

Chapter 6

The Place of Women in Employment: Turkish Case

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6.1 Introduction

The most efficient use of production factors is very important, in terms of growth and development the economy of the country. Labor, in the first place of production factors, is in the front row in employment in favor of men in our country as in the world. Women in the world had begun working for a fee along with the industrial revolution. Almost in every country of the world, women, constitute a significant portion of the population; have assets in the labor market in the past, both in our day behind men, remains limited with the status of “**secondary labor**.” The secondary role of women in the labor market is related to the traditional division of labor highly. That gender-based division of labor, though at different levels in every society basically; such as bearing children and growing, doing household chores, physiological and sociological aspects of women’s basic tasks, while earning money by working in the market has been recognized as the main role of men.

The factor that pushes woman into the labor market in Turkey is men’s participation in World War I, 1915. It is seen that during the years of war, women’s participation of labor force has increased. Before 1950, women were working as unpaid family workers in rural areas. Years of the 1950s were urban transformation years. In these years women, left unpaid family labor in rural areas, have migrated to urban areas. That’s why, employment had decreased in agriculture and non-agricultural labor force participation had been in real terms, after 1950 urbanization. Women had entered the industry or the services sector by urban migration, but could not have taken important way to go because of being non-educated.

Over time in labor market, women’s position and working forms have changed. How the change is in terms of industry is an important issue. The sectoral

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distribution of employment in a country is an important indicator of its development level. With development, employment increases in the agricultural sector when decreases in non-agricultural sector. This situation is also current for female employment. In developing countries and regions, female workforce in agricultural sector intensifies, when the service sector is the sector in which women have intensive work in developed countries. Accordingly, the well-paid employment women's labor takes place of the unpaid family labor in developed countries (Tansel 2002: 5).

Especially in developing countries, women's low labor force participation rate attracts attention and importance in the provision of development comes to the fore. Greater participation of women in economic life requires their gaining a greater share from development and growth and ensuring position recovery in the family. Eventually, ignoring or remaining dormant of women's labor force in production factors is economical loss. Women's contribution to labor force thus to the economy, is a gain for all countries, will be an important factor for accelerating development and balancing growth in a structure (Özdemir et al. 2012: 115). There are several reasons to push women to the subordinate position in economic and social areas. The reasons, related to the structural features of society, are as follows (Kocacik and Gökkaya 2005):

1. Discrimination in society, based on "male dominated" culture (in all areas),
2. Women's limited educational opportunities,
3. Physiological differences between men and women,
4. Shortcomings and inaccuracies in the legal regulations.

In achieving development, women's labor force employment case is an important issue that developing countries should deal with it. Today, it is seen that women cannot benefit from employment opportunities as equal to men in many areas in the world. Women are not at the forefront of a society, but they are members of a society, who have significant impact on the advancement. How effective and productive women in society that is so advanced (Kurtsan 2011; Karabiyik 2012).

6.2 The Concept of Employment

Employment is defined in different ways. With the simplest definition, employment is used to mean using, operating, and commissioning (Özaydın 2000: 5). In its broadest sense, the concept of employment is defined as all factors of production used in the production process in order to produce goods and services (Uysal 2007: 55). Employment, as a concept in the dictionary of the Turkish Language Institution (TDK), is defined as operating, using in a job, a task (TDK 2005: 989). As a word, employment is executing a person in order to the fulfillment of a particular job or task. Economic sense, employment including goods and services actively in the

production process in order to perform the production or achieve domestic output in a country (Ardıç 2006: 175). However, employment, as content, has much broader meaning and whatever the level of development, it takes an important place in the country's economic problems (Karakayalı 2007: 401). Women's employment is gaining importance at this point (Özmen 2012: 111).

In a country, in working age between 15 and 65 years, the total of the employed and the unemployed is defined as "labor force." In the current period, as well as those who were employed, unemployed people, who wish to be employed, are counted from the labor force (TSI 2009: 14). Labor participation rate is defined as the ratio of labor force in the age 15 and older population (TSI 2011a, b: 175).

