

The Women Employment Problems and Solutions in Sustainable Development-Turkey Case

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Abstract: Women's joining to the business life and being employed in every field, are important to make sustainable development and improvement steady. This situation is tried to be supported by many international policy. In the world from the 1970s up to now, although the ratio of women joining the business world has been increasing, unfortunately it is just the opposite in Turkey, being less all the time. In the years 1970-1990 the percentage of women joining the business life decreased from 50% to 30%. This ratio is now about 25%. This result has a lot of reasons. The rapid growth of population and migration to the big cities has increased the ratio of unemployment. The majority of women working in the villages, in agriculture have become unemployed in the cities. Further, the low education level of women also affects women working. It is also observed that in many job sectors women are working without any insurance. It is understood that there is no equity in the payment of the work that women do. Educated women generally take place in the field of service, finance, insurance, estate, wholesale or retail sale more than men. Low number of pre-school educational institutions is also another reason for the less employment of women. The non existence of laws encouraging women working and state's having no positive discrimination for women are other reasons. In other words, there are lots of problems about the employment of women in Turkey and this has a quite negative effect on the sustainable development of Turkey. What kind of solutions will there be to provide the development, has been discussed in the whole indication.

Key words: Women employment % Sustainable development % Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development means programming both present and the future lives and development in order to supply and support the needs of next generation by creating a balance between the human and the nature without consuming the natural sources. Sustainable development is a concept which has social, ecologic, economic, spatial and cultural dimensions [1-3] Economic and Social Development Movement adopts supplying the needs of present generations without jeopardizing the future needs and providing efficient and a prior solutions against any corruption among the equilibrant as a responsibility [4]. Social science affects people from every part of the society; so it must be clear enough to be understood by everyone [5]. Sustainable development is generally seen as an economic issue, but it also has political, social and pedagogical sides which means it is discussed in these fields. As a result of these discussions, a new idea of sustainable development is promoted [6,7].

In UNESCO Document sustainable development is generally to meet the human needs as well as protecting the environment. The best definition for this term is made during the Brundtland Commission which was convened by the

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United Nations. According to this definition; sustainable development is to acquire the needs of today and not giving promises for the next generation [2].

Sustainable development concept is discussed in two parts. “Needs” are in the first part and “the constraints” of the environment resulting from the technology in meeting the present and future demands are in the second part. In other words; sustainable development is an approach aiming at managing the natural sources by maintaining the human health and natural balance and leaving a natural, physical and social environment proper for the future generations. Such an approach requires handling globally economic and social policies together with the environment policies [8].

The principals of a sustainable society mostly can be listed as follows [2]:

- C Respecting the human life
- C Improving the standart of living
- C Maintaining the diversity of living creatures
- C Minimizing the consumption of nonrenewable sources
- C Not going beyond the bearing capacity of the earth’s surface
- C Changing our habits
- C Allowing people’s protecting their own environs
- C Considering the development and environment in totalitarian policies

Sustainable Development concept, which was first put forward in the Decleration of the Brundtland Committee in 1987 and supported by Agenda 21, was confirmed by all the participant countries of UNCED in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro. The approach aiming at sustainable development which was discussed predominantly during Rio Summit in 1992, was first started to be internalized in the 6th Five-Year Development Plan including the period between the years of 1990 and 1994. In Turkey; The Ministry of Environment was founded in 1991 during the 6th Five-Year Development Plan and Environment Protection Departments were institutionalized in six cities [8].

The main element of sustainable development is human. Humankind should live in accordance with the nature. In the content of Agenda 21; it is mentioned that the participation of youth to the cooperation between human and nature will contribute to the sustainable development [9]. In UNESCO document mentioned about:” Agenda 21 states that efforts on multiple fronts are needed to create a more sustainable world” [10]. The content of Agenda 21 consists of some critical issues upon which a global approval is ensured. Despite this approval; there are still some issues waiting to be discussed [2]. Agenda 21 defines special goals for communities in order to integrate environmental issues into the economic and social development efforts. The WSSD (World Summit on Sustainable Development) which was held in 2002 in Johannesburg gave an opportunity to consider the next ten-year period after Rio Summit and define new goals. In the Summit, a global decision was made including the “Summit Application Plan” together with the participation of all participant countries and international multilateral organizations [11].

