to declare themselves as employed in agriculture and work longer hours than men (Beneria, 1981; Kemal & Akbiyık, 2023). Rural women are less aware of their rights compared to urban women (Rathee & Bhardwaj, 2022), and this may make rural women vulnerable to abuse. In this sense, rural women have less opportunity and access to resources than men (Kaşıkırık, 2022). For example, the wide gender wage gap is attributed to others' underestimation of women's economic activities (Abdou & Shalaby, 2019). According to FAO (2011), in comparison to male farmers, female farmers across all regions have less control over land and livestock. Also, they tend to use fewer improved seed varieties and purchased inputs such as fertilizers. Furthermore, they are less likely to use credit or insurance, have lower levels of education, and are less likely to have access to extension services. FAO put forward that giving women the same opportunities as men could raise agricultural production by 2.5% to 4% in the poorest regions, and the number of malnourished people could be reduced by 12% to 17%. This means productivity is lower because of inequality. If equal opportunities in this field can be provided, productivity will increase, and it will also be an essential step for providing gender equality, which already has to be provided in all fields.

In rural areas, the roles of women and men usually differ. When women are "helping" men in agricultural activities, they are also completing all other aspects of housework. Women's labor is much more apparent in herbal production than animal farming. They are taking all stages of agricultural activities except sales (Doss, 2018). However, their labor is not valued in most cases as they work as unpaid labor (Hoşgör & Kim, 2016; Lahiri-Dutt, 2023; Özen & Baysan, 2022; Reynolds, 2021; Zhang, 2024).

Rural women also play an essential role in future development. According to FAO (2011), a vast body of research from many countries worldwide confirms that putting more income in the hands of women yields beneficial results for child nutrition, health, and education, especially for rural regions. FAO also suggests that education is a critical component of development and

is another important indicator of the importance of rural women in the development context.

Because of the traditions, there is a gender division of labor in Türkiye (Özdemir & Barutçu, 2024; Turan, 2020). These traditions also put women into a place by describing them as “wives” and “mothers” (Budak, 2023; Yavuz, 2022). This prevents women from actively participating in the labor force through formal means in Türkiye. Especially in the rural parts of Türkiye, traditions show much harsher patriarchal structures, and this patriarchy prevents the deserved earnings of women from their labor (Gökdemir & Ergün, 2012). However, agricultural women are a vital driving force of agricultural development and participate more actively than men (Acun, 2021). Considering the unregistered and unmeasured women labor force for various reasons, it is evident that women have way more impact on agricultural development in Türkiye.

According to Yıldırak et al. (2003), women's position in agriculture in Türkiye can be categorized into four subcategories. First, in big enterprises, women do not work in the field. They do not participate in agricultural production except in direct participatory works such as decision-making, management, and accounting. If males are insufficient in these, they may take part in a limited level. Second, in mid-level farms, males operate mechanized tasks and market relations, whereas women undertake labor-intensive work. Third, when males look for non-agricultural income sources in family enterprises, women work in labor-intensive agricultural work. In these types, women's labor division is much more complex than men's because of the hand-craft work. Lastly, for families with no land, both women and men have to look for seasonal work on other farms as seasonal workers. Considering these four subcategories, it is evident that rural women are a significant component of agricultural production. However, according to Schieffer (1987), as long as women's work in agricultural production is accepted as their “duties,” there is no possibility of any fix in their conditions. From this point of view, It is emphasized that women entrepreneurs face social role pressure (Aksay, 2019; Bakay et al., 2020). Thus, entrepreneurial rural women can be suppressed by social roles when they want to participate in economic life. Nevertheless, non-governmental organizations have made significant progress in supporting rural women entrepreneurs in Türkiye (Sefer, 2024). Some studies conducted in recent years show that rural women have begun to receive support from their husbands and their surroundings (Çukur et al., 2021). It can be predicted that rural women will be more supported in today's changing conditions, with the support of implemented policies and increased awareness and consciousness.