This ratio, which reflects certain age, gender, and race of the person showing the probability of being in the labor force and labor force participation decisions of individuals, is one of the main indicators in the implementation of economic policy under consideration. For example, to create and implement policies aimed at ensuring full employment of labor in the society, it must be able to determine how many people want to work; for that, as named as economic activity rate, participation rate of labor force is necessary to known (Biçerli 2009: 53).

6.3 Women Employment and Importance

Women, constitute half of the world population, are less employed than men in all countries and are working for lower wages in general. In World War I and World War II, with recruitment of the male labor force, women had begun to occur in the working area. After these wars and the economic crisis, governments began to expand individuals' (men-women) economic and social life participation fields. By industrialization, new fields were created to women, and women's new roles, within the family and society, had begun to be installed. Women's first use of labor for a fee started with industrial revolution (Kocacı and Gökçaya 2005: 196) and with the process of industrialization, women willing to participate and necessity in working life, on the other hand the need for employment accelerated women's employment (Özdemir et al. 2012: 115). During World War I and World War II, female labor force took the place of the recruited population of male labor in the arms industry (Altan and Ersöz 1994: 32). Women had worked with low wages and poor working conditions, in the first period of industrialization (Directorate General on the Status of Women, DGSW 2000: 4).

The industrial revolution is considered as the most important historical development, which led to the emergence of the paid female labor force concept, with its current meaning and for the first time. In other words, especially England in the nineteenth century, including many in Western countries, a significant portion of the total labor force was consisted of women (Hobsbawm 2003). However, from the middle of the nineteenth century, policies were begun to be implemented, as law limiting working hours in Western countries, banning women workplaces and businesses with protective laws (Altan and Ersöz 1994: 28–30). In other words,

labor exploitation of women in working life also was a factor on the birth and development of the social policy science (Kocacık and Gökkaya 2005: 198). Toward the end of the nineteenth century, rapid developments in the metallurgy, chemistry, and automotive industry had limited women's labor force largely in comparison with past, in production process (Altan and Ersöz 1994: 32). During this period, the growth in the public and service sectors had increased the proportion of women in the total labor force rapidly (Kocacık and Gökkaya 2005: 198). Nowadays, it is known that, as well as developments in the service sector, many interrelated factors are effective in increasing number of women in the labor force. These factors are mainly listed as follows (Koray et al. 2000: 214–215).

Increasing in preventive and supportive laws and practices for working women worldwide, demographic developments, increasing educational facilities and emergency nonstandard (atypical) working ways, decreasing in marriage rates, whereas increasing in divorcing rates, attitudes occurring in positive developments for women's work in society, improvements in child care and other services, women's productivity and efficiency are important for economic development and progress of society. Increasing in female employment can allow to overcoming for women in family and society, who are exposed to many problems (domestic violence, economic pressure, etc.). Also, by increasing family income, women can obtain living standards better.

Women's entrance to working life in agricultural sector and out of home had started with the necessity of supporting decreasing labor force, as a result of the most male population participation to wars in the early twentieth century [Directorate General on the Status of Women (DGSW)]. Female employment in Turkey had been a problem as expected to be resolved since the early years of the Republic. At this point, when considering the historical process, gender-based division of labor, migrations to the city, thaw in the agricultural structure, weakening of the traditional family structure, the difficulties in balancing family and working life, and low levels of women's education were considered as important elements of the causes, which cause to women's lower employment levels (Hotar 2011: transferred from 84 to 86; Karabıyık 2012: 232). After the Republic, the equality of men and women, education and vocational rights for women, with accelerating industrialization, urbanization, and migration, had led to the opening of new business areas (Ersöz 1993: 42).

