

Woman Labor in Transition Process from Agriculture to Industry Sector

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Abstract: Through the change in rural development plans, non agricultural sectors are supported in rural areas to decrease rural poverty, specially for women. Creating employment opportunity have an important role in women empowerment. But traditional gender roles build huge obstacles in front of women. Understanding these gender roles and the resistant mechanisms that are invented by women is really important to create new strategies for decreasing women poverty and deprivation.

Keywords: women labour, rural development, agricultural industry, gender roles.

Introduction

From 90's the inequalities between cities and rural areas increased dramatically. Rural areas became poverty and deprivation places. Immigration from rural areas to cities increased very fast and to keep population in rural areas, regional and rural development polices are needed to have another direction. Rural development plans started to support non agricultural sectors instead of agricultural growth. The industry investments on rural areas offered women paid jobs. Woman's working outside the house challenged the gender roles but found a way to continue.

Geyve-Pamukova region is a rural area in Sakarya, Turkey. In last 20 years two large-scale factories and some small factories opened in this region. And women transformed from unpaid family worker to paid workers. In this paper it will be discussed how this transition effects the physical and social structure of this region.

For the study, the women who works in the large scaled-factories and their employers are interviewed. It is seen that women don't transform the place, but they become more mobile and have more right in decision making process in family. But there are some gender based barriers for women empowering. These barriers are not only created by husbands or employers but also women feel unease because they can't perform their "wifehood" or "motherhood" duties properly. In this study the social change caused by working women, the barriers in front of these change and the resist mechanisms of women will be discussed.

Rural Development and Women Labor



The rural areas had a great importance when the agriculture had a high share in employment and gross national product, but the development of mechanized agriculture and the industrialization in urban areas put the rural areas in the second place and so rural areas became places of deprivation by comparison with urban areas (OECD, 2011).

The inequalities between rural and urban areas and the deprivation in rural areas became an issue firstly in the 1950s, to eliminate these inequalities the concept of rural development has been increased. The first rural development models, which took economic growth as a target by state aid. This method increased the growth and efficiency in the agricultural sector but this growth was not reflected on the life of rural society (Ellis and Biggs, 2001).

With the global competition in the 1990s, the differences between rural and urban areas have deepened. The deprivation in rural areas and the sectoral diversity in urban areas caused decrease of population in rural areas. For the first time in 2007, the population in urban areas has passed through the rural population and the rural population has decreased much faster in developing countries. (data.worldbank.org).

In rural areas, the development of agricultural growth which provides by state aid deepened the problem instead of solving. It revealed that a change in the policies for rural areas is necessity. In addition to economic growth, creating high quality living spaces and improving social life has been the main target of these new rural policies. Today's rural development policies also aim to increase the competition in the global system by developing non-agricultural sectors in the countryside, to provide the physical and social infrastructure that will attract the investor to the rural area, and to create qualified workforce to work in these new sectors. (OECD, 2011).

The economic growth-oriented development strategies which are adopted before 1980 have deepened not only the rural / urban inequalities but also the women / men inequalities in rural areas. In 1979, the United Nations drew attention to the inequalities experienced by rural women in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and proposed solutions to these inequalities. The Article 14 addresses directly the women in rural areas. This article makes contracting countries responsible for providing certain rights for rural women. These rights are the right to participate in the plans, the right to access to health services, the right to access agricultural credit and marketing facilities, and the right to housing. This convention also recommends to develop empowerment policies which will help women to access technology or credits for enterprising. (UN,1979).

