

THE ROLE OF WOMEN FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IN TURKEY

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Abstract.

This study is providing key information on the agricultural situation in Turkey and the role of women for sustainable agriculture. Also it is mainly attempts to provide an objective analysis of capacity development and strengthening women role in agricultural organization in Turkey. The study has been prepared mainly based on statistical information from Eurostat, OECD and State Institute of Statistics (SIS) in Turkey, as available in October 2007.

Key Words: Sustainable agriculture, Rural Women, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

Turkey has a population of 73.2 million with a per capita income of 5 500 EUR. A significant migration from rural to urban areas has been taken place since 1970's. Usually, families move to urban areas. In recent years, the percentage of women in rural areas has been increasing since men get job opportunities rather than women in urban areas. So women have been taking more responsibility in agriculture day to day because the economy of rural is mainly depending on agricultural activities. The technical, economical and social structures of agriculture and capacity of women in rural area are not capable to have sustainable agriculture in Turkey. For example, farm structure is concerned small size classes (0-5 ha) cover over 65% of the holdings. 94% of the farm holdings are smaller than 20 ha. Structure and specialization of farms correspond to the social and economic conditions in rural areas as well as to climatic conditions. This type of farms is characterized by very low productivity, high hidden unemployment and low competitiveness. These farms, however, are crucial for providing income security and livelihood to the majority of the rural population in Turkey subsistence and semi- subsistence farms are difficult to reach with traditional market and price policies (Anon., 2007a).

The development of Turkey's agriculture is mainly depending on the success of agricultural organizations such as cooperatives, farmers unions, agricultural chambers, crop boards, and limit liability

corporations since structure of farms are small scale.

The development of Turkey's agriculture depends on the social and economic conditions of women who take more reasonability of agriculture in rural areas. In this case, much of the sustainability, future competitiveness and prospects of agriculture in Turkey would depend on the strengthening women role in agricultural organizations.

In this study, we would like to have a propose on the ways of strengthening women status in agricultural organizations and to figure out that's impacts on sustainable agriculture in Turkey.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF TURKEY AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR

Turkey is 769 604 km². Agriculture is the most important sector in the Turkey's economy. Its contribution to total GDP makes it also one of the most important sectors. The share of agriculture in GDP is about 9,2% in Turkey. The gross value added of agricultural sector (GVA at constant prices) grew by 4% in the year 2000. In that year, agriculture benefited from a good situation for cereals, fruit and vegetables. Agriculture is an important contributor to foreign trade as well as and supplies 14% of total exports and accounts for 6 % of total imports (Anon., 2007a).

Table 1.
Economics indicators of agriculture in Turkey

Economics indicator	(%)
The share of agriculture in GNP	11,2
The share of agriculture in GDP	9,2
The gross value added of agricultural sector	2,9
The share of agriculture in imports	2,1
The share of agriculture in export	4,1
The share of agriculture in employment	27,3

Source, TUIK, TOBB, 2006

Agricultural labor: An increasing urbanization of Turkey has led to a decline of the rural population from 61,5% in 1970 to 32,7% in 2005. Currently 2/3 people live in urban regions. Agriculture, hunting, forestry and fishing employed on average 38% of total labor, equivalent to some 7 million people.

Agriculture is still the most important provider of employment in the Turkey's economy. Recent data of the State Institute of Statistic (SIS) indicates that the share of women in the agricultural work force increased to about 45% in 2006 from 39% in 2000. Especially in the age groups below 50, women represent the

majority of employment in agriculture with 56,2% in the 20-24 year old group and 52,5% in the 45-49 age groups (Anon., 2007a).

Table 2.

The population of Turkey

Total Population	Rural Population	The share of rural population in the total population (%)	The number of rural women labor	The share of women population in total rural population (%)
73 193 000	23 955 000	32,7	9 732 000	40,6

Source, FAO, 2005

The provisional results of the agricultural census in 2006 recorded 3 million agricultural holdings in Turkey. The average farm size is around 6 ha in 2006; about 65% of them have less than 5 ha land and 83% less than 10 ha. The census results are concerned; mixed cropping-livestock holdings constitute the greatest share of all farm types with about 1 million holdings (25,6%). Field cropping with 931 460 holdings (22,9%) is the second most important specialization, followed by specialist grazing livestock with 847 310 holdings (20,9%) and specialist permanent crops with 535 185 holdings (13,2%).