Women's labor force participation is more active based on 1950s (Kocacık and Gökkaya 2005: 201); although in recent years, in contrast to the general trend with lower increasing rates in the world, women's labor force participation rates had fallen steadily, starting from the mid-1950s; the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS 2005: 4). Its reasons are economic basement on agricultural production in the economy of Turkey until the late 1950s (TSI 2004), changes in economic structure, and accompanying social transformations (TSI 2000). In 1950, female labor force participation rate fell from 81.5 to 72% in 1955, in 1965 to 56.2% (Doğramacı 1989: 8; Dülger 1984: 95), in 1990 to 34.1%, in 2000 to 26.6%, in 2005 to 23.3%, but in 2010 increased by 4.3 points and rose to 27.6%. In last 10 years, female employment in Turkey had the lower increasing rate in 2010,

although it had declined continuously in general (Karabiyik 2012: 231, 256; International Labour Organization (ILO) 2011; TSI 2010; Karabiyik 2012: 234). According to 2010 data, women employment rate is 24.0% in Turkey, when on average it is 58.2% in 27 EU countries (European Commission 2010). This situation shows that Turkey is in back compared to many EU countries in women employment.

Important part of the female employees is working out of record. One of the most obvious reasons to working out of record is flexibilization. Flexibility is referred as changes in the labor markets, technology, and adapting to changes in production structure. Due to the problems such as unemployment and not creating jobs economy, the inelasticity of the labor market increases the informality by widespread flexible production and flexible working conditions. Flexible working may be in different formats like part-time (35 h or less per week) working, project-based work, on-call working, working from home, connected working to contractors system, and home-based working. It can be said that from the 1970s, widespread flexible working conditions have been shaped by the gendered division of labor. In particular, almost all home-based workers are women. "Home-based workers" term covers piecework, domestic workers dependent on a fee in their homes and contracted employees, without being bound to any employer, self-employed and employees on order. Undeclared work in women's employment rate is quite high related to home-based working, which is one of the common flexible working. Home-based working, which can be addressed within the framework of informal employment elasticity of women's labor relation, is the most intense experiencing informality in flexible forms of working. Home-based working is usually done by women. Especially for women, by reasons such as limited working conditions in outside paid and secure jobs, and caring jobs in home done by home-based working women's responsibility, this type of working women can be preferable. However, women's are defining themselves as "workers," result of home-based working is seen as an extension of household chores and considered as a contribution to the household budget. Home-based women's working fields are extensively in textiles and clothing, manufacturing, domestic service in Turkey (Durusoy Öztepe 2013: 11–48). Women, as a large majority of home-based employees, are working with low wages, very long hours and often work in the trade unions without organizing (Şahin 2011: 99).

6.4 Women's Labor Force Participation in Turkey

It is known that, in comparison with men, women's labor force participation is down and from year to year women's labor force participation is experiencing a steady decline. Working life does not only provide economic freedom to women, but also it increases their confidence and social dignity and improves their position in the family. Although there is no distinction to women's labor force participation from legal perspective, in contrast there is a positive distinction to it; women's

responsibilities are heavy in their families, from the role which is loaded by society to women. Women's responsibilities in family life lead to a preference for working or not working. To reconcile working life and family life, sharing responsibilities which are carried by women between their husbands in family and support of government with legislation have great importance. Turkish Government appointed various targets to increase women's labor force participation in the scope of development objectives. "National Action Plan for Gender Equality," prepared by Government, agrees that women's labor force participation is much more behind than men's in our country. The point emphasized by the report is that women's overall social and economic development is closely associated with labor force participation. Closer relationship that exists between women's economic and social development with participation is due to employment, which saves not only women's economic independence, but also increases their self-confidence and position improvements in their families by increasing social prestige.

Basically, three objectives were identified for ensuring gender equality. By determining organizations to realize these three objectives with cooperating institutions, the division of labor had been made and these objectives were identified in a detailed manner as subtitles in order to achieve effective results. The most important reasons that prevent women from the labor market have been identified, and solutions have been developed for the removal of these reasons. Increasing women entrepreneurship, promoting child and elderly care services, reducing extent of the traditional structure, ensuring gender equality, eliminating any discrimination to women, experienced in working life, is one of the forefront case for national action plans. This tabulated National Action Plan for Gender Equality is given below:

Objective 1: Acceleration of efforts to increase women's employment

- 1.1 Increasing the women's employability through education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship.
- 1.2 Dissemination of child and elderly care services.
- 1.3 Increasing social awareness to reduce the prevalence of traditional structures.