In the report titled as “Gender and Sustainable Development” published by OECD with reference to International Women’s Day, it was stated that benefiting from the world’s women population would increase the economic growth, decrease poverty, improve social atmosphere and contribute to the sustainable development of all countries. The precautions of improving the roles of women population in economic, social development and environment protection were also pointed out [12].

Problems: From this point of view; in the following parts of the declaration, the relationship between the women employment and sustainable development in Turkey was tried to be explained. In this context, the answers of questions such as what kind of problems there were and what kind of solutions could be found were handled.

Throughout the history, there has been an inequality between women and men; and this situation still keeps on. This inequality transformed the biological differences into the social differences and defined seperate roles for both genders.

It was seen that this understanding became the legitimate reason of the inequality; men became more dominant than the women and this situation was reflected in the law. According to this understanding: "Women stay at home, men work outside, men earn money; family, social, economic and politic structures should adopt these approaches." It is not easy to get over this traditional understanding [13-15]. It was observed that most of the women working on payment follow the idea of "contributing to the family" rather than "earning the family's keep" [16].

There has always been pressures on women in order to impose the self-development implementations through which they can look for a way to achieve flawlessness. People have different images and expectations in their minds which leads women seeking solutions such as weight-watching and calorie-counting in order to look better and meet expectations. Apart from appearances, there has been social expectations on women to gain a perfect attitude in their careers. For instance; academics are seen highly intellectual but not perfect in terms of academic requirements. They are expected to gain a feminine and intellectual stance which is in accordance with the socially accepted forms [17].

The reason of women's ending their career in a short period of time and/or not showing their whole potential for getting better positions is the problem of finding a common ground between their career and their family life like most of the women in the world [18,19]. Instead of giving the whole responsibility of taking care of the children, the old and the ill nursery to the women; these responsibilities should be shared between the father, mother, state or employer. However social support institutions such as day nursery haven't reached the enough amount in our country.

Some discrimination examples are encountered that some of the jobs are not socially accepted suitable for women, task distribution is not fairly carried out, women are first expelled during the economic crisis, low wages are given in the unregistered sector. Because of the separation between the jobs as "women jobs" and "men jobs"; women focus on traditional women jobs and accept working for low wages and low status. These jobs include working temporarily and working without social security [18].

The women employment ratio in Turkey is quite low and they don't equally work with men in the same sectors and jobs. Half of the working women population take place in the agriculture and unregistered sector [20]. In Turkey the percentage of women's taking place in employment market is only 25%. This ratio is quite low when compared with the OECD members whose percentage is 61% [21]. According to O-uz [22], the women unemployment ratio is 1.5 times more than men unemployment. 85% of agriculture sector consist of women; and the fall in the agriculture in recent years has mostly affected women and most of them have lost their jobs. Women labor is concentrated on the labour intensive sectors such as textile, food, confection, tobacco that are also known as cheap labour. But when compared, the women labour ratios of these sectors are lower than the agriculture [18].

Even though all the other conditions are equal; the inequality between the wages of women and men workers still takes place. Women is at the bottom of wage hierarchy. Similarly, there is an inequality between the men and women in terms of career development. The men and women that have similar vocational education reach at different professional positions. It is seen that women's opportunity to work as a manager is less than the opportunity of the men [23].

Since 1970's the rate of women's taking place in the labour force has increased and the gap between the men and women has begun to lessen; but these trends have reversed in Turkey. Between the years of 1970 and 1990; women's participation to labour force regressed from 50.3% to 33.4%; on the other hand men's participation to labour force regressed from 79.5% to 73.9%. In the same period, the gap between the men and women increased from 29.2% to 40.5%. When the participation rates are examined on the basis of rural and urban dispersion, women's participation in the rural areas (50.4%) are higher than the urban (15.9%). The same values for the men are 75.8% and 67.7% as in the same order [24,25].

Even though gender equality was not also employed in EU, Turkey is far behind the EU [26].