It is important to provide employment opportunities as suggested by rural development plans in resolving rural women's poverty and lack of access to services. But without analyzing the social acceptances which are shaped by gender roles, the obstacles to women's participation in paid employment and reactions of women to these obstacles, creating employment opportunities can be only a limited solution

The social life in the rural areas is mainly based on ensuring the continuity of agricultural production and shaped by natural conditions and traditions. Gender roles are also directly related to agricultural

production and traditions. The rural women work on the fields as men for agricultural production but they are also responsible for other jobs as taking care of animals, drying the products, feeding the workers. These jobs are handled at home with the woman's reproduction duties. And the most important difference between men and women labor is the women are not paid (Berlan-Darque, 1988; Massey, 1994; Little, 2009). The woman labor is a free labor which is transferred from father's house to husband's house by marriage. Just because gender roles do not allow them to leave the house for a long time; women continued to deal with labor-intensive tasks while men use knowledge and skills and marketing of products. In this system all of the family income is controlled by men, women are excluded from domestic decision-making mechanisms.

Inclusion of non-agricultural sectors in rural areas means both employment for rural people and cheap labor for the investor. Sectors like agriculture and textile (which employs women) being predominant in rural areas created job opportunities for rural women. Working in the factory means not only getting out of the private area and taking a part in public area for woman but also means getting paid for their labor. But working outside of the house doesn't mean that women are not responsible for domestic work anymore. Taking care of elders and children and domestic works mean double work for women. And giving the control of the money to the husbands as head of households can mean working out of house is a burden for rural women not a tool for empowerment. So to reduce women poverty the rural development policies have to analyse local social acceptances, gender roles and the limitations which are build by these roles and social acceptances.

This paper aims to understand how gender roles and local social expectations shape working women's daily experiences by interviewing industrial worker women in a rural area. The field of study is Geyve Pamukova region, which is a rural center and locates in Sakarya, Turkey. The regional development plans aim to reduce women poverty and empower women by creating employment opportunities.

Rural Development in Turkey

Turkey adopted planned development firstly in 1960s. Until the 1990s development used to mean basically economic growth. Development plans in this period were largely limited to modernization in agriculture and infrastructure improvement.

The worldwide changes in rural development policy effected development plans in Turkey too and in the second half of the 1980s the concept of rural development has began to change in Turkey. The country development plan which was prepared in 1989 aimed that facilitating the service and information flow in accordance with contemporary needs for the rural area; supporting agriculture-based industrial investments and increasing non-agricultural economic activities (DPT, 1989).

In the first decade in 2000s Turkey started a localization process in governance under the effect of European Union harmonization process. This localization changed the concept of development policies. The central development policies transformed into regional development policies. State Planning Organization was closed and 26 regional development agencies were established. These

Regional Development Agencies aim to build a cooperation between public sector, private sector and civil society organizations, to control utilization of natural and human resources, to accelerate regional development by using local potential and to decrease inequalities between regions. Reducing inequalities between urban and rural areas has a special importance to keep population in rural areas.

Regional and Rural Development Plans for Study Area

The study area, Geyve Pamukova region is located in the north west of Turkey and 170 km far away from Istanbul, the biggest market of Turkey. This region is in TR42 district with Sakarya, Yalova, Düzce and Bolu provinces. East Marmara Development Agency is responsible for this district and defines these cities as old agriculture cities which lose their character under pressure of Istanbul's deindustrialisation process. In 1980s industry was decentralized from Istanbul and the located in nearby cities. These nearby cities were agriculture cities, the population mostly used to live in rural areas. And this process from agriculture to industry changes nature, working habits and all social structure. The first development plan aim that the cities keep their own character as much as possible to sustain agriculture product and educate labour to adapt this process.



Figure 1: TR42 Cities and Istanbul

The second development plan (2014) divides the district into three regions by considering socioeconomic qualities: Global Region, Dynamic Region, Periphery Region. Adapazarı, İzmit and Gebze are the important economic centers of Global Region. The 94% of population lives in urban areas in this region. This region has the highest development level and most of the industrial investments. For this reason many people migrate to this region from Dynamic and Periphery Regions. Dynamic Region is a transition zone. This region has still rural characteristic but state and private sector create new industrial zones in this region.

and effect women's life but positively but they don't consider local life, social structure. They don't analyse social reactions, obstacles and gender roles.