Objective 2: Improvement of women's economic position in rural areas

- 2.1 Promotion of women entrepreneurship in agriculture.
- 2.2 Implementation of projects, income-generating and intended to improve working conditions for women in rural areas.

Objective 3: Struggling with gender discrimination in the labor market

- 3.1 Addition of the provisions about gender equality to law, by revising the current Law of Labor.
- 3.2 Creation of data related to differences in income between men and women, performing similar works.
- 3.3 Taking the necessary precautions against to all forms of discrimination faced by women in working life.

6.4.1 Woman's Work Life Place in Turkey

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries in 2011, the employment rate of women is the highest in Iceland (77.3%) and the lowest rate is 27.8% in Turkey. While the ratio of males' labor force participation is 70.3% in 2004, this ratio has increased to 71% in 2012. The labor force participation ratio of females has increased from 23.3 to 29.5% in the same period. Around one-third of working females is employed as unpaid family worker in the year 2012. While the ratio of females is 54.3% in regular employee and casual employee, 10.8% in own account worker, the ratio of males is 66.5% in regular employee and casual employee, 22.3% in own account worker.

While the ratio of workers in agricultural jobs decreased for both sexes, the ratio of workers in non-agricultural jobs increased for both sexes in 2004–2011. In 2004, while the ratio of female workers is 50.8% in agriculture, this ratio decreased to 39.3% in 2011. In 2004, while the ratio of male workers is 21.6% in agriculture, this ratio decreased to 18.4% in 2012 (Fig. 6.1).

The unemployment ratio of females is higher than that of males. In 2004, while the unemployment ratio is 11% of females, this ratio is 10.8% in 2012. The unemployment ratio is 10.8% of males in 2004; this ratio has decreased to 8.5% in 2012. The unemployment ratio is decreased for both sexes in 2004–2010. The unemployment ratio of 15–24 age groups females is higher than that of males in the same age groups. In 2012, 19.9% of 15–24 age groups females and 16.3% males are unemployment in the same age groups. The start of women's non-agricultural employment had accelerated with the continuing increase of migration to urban areas, but according to TSI data, this rate had begun to decline from 1980s and declined to 20% after 2001 crisis (Fig. 6.2).

The most important factor in this great decline is employment most of the women in the field of agriculture and dwindling of the agricultural employment. Due to most of the women are employed in the agricultural sector, urban labor market participation rates of women are very low compared to rural participation. As a result of the decrease in the employment rate in the agricultural sector,

The distribution of employment by agriculture and non-agriculture

Years	Total employment	%			
		Agriculture	Non agriculture	Agriculture	Non agriculture
TÜRKİYE-TURKEY					
2004	19 632	5 713	13 919	29,1	70,9
2005	20 067	5 154	14 913	25,7	74,3
2006	20 423	4 907	15 516	24,0	76,0
2007	20 738	4 867	15 871	23,5	76,5
2008	21 194	5 016	16 178	23,7	76,3
2009	21 277	5 254	16 023	24,7	75,3
2010	22 594	5 683	16 911	25,2	74,8
2011	24 110	6 143	17 967	25,5	74,5
2012	24 021	6 097	18 724	24,6	75,4
Kadın-Female					
2004	5 047	2 565	2 482	50,8	49,2
2005	5 108	2 367	2 741	46,3	53,7
2006	5 258	2 295	2 963	43,6	56,4
2007	5 356	2 288	3 068	42,7	57,3
2008	5 595	2 354	3 241	42,1	57,9
2009	5 871	2 446	3 425	41,7	58,3
2010	6 425	2 724	3 701	42,4	57,6
2011	6 973	2 984	4 029	42,2	57,8
2012	7 309	2 872	4 437	39,3	60,7
Erkek-Male					
2004	14 585	3 148	11 437	21,6	78,4
2005	14 959	2 787	12 172	18,6	81,4
2006	15 165	2 613	12 552	17,2	82,8
2007	15 382	2 578	12 804	16,8	83,2
2008	15 598	2 663	12 935	17,1	82,9
2009	15 406	2 808	12 598	18,2	81,8
2010	16 170	2 959	13 211	18,3	81,7
2011	17 137	3 199	13 938	18,7	81,3
2012	17 512	3 225	14 287	18,4	81,6