## 2. Women's Social and Economical Conditions under the Light of MDGs (2000-2015)

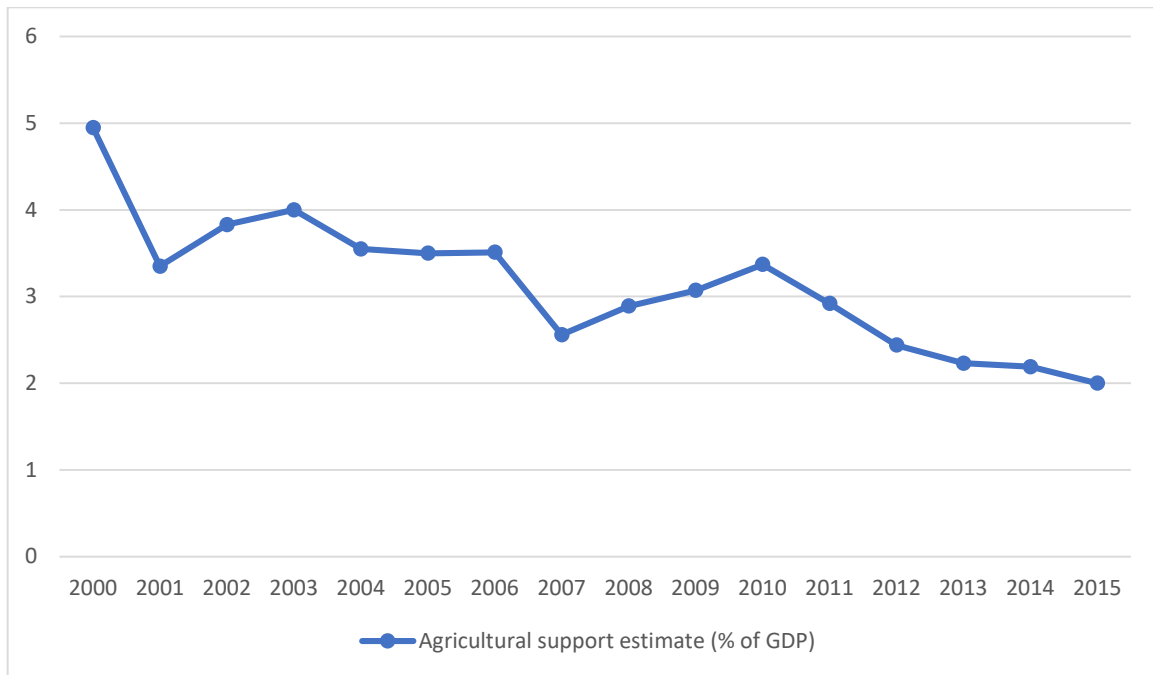
In terms of legal conditions, first and foremost, the Republic of Türkiye is a self-proclaimed “social state” according to its constitution (Turkish Constitution, 2016). So, in a social state functioning correctly, it is the state's responsibility to regulate work life in all sectors, including agriculture. However, in practice, this functioning of the state is a bit controversial. To understand the controversy, it is essential to review the development of legal regulations in the agricultural field. In the early 2000s, one of the biggest problems of agricultural workers was that there needed to be a legislative regulation for agricultural workers (Yıldırak et al., 2003). In the 2000s, one of the regulations was Law no 2925, which was about agricultural workers' social security. However, this Law caused some problems in practice because paying insurance premiums was only given to the workers. This was problematic for women because of social structures and women's lack of employment stability (Gülçubuk, 1999). They were not even taken under Law no 1475 on labor rights. In the mid-2000s, they were taken under this Law. In 2010, a Prime Ministry Circular was published to improve the conditions of mobile agricultural workers. This Circular mainly focuses on providing secure travel for seasonal workers, improving their housing conditions, and establishing boards for seasonal mobile agricultural workers. Despite these regulations, the conditions of seasonal agricultural workers are still a very critical field, especially in the legislative branch. Several scholars claim that current legal conditions promote sub-contractor working of agricultural workers, and for sub-contractors, there is a need for protective acting legislation or regulation (Kaya & Özgülnar, 2013).