For this study, 45 women worker and three managers from three different factories were interviewed. The oldest of the factories provides service for twenty years and the newest one for ten years. The gender roles and social living were shaped by traditions in study area and women's participation in paid employment challenges these traditions and social living. The interviews questioned that why do the women work, how do they spend time after work, in what do they spend their money, decision making processes in family, with whom do they share domestic work. With these questions it was aimed to understand how does the working effect the lives of women, can the women workers access the services easier, the obstacles for women to gain strength and the resistance mechanisms created by women for these obstacles. Hopefully this study will be a framework for future investments and development plans.

Interviews with Company Representatives

Two factories belong to food companies and one of them was opened in 1992, and the other one in 1996. Both of these factories were located outside of the settlement, on the road to Istanbul. The third factory is a textile company and was opened in 2002 in Geyve Organized Industrial Site, closer to the settlement. In all these factories workers work in shifts. Regional development plan gives an important role to these companies to create women employment, specially food companies. So the the interviewees are chosen mostly from the food companies

Reasons to Choose This Region

Firstly it was asked to company representatives that why did the company choose this region. Three of them told that the location is very determinant in making this choice. This region is close to the Istanbul, which is the most important market in Turkey. The rural character of the region do not provide any advantage for cheaper labour for food companies and they also don't consider clustering because the both of them use their own infrastructures. The textile company is located in Organized Industrial Site and moved there during the Istanbul's de-industrialization process. For the textile company, it is important to be close to the Istanbul market but they also benefit from the advantages that are provided by Organized Industrial Site. The company representative also told that the region provided an unexpected advantage, labour force. Specially finding women worker is not an issue for the textile company.

Thoughts About Female Workers

The advantages and disadvantages of employing women were asked to company representatives. The social life in the region was shaped by traditions. The women do not spend time with men if they are not from family. The friendship between a woman and a man is not approved by society. But in these factories women and men work together in the same place. It was asked to the representatives if that caused any problem.

One of the company representatives is woman and she told that organizational culture of her company supports women employment. The company has branches on all regions in Turkey and employs women in production, distribution and management. In this factory, there are 220 women and 305 men workers. 208 women work as blue collar workers and 8 women work as white collar.

The company representative doesn't think that there is a difference between women's job and men's job in production. The maximum weight, break time, needed skill are same for women and men in production process. The company doesn't hire part time or seasonal workers. Women and men get the same wage. So they don't need to choose one gender and try to keep a balance between number of men and women employees. The management of the company also support the women to be machine operator or forewomen when they are experienced. The company considers to empower women but they also know the limitations which are shaped by social life in the region. Production process has different production lines and mostly workers of each lines have the same sex.

The company representative explained this situation by employees' own choices. She also told that if women and men work together in the same line there is always a foreman. Because the male workers don't want to receive orders from women but also the women hesitate to give orders to men. She thinks that working together in factory helps to normalize women men relationships but there is a still long way. Even the company has zero tolerance for gossips and slanders it is impossible to stop people talking about their coworkers.

The representative of the other food company defines his company women friendly too. There are 900 workers in the factory and about 100 workers are female.¹ 10 women work as white collars in quality control department, rest of them work as blue collars. These company representative thinks that there are two important difference between male and female workers: women are physically weaker and they have domestic works beyond the working in factory. So they give the physically less tiring jobs to the women and let the women to regulate their shifts in a way to taking care of their children and home. The company also organizes special events in Mother's Day, that women can join with their families and give to them presents. Despite the company representative emphasize the respect to motherhood, the company has no day care center or nursery room. Another women friendly policy of the company is employing the women who really need to work. It is important to understand which women really need to work according to company representative. The company representative and the owner of the catering firm that provides catering and cleaning services to the factory support women to work if they really need. And the women who really need to work are widows who have no support from family and have to feed their children. Catering firm owner thinks that the women who insist on working and earning their own money are greedy. When they earn their own money they become rebel, don't respect the head of house and the families come apart.