Source: TurkStat, Household Labour Force Survey

Fig. 6.1 Distribution of employment by agriculture and non-agriculture. Source Republic of Turkey Ministry of Development (2009: 5)

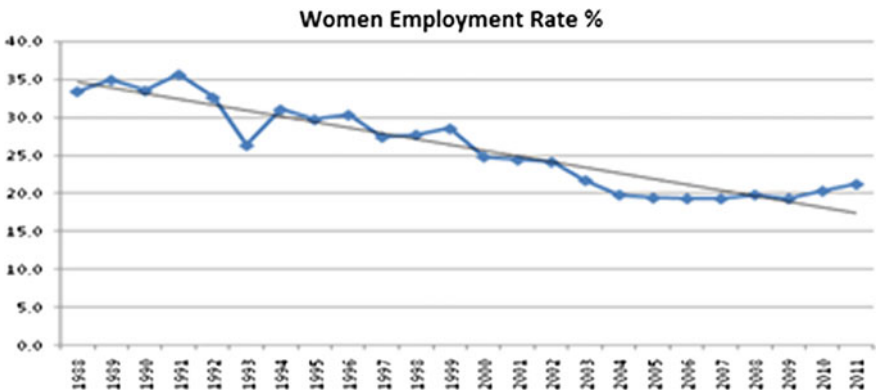


Fig. 6.2 Women employment rate. Source TSI household labor force survey

unemployed women in the cities cannot provide the required qualifications for the jobs; remain out of the workforce (Kızılgöl 2012: 87–102).

Considering the rate of women employment to total employment, from October 2008 to present, employment rates are rising. When the ratio of employment is concerned, it is seen that there is seasonality. Employment rates are highest during the winter months (December, January, February) and decrease in the summer and fall, especially in August (Fig. 6.3). Looking at male and female employment trends in terms of years, it is observed that both types of employment also showed a

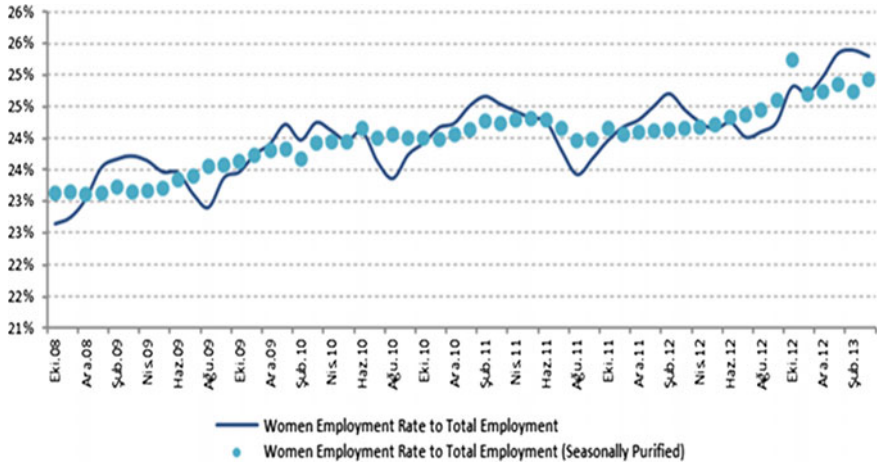


Fig. 6.3 Women employment rate to total employment. Source TSI household labor force survey

parallel trend. Analyzing male employment, falling months of the women’s employment, although it shows a parallel decline according to women’s employment, it fluctuates less and it grows less than women’s employment rate in years. Female employment shows a steep drop in the autumn months. From January 2008 until May of 2013, 34% increase had been recorded in female employment which is higher than the increasing male employment rate.