Besides legal issues, social conditions are significant in understanding the circumstances of rural women. According to Yıldırak et al. (2003), there were also undesired results regarding the social conditions of rural women. Despite women having physical weakness compared to men, they worked 2 to 5 hours more in a day. Sharing housework responsibilities with husbands rate is only %2,3 in rural areas. More dramatically, more than %50 of the surveyees answered the question “What are you doing in your spare time?” such as housework, handicrafts, childcare, or I have no spare time. Only %42 of them answered the question as resting or entertaining activities such as socializing with friends, reading books, or listening to music. Their marriage conditions are also problematic because of several conditions. First, they are marrying with arranged marriages at a rate of %78,4. This means that they cannot even choose who to marry and marry or not. At a rate of approximately %10, marriage with more than a woman is also spread in rural areas (which can go to 4 wives even if the rate is too low - %0,9). Yıldırak et al. (2003) also suggest that in family structure, even in the 2001 civil code, legally, “Head of the house is

husband" was dismissed, this norm continues especially in rural areas. This was also highly spread due to traditional social structures in the 2000s. According to several scholars, it is still very spread in rural areas (Yüksekkaya, 2018). These social structures are also causing oppression of women's financial ability and independence as well. Women work as paid laborers on farms and as unpaid laborers in houses. However, even their paid labor may not be valued for themselves because it may become the family's money, and the "head of the house," the husband, may collect this money and spend it in the family's name. So, rural women may even have no chance for private spending or personal amusement. This can be seen as an oppressive issue for their identity as individual women. According to Yıldırak et al.'s (2003) research, rural women's interaction of women with global or national level events/incidents is also problematic. %38,4 of the women claim that they do not have any access to news about the outside world. According to the research team analysis, this proportion worsens for seasonal mobile workers. Research team claims that %87 of seasonal agricultural worker women have no reach to the news outside their scope for at least half of the year. Their expectation for the future was also asked in the

same work, and only %2,8 said that they are happy with their life. Others want to start an enterprise (%11,8), buy a personal house and car (%23,6), help people experiencing poverty (%10), have qualified education (for themselves and their children) (%7,9), live in their house in welfare (%21,8), traveling (%2,9), pilgrimage (%2,8), no idea (%4,7) and other (%11,7) (Yıldırak et al., 2003). With these in 2000s gender equality in social, family, legal and structural means seems as essential problems. Most of these problems seem to be still on the table. More recent research shows that rural women working in agriculture are still economically weak and living in poor conditions; housing conditions are still on the table, and their expectations for their children to reach quality education continue. (Çelik et al., 2015; Kovancı & Karakoç, 2024).

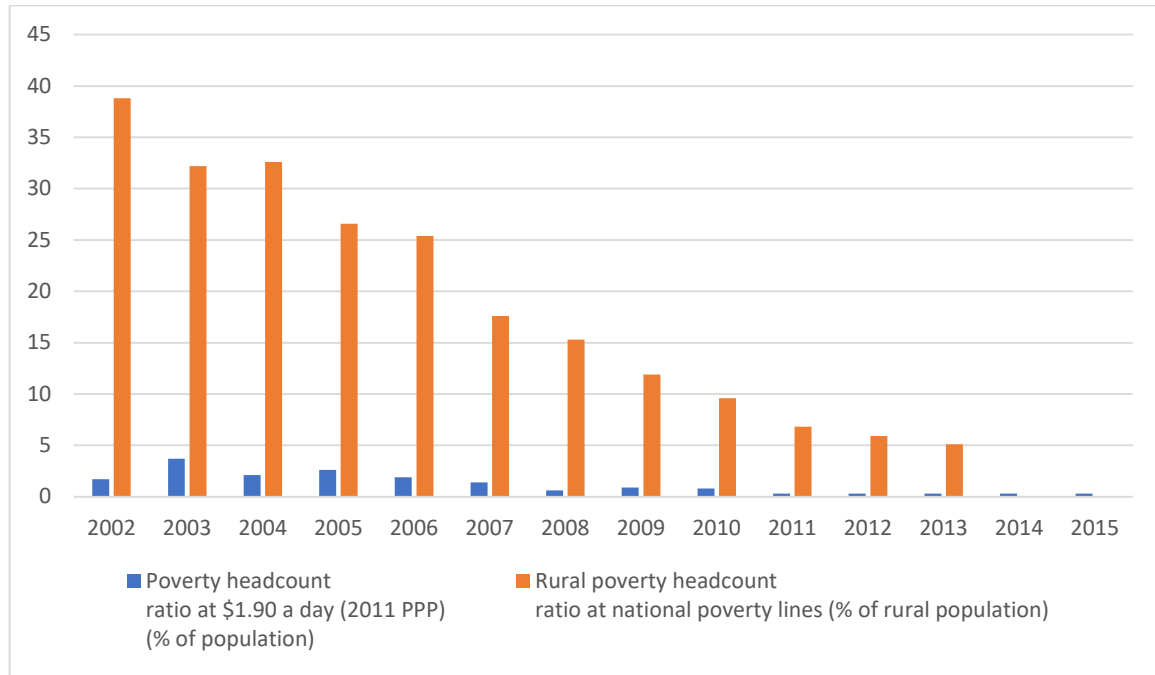
There are promising indicators in the MDGs and not-promising ones. For instance, as it can be seen in the Graphic 1, Türkiye's yearly agricultural support share as a percentage of GDP has decreased systematically year by year. It was %4,95 in 2000 and became %2 in 2015, which is a dramatic decrease. Even if the amount was increased, the decreased proportions are very obvious.