¹ This company representative didn't give the exact numbers because of company policy.

Lastly, in textile company there are 520 blue collar workers and 390 of them are female. The company will increase the employment capacity and hire 200 more women in 2019. The company representative defines the job as an intricate job that requires maximum attention and women are much better in these jobs. So the company prefers to employ women. Female workers are mostly single or childless young women. The women do not prefer to work when they got married or having kids. The company representative thinks that women's priorities are changed once they got kids and they don't want to work anymore.

All of the three companies define themselves women friendly but none of them have daily care centers or nursery rooms. Only the female company representative accepts that it is a huge problem. It is not a choice for company, but the current conditions causes this deficiency. The factory campus is noisy and smelly. And also delivery from the factory continues during all day. These conditions are unhealthy and dangerous for the kids. If local government offers an appropriate place the company is ready to build a daycare center.

The representatives of the other two companies don't think that their companies are responsible for daycare centers. According to law, for food company providing daycare service is not an obligation by considering the number of female employees. And the employees of textile company are mostly single or childless women. The company representative thinks that leaving the child in daycare center is an abnormal thing for the women in this region. The women don't want to leave their kids with strangers, they prefer to get help from their mothers or mothers in law. The only daycare center in Geyve provides service to the white collar women, as teacher or officer.

Interviews with Female Workers

The thirty two of the interviewees are married with children, eight of them are single and five of them are divorced. The youngest interviewee is twenty two one years old and works in the textile company for eleven months. The oldest interviewee is sixty years old and works in one of the food companies for sixteen years. The highest education level is secondary school and none of the interviewees is illiterate.

The interviewees mostly live in town centers which are defined as rural centers by regional plan. The shuttles of companies provide transport service to the women who live in central neighborhoods, but the women who live in nearby villages need to arrive closest shuttle point. These women always travel with their husbands or male family members. None of the interviewees use their private car. The family cars are used by husbands or fathers.

Reasons to Work and Spending Items

The women were first asked why they worked and where they spent the money. While single and childless women spend the money mainly for themselves, married women with children put the family support and the needs of children first. Clothing, self care and fun come last. There are two main motivations to continue working life. one is the dream of retirement, the other is to buy a house. Having your own house also has a symbolic meaning in this region as well as throughout

Turkey. Women are very familiar with the home ownership of their relatives, neighbors or colleagues. These statements are very common in interviews “husband and wife worked together to buy a house” “despite of all the hardworking they couldn’t afford to buy a house” “they don’t have a house but spend money too thoughtlessly”. Almost all married women see women's work as wasted labor if they cannot buy a house. In a sense, buying a house is seen as a tangible equivalent of the efforts.

In this region head of the house is traditionally husband or father and has the control of the money. In families, that make a living with agriculture, when women work as paid agricultural workers, their wages are usually paid to their husbands or fathers traditionally. For this reason, women were asked who had their salary cards. The majority of women keep their salary cards themselves and find it normal to keep their own money. However, immediately after saying that they had control of their money, they felt the need to state that they spend their money for their families and they did not have any luxury expenses. . Women are better than their husbands in determining the needs of children, as well as basic needs, trips with children are paid by women's money. Women take great pride in taking their kids for weekend trips, cinema or other activities.

One of the three women who did not have her salary card said that she handed her salary card to her married son. The sixty-year-old interviewer woman does not want to shopping because she is exhausted in the factory that is why his son does it for her and others by using woman’s salary. Other two women’s salaries are in their spouses. One of the women did not understand the accounting affairs and the other said that she was working because of her husband's debts and that the money she earned was taken by her husband and deposited in the bank.

The companies don’t have seasonal or part time employees. The female and male employees work under the same conditions for same working hours and get the same wage. However women’s wage was accepted as a contribution to the family budget. Married women say that decisions about buying expensive goods such as furniture, car or house were made mostly by husbands. Husbands prefer housewives rather than working ones when women make too many comments on how to spend money.