- C Women employment in EU is 57,2 and in Turkey it is 24.6
- C Price gap between the genders in EU is 15 and in Turkey it is 22

- C The women entrepreneur ratio in EU is 28 and in Turkey it is 12.5
- C The women professor ratio in EU is 15 and in Turkey it is 27
- C Women ratio in the fields of science and engineering in EU is 29 and in Turkey the ratio of women graduates of technical departments between the years of 2006 and 2007 is 24.8
- C The ratio of women senior managers of companies in EU is 33 and in Turkey it is 6
- C Representation of women in EU; in the EU parliament it is 30.3; in member countries' national parliaments it is 23 and in Turkey the women representation in the parliament is 9.1.

When we have a close look at all those numbers, we see that Turkey has reached a number at women employment at academic fields which is much higher than the EU average. According to the Higher Education Council, women consist of the 35% of the academicians in Turkey. But as the academic career goes up in terms of positions, the number of women academicians decreases. For instance the women academicians at Higher Education Council consist of 5%, women deans are 12.6%, women rectors are 8%. Even though it is an important indicator for Turkey that women have a high proportion in the academic fields; this indicator's having quite trivial importance in decision making process makes it an important prove of discrimination on the basis of gender [26].

Working age have effects on employment rates of European men in contrast to the employment rates of women. As the higher education expands, men under 25 years old do not prefer to work without a certificate. In a similar vein, men over 50 years old prefer to be retiree and not to work. Under these circumstances the middle age groups, which consist of 25-49 years, compose the stable rate of employment in Europe. Women employment, consists of ages between 25 and 49, has an increasing profile unlike the stable condition of middle age groups of men. This increase is also mostly related with the changes in child-birth rates of European women [14].

Solutions for women employment were sought by UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 1995 Beijing Declaration, Action Platform and Following Documents, ILO Agreements and EU 1999 Amsterdam Treaty/European Employment Strategy [27]. As a result of national employment strategy's being lack of extensive women employment policy, employment legislation's forcing excessive responsibilities on employers in terms of women employment, flexicurity methods' being far behind the EU level; there comes out a number of negative effects on women employment. Employers' behaving indisposed for women employment in a competitive market, heavy employment taxes' making unregistered employment more attractive, lack of general and vocational education, lack of on the job trainings, disconnected structure of non-governmental societies and women associations are among those negative effects [28].

There are three different social security institutions in Turkey: people work in the status of workers are subjected to social insurance institution, people work in the status of civil servants are subjected to Government Retirement Fund and free employees are subjected to Insuarenced self-employed institution. But there are a lot of women working without any social insurance. Insuarenced self-employed institution which enables discretionary insurance for housewives is limited due to the reasons such as high premiums, being dependent of husbands in terms of premium payments and lack of knowledge [18].

One of the major obstacles against women's taking part in business life is women's being uneducated; especially not having vocational educations. 21% of the women in Turkey are illiterate. Only 3.9% of the women have bachelor's degree. 47% of the primary school students and 39% of the high school students consist of females [22].

It is seen that as the education level increases the number of women employment increases but on the other hand the number of educated men are higher than the educated women. From another point of view, it is seen that the gap between men and women lessens as the level of education increases. For instance; the participation gap rate at the level of high school is 38.9%, but 7% at the level of university. When the employment rate in accordance with the education level is compared, it is seen that the rate of high school graduate women's employment is 36.2% and the rate of university graduate women's employment is 80.9% (The difference between two levels is 44.7%). Similarly the rates of men in order is 75.1%

and 87.9% (The difference between two levels is 12.8%) [25]. Especially the education level of urban women labour force is higher than the men. 55% of the women and 40% of the men have education levels higher than high school. The participation rate of women's that have education levels more than high school is 31% and the rate of men is about 74% [27]. As women get educated, they both ensure their standard of living and make contribution to their children's lives. Educated women prefer to have fewer children and in addition to enabling them a qualified life, they support their children to get education and be favorable citizens for their countries [29]. The increasing number of girls' registering to education institutions should be examined by statistical measurements. Because, with the help of these measurements, it is possible to see the relation between the educated women and conditions related with children such as child mortality, fertility rates, school environment of children, etc. The world is a village without boundaries now thanks to the globalisation. Therefore; any precautions or strategies should be developed with the cooperation of countries. In addition to the governmental cooperations, there should be a common study program among the non-governmental organizations and citizens. If citizens take active roles in the sustainability strategies, the process gains speed. Because they are the real implementer of these strategies. Therefore; the more educated the citizens, the better the next generations and societies [30].