**Graphic 1.** Agricultural support estimate (% of GDP) in Türkiye

Source: (United Nations, 2017)

Considering poverty and its distribution between rural and urban areas and at the general level, 2015 saw a significant improvement, but it wasn't completely fixed.



**Graphic 2.** Agricultural Poverty and Poverty Distribution between rural and urban in

Source: (United Nations, 2017)

According to the Graphic 2, living international poverty lines have decreased considerably in the total population and rural population. It can be said that poverty gaps between rural and urban populations are decreasing as well, but the rural population's poverty rate is still 17 times more than the general population. Still, when evaluating this from an MDG perspective, it can be said that Türkiye is successful according to Graphic 2. (The goal was to reduce it by half). However, regarding women's conditions, it is still a big question of how much women can benefit from and enjoy this income distribution in rural areas because of the structural social conditions. As mentioned by Karakoç & Kovancı (2024), rural women are still economically weak and in insecure conditions.

For reviewing social and economical condition of a certain group, education comes forth as an important component, since education is a key element for development. So, access to universal education is an important indicator in both the MDGs and the SDGs. Specifically, the MDGs have an indicator for achieving universal primary education. According to United Nations (2017), the gender parity index by completion rate for primary education in rural areas was 0,95 in total and increased to 0,98 in 2014, which are promising numbers. However, when it comes to lower quantiles, numbers are not very promising but decrease to 0,58 in the Quantile 1 population, which is not a very good value and does not comply with the goal of leaving no one behind. Smits & Hosgör (2006) explain this as there is gender discrimination in families who have low-income levels that they choose to send their sons to school if they feel they have to choose one instead of their daughter. This again points out the structural social problems.