A interviewee explains her reason to divorce with this attitude. Her ex husband wanted to spend the money that she earned by working hard and she didn’t let him and got a divorce. Divorce is not very common in her family and community but she has a “honest job” and works “chastely”. So she got support from family and friends.

All the interviewees emphasized this “working chastely”. Working outside the home is still a new concept for this region. In factories women and men work together and it causes gossips about men women relationships, and these gossips reach family members. For this reason female workers care to limit their relationships with male worker. They don’t chat with male workers, they only communicate with male workers if it is necessary for work. None of interviewees wanted to talk about details of these gossips. But they told that there is no gossip about women who cares only her job and works chastely. For the interviewees behaving chastely and limiting the relationship with

male workers are women's responsibility. Men are just men and women have to be careful if she doesn't want to cause gossips.

Spare Time Activities

The spare time activities of women were asked through interviews. The women that are married with children spend their time with family specially with their kids. Domestic works take most of their time but they believe that earning money gives them opportunity to spend more quality time with their families. They have picnic in nearby areas, visit historical and cultural places, go to cinema and shopping in urban center. And all these activities are possible when the family has two wages.

Women spend their spare time with their female workers too. Workplace provides also socialization opportunity for women. When their shift ends on the morning, women go to breakfast or drink tea in a cafe. Husbands are not jealous or unpleasant, because they know the other female workers and trust them. Spending time with other women are refreshing for the female workers. These women are mostly single or have school age children. The women with young children can't have their own time.

Sharing Domestic Work

Thirty five of the interviewees are married with children. And most of them do domestic works themselves. When a woman has an unemployed daughter, she helps to mother in domestic work. Oldest interviewee has an unemployed daughter in law and despite she has her own house she cooks and cleans for her husband's parents too. And by her help the interviewee can continue working. The interviewee is glad with this sharing, she thinks that domestic works are much harder than working in factory.

For child care women get help from other female family members. Mothers, mothers in law and unemployed sisters care the children when the mothers are at work. Women with young children can not socialize with their colleagues. They feel guilty when they don't go directly home and free the carer of the child. Only one interviewee told that her husband couldn't find job when their children are young and took care of their three children. He also cooked and cleaned house. Despite all the critics and mocks from family and friends she thought that her husband did a good job and she could earn the money without worrying for children.

Husbands don't take responsibility in domestic work or child care. And women basically accept this organization. They don't complain about difficulties of work life they think that the double working make their life harder. The job in factories is physically exhausting but when they leave the factory the job is finished but responsibilities of home continue for seven days and twenty four hours.

Conclusion

Investing in non-agricultural sectors in rural areas created employment opportunities for women and play an important role in empowerment of women. Getting paid for their labour made the

women more independent. They became more self confident because they can create quality time for their family and themselves.

Despite all these positive effects, women face many difficulties in working life. According to the community working and earning money is not a right but a privilege for women. Women have to behave decently to have this privilege. To keep their names clean they have to be always careful. However companies do not employ first degree relatives in the same campus, some friend or neighbor watches the actions of the women. The male worker don't respect the female workers. They think that the women are not good enough to make qualified jobs, so they need to be thankful and don't argue with male workers.

Women mostly have control of their money for daily needs. But as a wife and mother they put their own needs wants in second place. They don't spend money for education, self care or making savings. The important decisions are made by husbands. They work hard with their husbands to buy house or car but these properties belong to their husbands.

And the biggest problems that women have to face are caused by gender roles. Women have to cook, clean and take care of the children and elders. Factories have no day care centers or nursery rooms. Women feel guilty about living their children or take a break from working. They identify themselves as mother, daughter or wife. They can easily give up on working woman identity.

Companies have their own policies about employing women, women job definitions and opening day care centers. There is no regulation or incentives in regional plan strategies about these policies. The regional agency need to analyse local social life carefully to determine the social obstacles that stand in front of women empowerment.

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