The value of agricultural production in 2006 amounted to 48.5 billion EUR. The major agricultural products in value are crops cereals (11,6%), industrial crops such as sugar beet and tobacco (6,4%), vegetables (13,7%), fruits (17,4%) and other crops. Wheat is the most important single crop with 7,9% of total output value. Livestock production and animal products contribute with 24.9% and 19.3% of total value respectively.

Most of the agricultural production in Turkey originates from the coastal regions, with a certain importance of the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. In the northern and eastern parts of Turkey the importance of livestock production is quite evident. The relatively low agricultural production potential of eastern regions is conditioned by the natural conditions such as lower rainfall, lower temperature and higher altitudes. It also corresponds to the socio-economic conditions in rural areas as expressed by small-scale farming and subsistence production.

The southern-west regions produce 56% of all wheat in Turkey while Mid-Western Anatolia largely covers 43% of the barley output. The Aegean region produces 63% of Turkey's tobacco. Cotton production is concentrated in South Eastern Anatolia with 47% of Turkey's production, followed by the Mediterranean with 22% and the Aegean region covering the rest. Around 36% of the total vegetable output consists of tomatoes that are mainly cultivated on the whole coastline from Western Black Sea to Western Marmara and Mediterranean. Mediterranean coast while the peripheries of the Black Sea regions and South Eastern Anatolia produce the majority of nuts. Turkey is

one of the largest nut producers in the world.

Table 3.

The crops pattern in Turkey's regions

Regions	Crops	Rate (%)
Middle Anatolia	wheat	56
Aegean region	tobacco	63
South Anatolia	Cotton	47
Blacksea	nut	43
Mediterranean	tomato	84

Cattle production is spread rather homogeneously over the whole Turkey. However, higher regional shares of milk production are located in the mountainous parts of northern Anatolia and in the southern Mediterranean areas.

Sheep was the second most important category of livestock production accounting for 20% of the total livestock output in 2000. About 46% of sheep production is concentrated in the extreme eastern zones of Anatolia where the mountains often reach 2000 meters and the minimum winter temperatures frequently approach 20°C below zero. Chicken production is concentrated near urban centers, i.e. close to consumer markets: about 70% of the chicken production is located around Istanbul and in the surrounding of the most populated areas.

Livestock farming in Turkey is generally a small-scale family farm activity, carried out in the vast majority of cases as a sideline activity by arable farmers. According to the 2001 provisional Agricultural Census results, 67% of all agricultural holdings were involved in mixed farming such as crop production and animal husbandry, while 2% were specialized exclusively in animal husbandry.

Tobacco is an important product for Turkey's agricultural sector with about 1.3% of total agricultural output and 20% of the total production of industrial crops.

Turkey established a Customs Union with the EU, which has been in force since January 1996 (Decision 1/95 of the EC-Turkey Association Council). The agricultural sector is not covered by the Customs Union, but has been the subject of preferential trade rules since the Association Agreement of 1963 (Decision 1/98 of the EC-Turkey Association Council). This preferential treatment of Turkish agricultural commodities certainly contributed to the positive development of exports as the majority of these enter the high-income markets of the EU.

Turkey exports about 4,2 billion EUR and imports about 2,9 billion EUR worth of agricultural and food products. Turkey's main trade partners are the EU and the Accession and Candidate Countries; the USA is another important partner mainly for Turkish imports.

AGRICULTURAL POLICIES IN TURKEY

From the point of view of agricultural policies, the competitiveness of Turkey's agriculture and food industries is one of the major political and economic challenges for the future. Apart from measures directly targeted at improving competitiveness, it would also implicate the development of rural regions, which would have a positive indirect effect.

The support for Turkish agriculture has mainly been channeled through price support (i.e. "deficiency payments" for sunflower seed, soybean, cotton, olive oil), input subsidies (credit, fertilizer and irrigation) and supply control measures for crops such as tobacco, hazelnuts and tea (Alternative Crop Scheme). The government has also been involved in the purchasing, processing and marketing of crops (often through financial support to farmer-owned cooperatives). In addition, the state banks have provided the sector with interest subsidies. This policy is mostly directed towards the market-oriented producers.