### 3. Women's Social and Economical Conditions under the Light of SDGs (Post 2015)

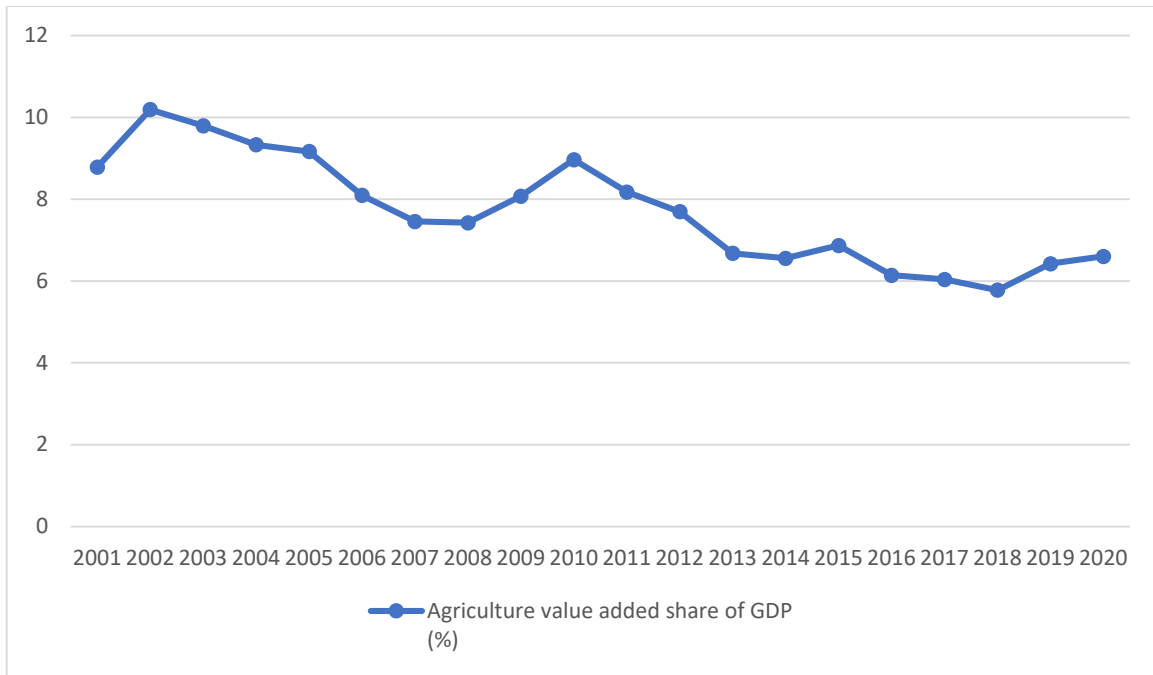
When it comes to reviewing the conditions of rural women in light of SDGs, End Poverty, End Hunger, Inclusive Education, Resilient infrastructure (from the perspective of rural), and, of course, gender equality come forward.

According to UN statistics, in Türkiye, the rural population rate living under the international poverty line is 0,7 today (United Nations, 2022). When we compare this rate with the year 2000's %38,8, it can be said that it is a very promising value. However, considering all geoGraphicic scopes within their conditions, Türkiye's numbers are not very promising. Considering the higher quantiles (quantile refers to socio-economic condition segment in the given society – which was generally set from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) quantiles) of the population generally lives in the urban, it can be assumed that conditions are much more dramatic for the rural population. Moreover, as mentioned before, due to structural and traditional social norms in the rural areas of Türkiye, rural women become one of the most resilient social groups against poverty.

When it comes to ending hunger, it is indisputable that the most critical pushing power can be the rural population of any country, and Türkiye is not exempt from this. Because of the reasons mentioned before, women are an essential part of this. To analyze this, it is crucial to understand the productivity and average incomes of both small and large-scale food producers. Unfortunately, data for these are not sufficient. According to Umar and Asghar (2018), the lack of sufficient available data can be caused by governments' unwillingness to show their failures in the international (and national)