Solutions: There are a lot of reasons that increase the problems of women employment among which we can see the temperament, law, patriarchy, philistinism, educational and economical conditions of the country, etc. In order to get over these problems, a number of solutions are listed as follows [15,21,22,27,28,31-35].

- C The increase in the women employment in Turkey will increase the level of welfare, sustainable development and will contribute to the women's improvement as individuals. Necessary political precautions should be taken in order to bring up the participation targets to the level of 40%. Equality in economic life, in decision making mechanisms, in social rights, in social life, etc. must be assured. Any kind of tax and incentives that prevent women employment should be reconsidered and women employment at specially chosen sectors must be compulsory. Incentive methods for establishments should be put in practice. For instance; government's covering a part of the employer premiums for the women new at business.
- C Procedures and implementations such as flexible, limited or part time working should be generalized in order to increase the women employment. Covered flexibility methods that are accepted by EU countries in order to balance the family and business lives of women should be generalized. Our national should be developed in accordance with this approach and social insurance system should be updated.
- C Bringing out the potential entrepreneur power of women and making benefit of this situation will both open new employment areas and empower the status and role of the women in social life. Entrepreneurial spirit of women should be promoted. Priorities should be given to the women entrepreneurs at public contracts.
- C Accepting the women farmers in the rural areas as individuals and making them active in decision making process of defining the type, place, amount, time, harvest, store and marketing of the product together with the men is only possible with education. In other words, the placement of women in rural area employment is only possible with bringing women in every phase of production. Agriculture Labour Act should be put in force by considering the amount of seasonal women worker.
- C Alienating the gender discrimination from the education, improving the education quality, reaching 100% of women literacy, supporting their achievement in higher education should be assisted.
- C The number of vocational schools should be multiplied. The rate of vocational high schools which is 35% and the rate of traditional high schools which is 65%, should at least be 50%-50% level.
- C Distance education opportunities should be increased and new certificate programmes should be appealed in order to create new employment areas for young nonemployed people.
- C Adult education should be generalized and new projects on this issue should be developed.
- C Employer's unions and whole business market should cooperate.

- C Preschool education whose level is 100% in developed countries but 16% in Turkey should be generalized. Municipalities should plan and monitor the preschool services of Turkish Social Service and Children Protection Institution and The Ministry of National Education. It is seen that in the countries at which the women employment is quite high; nursery of children, the patient and the old is nationalized.
- C Positive discrimination should be put in force in order to increase the number of women employment as in Germany.
- C Public opinion sensitivity should be generated in order to give senior managerial positions to the women for going beyond the patriarchal understanding.
- C The media should support women employment.
- C Problems of women are not independent form the problems of the country. The inequality between men and women is problem of democracy. By accepting these issues; the sustainable development can only be obtained by using female labour force together with the male labour force.
- C Seasonal workers should be authorised by the licensed special employment bureaus.
- C The role of non-governmental institutions in women employment is quite important. They should take active roles in this situation. Women associations should cooperate and become more powerful.
- C Legal regulations must be brought for the temporary and on payment housekeepers.
- C The amount of source in the unemployed insurance fund should be allocated to the female vocational education.

Making studies on traditions, cultures, beliefs and customs and gaining more information, development affects the societies. It also make contributions to understand the handicaps against growth and development of societies [36]. During the modern age, men have seen lots of changes. These changes took place almost in every part of our lives. We can see the tracks of these changes in the community, culture, politics, economics, education, relationships, etc. As the social life changes, it affects the thoughts and expectations of people. They get more conscious and react against inappropriate conditions. They get closer relations with the government. Individuals are more conscious about their rights and think that the governments are responsible towards them in terms of these rights [37].

As a result the discrimination of women in employment affects the sustainable development. It slows down the development rate of Turkey. Women employment will affect the economic development in positive way [33]. Women's becoming more powerful in the society depends on their economic freedom. Societies with powerful women is advantageous in terms of social development. Therefore; women employment in Turkey is an urgent action plan and waiting to be handled.

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