Women’s more active participation in working life and their promotion in terms of career have great importance in terms of the economic development of Turkey. Low labor force participation rate of Turkey stems from women’s less places in working life. According to TSI, the labor force participation rate in Turkey in 2012 amounted to 50%, and this percent is composed of percent of men and 29.5% of women. Employed female population stays in 26.3%, while the male population has risen to 65%. As women’s labor force participation rate is low, unemployment rate is high. This ratio is 8.5% for men and 10.8% for women. The result of low participation in the labor market, women are being dependent on men. Researches show that the inadequacy of services related to child and elderly care, assumptions related to women’s work and therefore low career opportunities, inability of education level and gender-based division of labor are the most important causes of women’s low labor force participation. These barriers are not only in employment, but also in entrepreneurship, social and political life stands in front of women (Fig. 6.4).

A recession in 2009, which is closer to 5%, although there was an increasing in women’s employment, in 2010 and 2011 closer to 9% growth had been experienced close to the domestic market, and staying 2.2% growth in 2012, women’s employment had increased and non-agricultural women employment had been closer to 4.9 million. Almost 1.5 million of this 30% is “illegal” working women out of record. Even though, it means an increase in women’s share of

Rate of Women's Laborforce Participation %					
Year	Rate of Laborforce Participation	Unemployment Rate	Employment Rate	Rate of Laborforce Participation	
				Urban	Rural
1990	34.1	8.5	31.2	17.0	52.0
1995	30.9	7.3	28.7	16.8	49.3
2000	26.6	6.3	24.9	17.2	40.2
2005	23.3	11.2	20.7	18.7	33.9
2010	27.6	13.0	24.0	23.7	36.3
2011	28.8	11.3	25.6	24.8	37.5
2012	29.5	10.8	26.3	26.1	36.9
2013/06	31.9	10.8	28.5	28.6	39.0

Fig. 6.4 Rate of women's labor force participation percentages. *Source* TSI household labor force survey

Table 6.1 Change of women employment rate from 2009 to 2013

Increase in women employment	Total women	Non-agriculture	%
June 2009	6,256,000	3,416,000	54.6
June 2010	6,883,000	3,749,000	54.5
June 2011	7,386,000	4,066,000	55.0
June 2012	7,688,000	4,461,000	58.0
June 2013	8,018,000	4,872,000	60.8
Gap between June 2013 and 2012	330,000	411,000	

Source TÜİK Hanehalkı İşgücü Anketi, (TSI Household Labour Force Survey), <http://www.tuik.gov.tr> (1 July 2013)

non-agricultural employment from 20 to 25%. Out of agriculture, only 25% of women are working in manufacturing industry. Women, who find jobs in manufacturing industry, work in mostly based on cheap labor, food, garment, textile manufacturing sectors. These are mostly in Istanbul and closer industrial cities as Tekirdag, Kocaeli and Bursa. In June 2012–2013 period, 20% of 330 thousand increasing in women's employment outside agriculture realized, and it also consisted of one-quarter of the jobs created in the industry. Sectors, providing jobs to women, had been education, health and tourism sectors with services sector (Table 6.1).

6.5 Conclusion

The female employment rate in our country has increased from the 1950s until the 1980s and has begun to decline rapidly in the 1980s; in 2000s, it has settled in the last place by reaching an average rate of 24% in OECD countries. According to the

result of “Barriers and Opportunities for Women’s Introduction to the Labor Market” named study, which is done by the collaboration of Employment Agency and Ministry of Labour and Social Security, women are willing to participate in the labor force and the majority of employers also have a bright view of employing women.

According to the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) Millennium Development Goals Report 2011, paid women’s employment rate, working in non-agricultural sectors, is still quite lower than non-agricultural employment rate in our country. A majority of women, working as unpaid family workers, are engaged in agricultural activities. Women’ beginning to work in non-agricultural sectors will increase the proportion of women in wage employment (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report 2010: 31). In 2011 EU Progress Report, it is indicated that women’s rights and gender equality were given wide coverage and limited progress was recorded. Some measures to increase women’s employment have been received but the scope and impact of these measures remain at low levels. Also in the report, it is underlined that women take place as limited in senior management positions in relation to education (politics, education, government in management positions in the prefectural authorities, political parties, and trade unions) (TSI 2011a, b). As a result, despite the importance of women’s employment in the economic development, women’s employment is seen at very low levels in Turkey. We can say that this situation stems from many factors like gender, education, policy-making, family life.

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