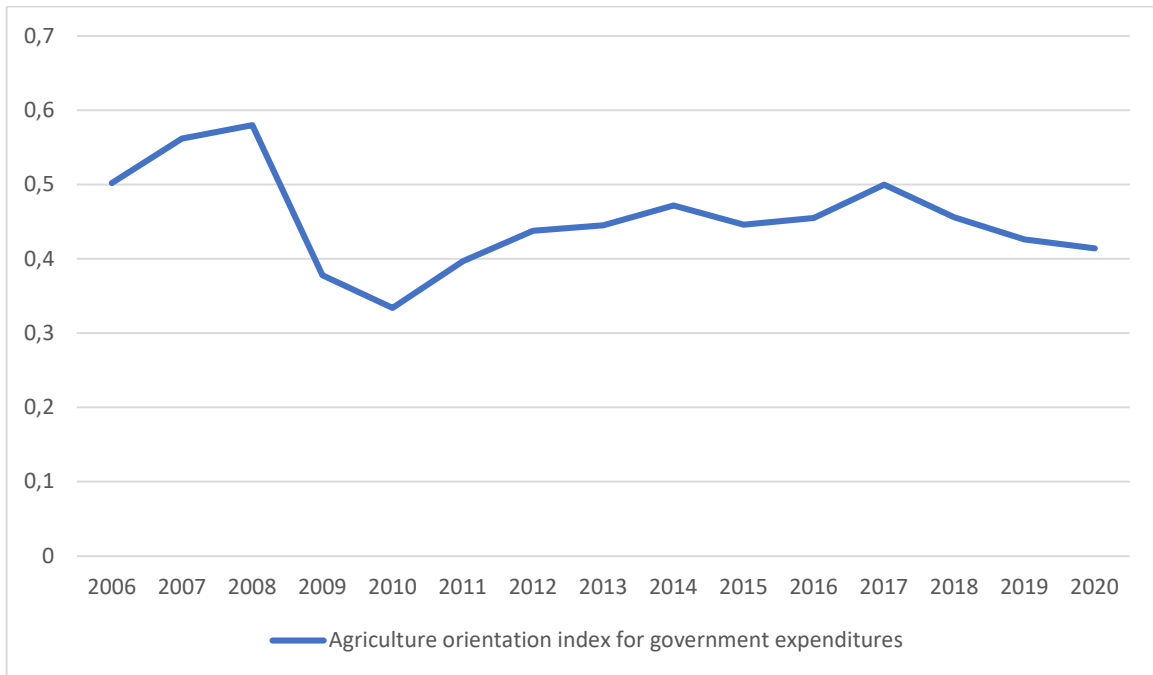
arena. Considering the Turkish government's importance in agricultural development, it can be said that it is at a

decreasing level. Below is the Graphic 3 for the share of GDP and government expenditure index on agriculture.

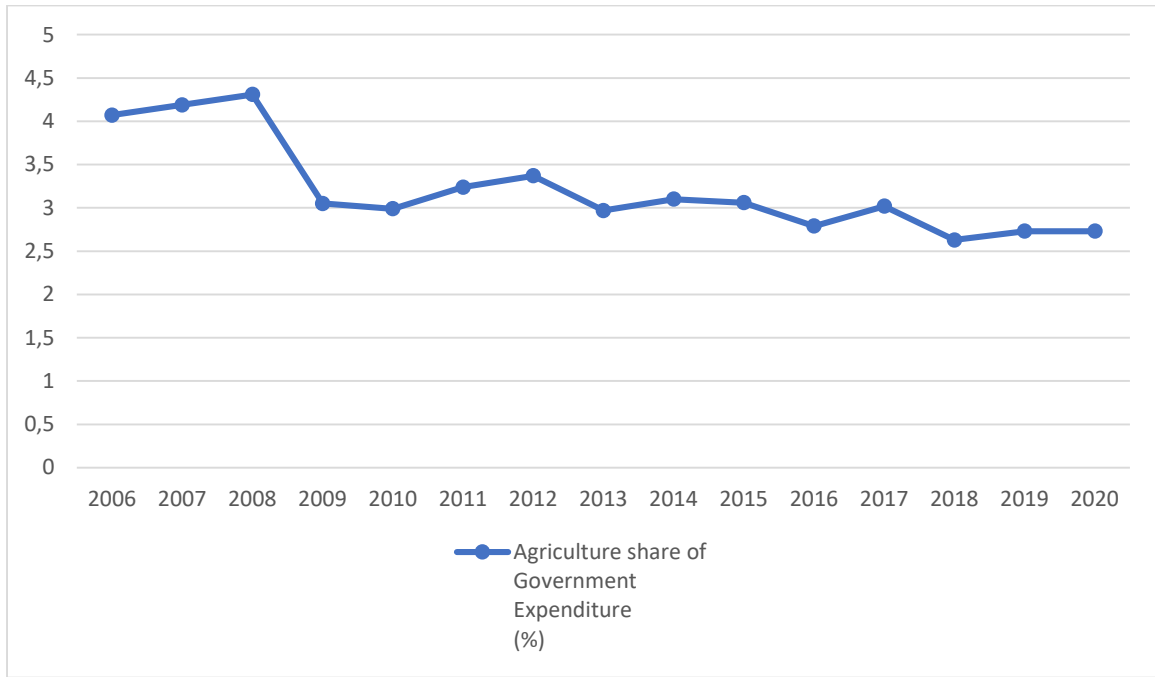


**Graphic 3.** Government Expenditures on Agriculture in Türkiye

Source: (United Nations, 2017)