Turkey is currently implementing "Agricultural Reform Implementation Project" (ARIP) for storage, packing and processing of the crops and livestock products. ARIP consists then of four major components: 1) design and implementation of the DIS system with a view to introducing a unified national programme of direct income support, 2) farmers' transition towards more profitable crops, 3) restructuring of Agricultural Sales Cooperative Unions (ASCUs) in order to turn it into private sector, and 4) link domestic prices to world prices and reduce the intervention stocks.

A Direct Income Support (DIS) system is being introduced, which is based on land rather than inputs and outputs. At present, all farmers registered under the Farmer Registration System (FRS) and cultivating between 0.5 ha and 20 ha of crops are eligible for the DIS payment.

There is not any special program for strengthening women role in agricultural organization in order to create sustainable agricultural production in Turkey.

Table 4.

The number of farmers organization in Turkey

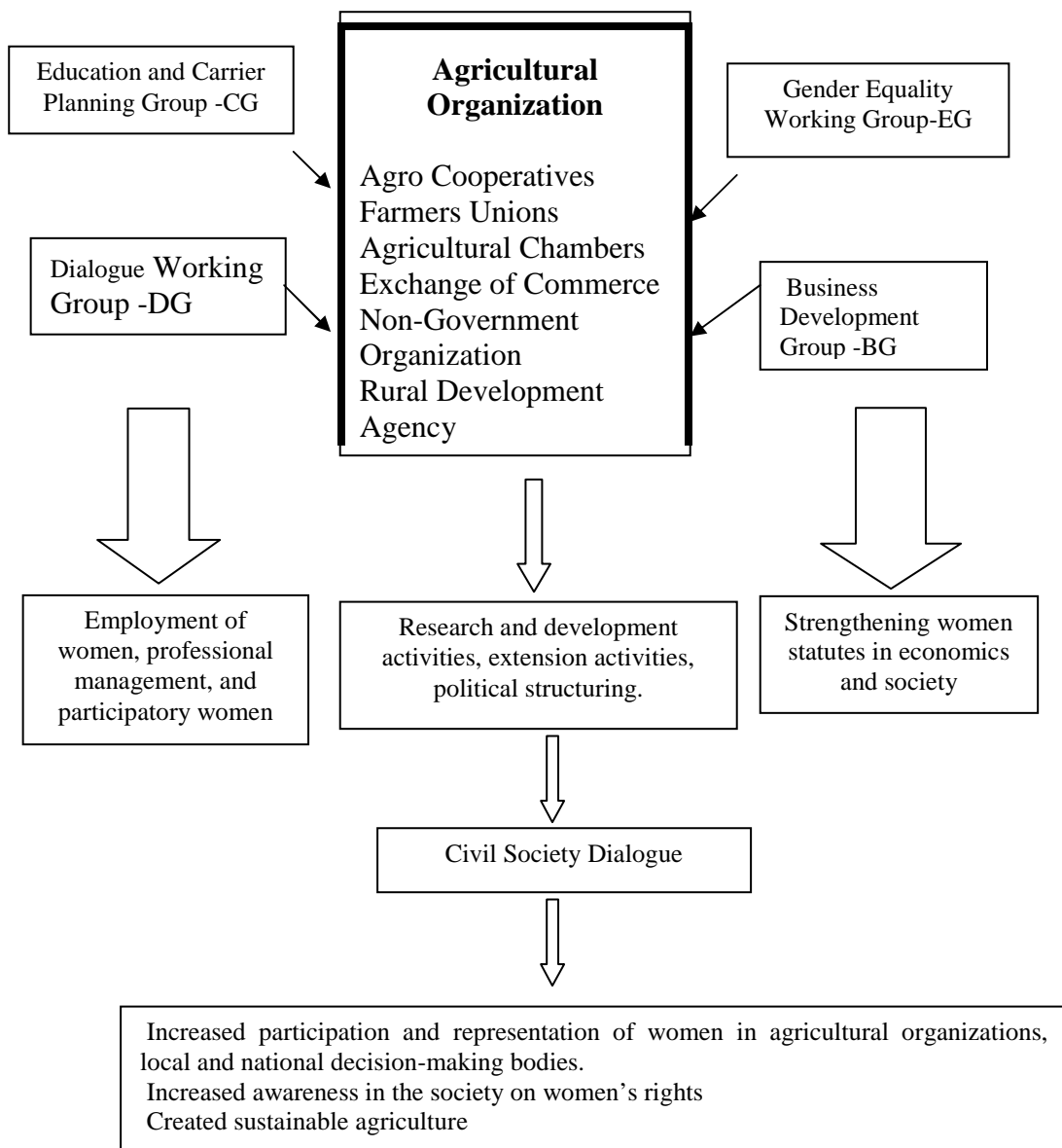
Producer Organization	Number
Agricultural Cooperation	12 535
Agricultural Chambers	703
Farmers Union	919