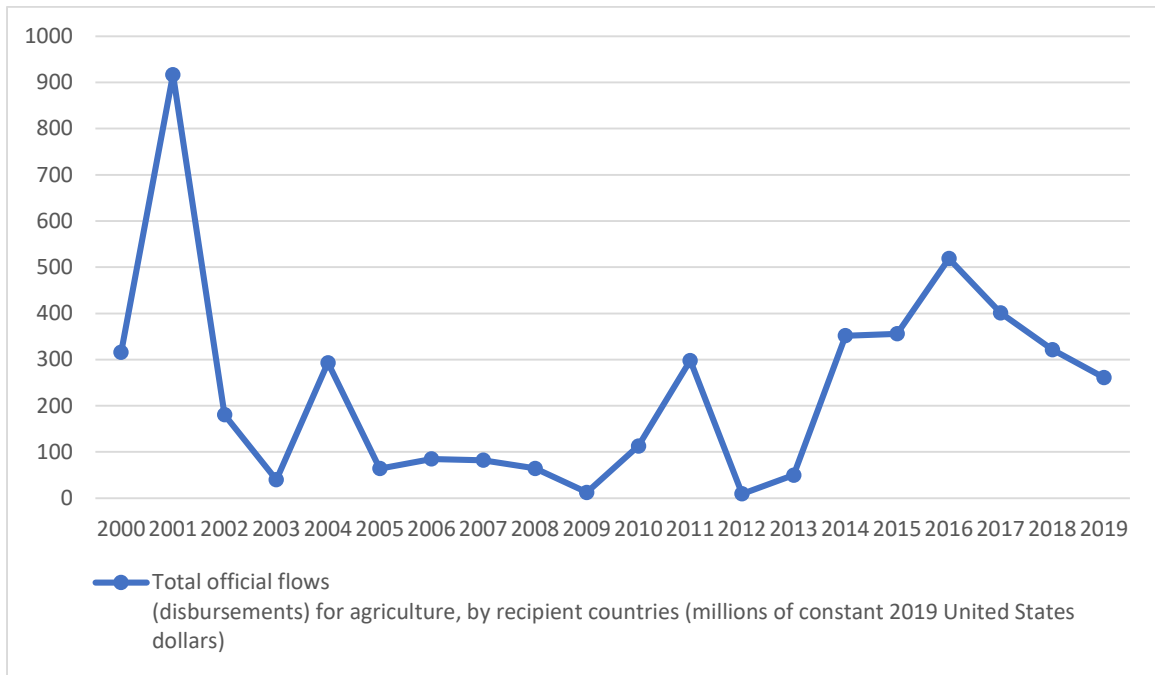


**Graphic 4.** Agriculture orientation index for government expenditures in Türkiye (Note: Data between 2002-2005 is non-available) Source: (United Nations, 2017)



**Graphic 5.** Agriculture share of Government Expenditure in Türkiye (Note: Data between 2002-2005 is non-available)

Source: (United Nations, 2017)



**Graphic 6.** Total official flows (disbursements) for agriculture, for Türkiye

Source: (United Nations, 2017)

It can be seen that all of the data in Graphic 4, Graphic 5 and Graphic 6, GDP share, agriculture orientation index for government expenditures, and agriculture share of government expenditure, are decreasing. If this trend continues, there may be a danger for people in rural areas living in dignity and welfare conditions and for Türkiye by means of food production. When it comes to total official flows (disbursements) for agriculture show an unbalanced trend. Interestingly, in 2001, it saw its top point, then showed a low trend.

As an important indicator under the SDGs, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all, as mentioned as the fourth goal of the SDGs, is a significant point of review. According to the United Nations, the proportion of lower secondary schools was %63 in 2003 and decreased to %56 in 2019. The primary level decreased from 72,3 to 70 from 2001 to 2008 (2003 data was unavailable) (United Nations, 2022). This means that Türkiye is drawing a decreasing table in reaching quality education.



Regarding education equality in Türkiye, UN statistics show that the relationship between income and education level is not very promising. According to the UN, quantile 1 level, which is the lowest-income population of Türkiye, has a completion rate of upper-secondary schools %23,7, and it is 84,7 for quantile 5, which is the highest-income population in Türkiye according to 2014 data (which is the most recent available data) (United Nations, 2022). There is a huge gap between low and high-income populations. This gap increases when comparing rural and urban populations. Rather than segments, regional differentiations also pay attention. In the Western parts of Türkiye, schooling rates are highest, at %90 and above; in the eastern part, it decreases to %75 (ERG, 2021). This is consistent with the data on differences between lower and higher-income regions. This points out an income-level and geographical scope (between rural and urban) inequality in education.

Regarding structural and traditionally caused social conditions of rural women, it seems that problems are not entirely solved. Even today, the "house head" mechanism has not been completely dissolved and it can be said that traditional structures are still continuing especially on rural areas in Türkiye. Hence, women have no money left to spend on personal needs, amusement, or care without the consent of their husbands. They are also still unpaid workers in their house, and it has become their reality and neutral social norm (Suzuki & Hoşgör, 2019). Even, if they could find a chance to spend their money of their own will, they would earn less than men despite doing the same work for the same hours (even more hours in some cases) (Peker & Saltık, 2020) These social norms should have been examined and solved via education, advocacy campaigns, and awareness raising by state and civil society. Without fixing structural problems, it becomes impossible to solve regulative problems, and regulative problems just become statistical data. Also, for equal, balanced, and efficient rural development, it is an important indicator of women's land ownership rate. However, for Türkiye, this data is not available from any trustworthy source, but according to many scholars, this is very limited, and only when there is no other option can women become land owners in rural Türkiye. (Gökdemir & Ergün, 2012; Suzuki & Hoşgör, 2019; Yıldırak et al., 2003).

### Discussion And Conclusion

Rural development is a crucial component for developing a country, especially by ending hunger. To make rural development more efficient, balanced, and equal, it is essential to provide gender equality. It can be said that Türkiye has proceeded some steps forward from its starting point and showed a decline in certain areas. Türkiye should increase the numerical data showing promising levels, like decreasing the economic gap between rural and urban, and inclusive education for all. However, it should also give more importance to areas showing declining data, such as support for agricultural

production. Also, even data was unavailable as many scholars claimed that Türkiye should give importance to providing equal opportunity between women and men, for instance, on land ownership (giving this example because it is one of the SDG indicators). Above all, traditional structures and social norms are standing on the table without any change, so the Turkish government, with civil society and media, should take action to fix these structures by using tools such as gender awareness campaigns, advocacy campaigns, and providing education for gender equality.

Women living in rural areas have a visibility problem. Women who take on the role of mothers and homemakers due to their roles in the family shaped by social norms continue to be defined by these roles in their participation in economic activities. Therefore, no matter how much and continuous their labor is, the place of women living in rural areas in development is not included as official data unless they can get rid of their other roles to some extent. Despite this, statistics report that women living in rural areas have a great place in development and agriculture. It is tough to achieve full productivity unless rural women's economic and social conditions, which have great potential, are improved. It is essential for these women, whose work is unregistered and seen as worthless, to be encouraged. The first step is to prevent unregistered work. Registered work, which officially gives rights to women living in rural areas, can also be socially beneficial in terms of emphasizing the role of women in development. While the motherhood and homemaker roles of rural women working unregistered jobs are always at the forefront, it can be thought that they may have the chance to organize their other roles when they start working formally. For women who are left at the mercy of other family members, the social and economic conditions they face are shaped according to the prejudices fostered by social norms. However, when they are placed directly in formal employment, they can be empowered to escape the pressure of social norms. Thus, preventing unregistered work of rural women should be the priority.

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