A PROPOSE ON STRENGTHENING WOMEN STATUTES IN AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION IN TURKEY

The propose has to cover 4 E (Economical, Ecological, Ethical, Educational) sustainability in order to create development in agriculture. 5 W (by who, what, when, where, for whom) have to be answered for sustainable agricultural development. Taking into consideration above criteria, here, we would like discuss the following model as propose for strengthening women status in agricultural organizations in Turkey.

In Turkey's parliament, one of Government Minister is responsible for women rights in Turkey. Whenever Turkey organized working groups or branch as follows, the groups can strengthen women statutes in Agricultural Organizations. It is necessary to have Gender Equality Working Groups in rural areas in Turkey. Since gender equality is a fundamental right for the achievement of growth, employment and social cohesion. The responsible ministry in Turkey has to make significant progress in achieving gender equality such as specific measures for the advancement of women, projects, social dialogue and dialogue with civil society.

Strengthening Women Status in Agricultural Organization



According to the National Development Plan of Turkey-NDP, under the subtitle “Equal Treatment Between Men and Women”, Turkey is aware of the fact that gender equality is a matter of human rights, social justice and democratic representation and ensuring equal treatment between men and women is very important in respect of enhancing the level of economic development and ensuring social peace among individuals. In this context, the active role to be played by women in agricultural organizations is one of the main tools in achieving sustainable agriculture.

The development of human resources and increasing employment has to be underlined in the NDP as a part of Turkey's development strategy, with emphasis on creating "equal opportunities for employment" in agricultural organizations.

The objective of the strengthening women statutes in agricultural organizations is to contribute to the promotion of gender equality in agricultural organizations in Turkey through small grants to women agricultural organizations in order to support activities targeting increased access of women to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities, increased participation and representation of women in local and national decision-making bodies and finally increased awareness in the society on women's responsibility for sustainable agriculture.

The below-mentioned priorities have to be given women in Turkey:

- 1- Training on full access and enjoyment of economic and political rights for women in rural areas in Turkey
- 2- Training on difficulties that women face in starting up businesses, in accessing finance, and professional management of agricultural organizations
- 3- Training on under-representation of women in political decision-making on agricultural organization both local and national levels.

The below- steps can be activities of strengthening women statutes in agricultural organizations;

a) Preparation of Sector Strategy and plan: The Sector Strategy and Plan activities will follow on from the funding of the women business and actions based on the recommended options for development of women status in agricultural organizations.

b) Establishment of stakeholder participant: Stakeholder participant will be achieved through the establishment of a special liaison unit and secretariat for the Scientific Advisory Committees; provision of public information through brochures, radio and films, and public meetings and hearings.

c) Training women on professional management, personal development, business development, and agricultural organizations.

d) Institutional Development; An institution building will lead and coordinate the activities related to the institutional development of women statutes in agricultural organizations. The institute will be employed for people the legislative alignment process, restructuring of the agriculture administration, adoption of good practices and procedures related to management of the sector and training of staff.

RESULTS

In recent years, the percentage of women in rural areas has been increasing since men get job opportunities rather than women in urban areas. So women have been taking more responsibility in agriculture day to day because the economy of rural is mainly depending on agricultural activities. In this case, much of the sustainability, future competitiveness and prospects of agriculture in Turkey would depend on the strengthening women role in agricultural organizations since structure of farms are small scale. There is not any special program for strengthening women role in agricultural organization in order to create sustainable agricultural production in Turkey.

The objective of the strengthening women statutes in agricultural organizations is to contribute to the promotion of gender equality in agricultural organizations in Turkey through small grants to women agricultural organizations, increased participation and representation of women in local and national decision-making bodies and finally increased awareness in the society on women's responsibility for sustainable agriculture.

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