

STRUCTURE AND CHANGING PECULIARITIES OF TURKISH VILLAGES

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Summary

The structure of the Turkish villages and the changes reflect not only the present situation of the rural area, but also reveal some tips concerning the future of the rural life.

Turkey's dynamic economy is a complex mix of modern industry and commerce along with a traditional agriculture sector. That character of the economy is observed in the rural areas as well, and a dualist structure dominates even in agriculture which is still the outweighing sector in villages. If it is considered that in 2011 the share of agriculture in total employment was about 24 percent and in the GDP - 8 percent, the ongoing significance and the traditional character of the sector is obvious.

However, big enterprises which are carrying out the modern techniques besides small holdings which are achieving only very low productivity in agriculture, denote the changing agricultural conditions and accompanying life of living in rural areas.

Presently, there are three types of villages all over the country: Villages showing improvement tendency, villages with a stagnant character and the villages which are deteriorating in many aspects.

Conversion in rural areas is affecting the urban areas as well; not only the economic environment, but also the outlook of the whole society reflects the traces of that transformation.

Keywords: Rural areas, agriculture, migration from villages, gender issues, Turkey.

Introduction

Economic and social character of the rural and urban areas reflects the overall picture of the community, like a mirror. However, the rural areas represent the society pursuant to their weight in the economy and to the settlement pattern as well. The outlook of the cities, e.g., especially of the big ones which attract the rural population is changing as a result of the rural exodus phenomenon. Initially that change came into being in the suburbs depending on the density of migration and the migration absorbing capability of those cities; the cities begin to have some characteristics of rural areas. Consequently, social life acquires a new shape which has some new features as an indicator of that rural-urban interaction.

The development of rural areas, therefore, ought not to be considered only as a way of covering the needs of a section of the community; it is obviously of great importance for overall development of the country. Actually, the rural-urban interaction which cannot be always evaluated positively can pave the way of changes in both sections of the community concerning lifestyle, mentality, traditions, and behavior pattern.

Social changes which are observed in Turkish society are affected by economic and political factors. Those factors are also influencing rural society; besides the rural sector-specific factors are triggering the changes in the rural areas.

The aim of the paper is to describe the structure of the Turkish villages and to try to understand the future of some aspects of the rural life through explicating the present transformations in that structure.

The current state of the villages will be defined from some economic, social and cultural aspects compared with the urban areas, and the observed changes in the course of time will be summarized. For determining the current situation in the villages, some topics such as demographic characters of the country, the peculiarities of agriculture, which is the main economic activity in the area, transformation phenomenon in general and in agriculture, gender issues and expectations under the light of observed developments will be addressed.

Demographic Characters of Turkey

The population of Turkey reached 74.7 million on December 31, 2011. The yearly rate of population increase was 1.35 percent in 2011. The median age of the population in Turkey was 29.7 in the same year. The age of 67.4 percent of the population is between 15 and 64, namely economically active population attains 50.3 million people. The population that is between 0-14 years of age has a rate of 24.3 percent (Turkish Statistical Institute, *Adress Based...* 2012, p.1-2).

Population density is 97 persons per square kilometer. 76.8 percent of the population lives in the urban areas, while 23.2 percent of the population lives in the rural areas. However, some cities are pretty small and living standards in these settlements are rather similar to the rural areas. While the population of some cities can be described as huge (e.g. Istanbul with 13.6 million citizens), the scale of some cities is beyond comparable small (e.g. Bayburt with 76 thousand). Some of the cities are growing, whilst some of them have a stagnant position and some cities are regressing through migration. The population of 56 provinces increased in 2011, but the population of remaining 25 provinces decreased.

The rate of the persons at the age group of 0-14 in rural areas constitutes 24.3 percent of the total population in the same age group just like the Turkey's average. The rate of the people whose age is between 15-64 years reaches only to 21.4 percent in the rural areas, that is highly lower than the average rate of Turkey, namely 67.4 percent. That fact indicates that the economically active population is mainly located in urban areas and the rate of the people who live in the rural areas is even lower than the average rate of rural population in Turkey, namely 23.2 percent. The rate of the rural people who are older than 65 years of age is 35.8 percent of total population in this age group and that is a clear evidence of the aging problem in rural areas. 23.6 percent of the economically active population is employed in agriculture, while 19,8 percent works in the industry sector, 6,4 percent is employed in construction sector, and 50,1 percent of people work in civil services as per December 2011 (Turkish Statistical Institute, *Household Labour Force...* 2012).

Agriculture and the structure of agriculture give shape to the living style in villages as the main economic activity in the rural areas. Therefore, agriculture has a special role for villages.

Agricultural Situation in Turkey and the Changes in the Course of Time

A general overview of agricultural activity and its role in the economic life in the rural areas reflects the general economic situation of the rural areas. Describing the economic state and changes in general would explain the development in the rural areas as well.

Agriculture accounts for only a small share of GDP (8 percent in 2011) (<http://www.tuik.gov.tr/VeriBilgi.do?tb_id=55&ust_id=16>). Agricultural employment figures are declining in absolute and relative terms in the course of time, but they are also

changing within the year. Though the figures incline to decrease from year to year, some people who migrated from their villages or are employed in other sectors come to their households to do agricultural activities, whenever their labour is needed, such as in the harvest time. The rate of agricultural employment increase in summer time and decrease in winter, e.g. the rate of agriculture in total employment was 24 percent in December 2009 and 26.6 percent in August 2010 (T.C. Başbakanlık... 2010a, 2010b).

The statistics about cultivating area of agricultural holdings are collected in each ten years. Therefore the last numbers indicate the figures of 2001. The number of household members engaged mainly in agricultural works in the holding was 11.8 m people totally in 1991, while the number decreased to 8 m in 2001. The figure was 5 m in 2008 (European Commission 2009). According to the results of Population Censuses and the Households Labour Statistics, the figures are declining steadily albeit a change depending on the seasons. The shift of the amount of agricultural employment from one season to another does not occur only due to the labour needs of agriculture. Agriculture helps to overcome partly unemployment problems in Turkey through absorbing the labour force steadily or seasonally. The figures increase for instance in recession times. However, it is quite obvious that the still ongoing high rate of agricultural employment is an indicator of the importance of agriculture in Turkish economy.

Employment in agriculture is steadily declining not only as the share, but also in absolute terms. However, not only is the number of the people who work in agriculture declining, but also the total size of cultivated land is decreasing in Turkey.

The General Agricultural Census is carried out approximately in each ten years as mentioned before. A decision has been taken by a decree that agricultural censuses be held in the years ending with 1. The number of agricultural holdings is decreasing according to the results of the last two censuses. The reduction of the number of holdings is about 25 percent, which declined from 4 million in 1991 to 3 million in the 2001 census. A decrease in the number of holdings can be explained with the fact that people give up working in agricultural area and cease their holdings; but the declining total size of the areas of the holdings which accompanies the decrease of the number of holdings is a subject of alarm. This is a result of negative effects of division of agricultural areas in real terms among inheritors and fragmentation as well. Fragmentation is accelerated whenever the number of inheritors of a holding is abundant and after the parcels cannot be divided among a number of inheritors anymore; in such a case none of the inheritors cultivates the land. Otherwise, the yield would be shared among the inheritors and he/she would work uselessly. The aggregate size of those kinds of agricultural areas is unknown albeit very large, as it is obvious from the figures of the last two censuses. That situation ought to continue after 2001 and even have to gain momentum. This creates a severe loss in respect of resource use of Turkey.

The average cultivated area per a holding was about 5.2 ha in 1991, and it increased to about 6 ha in 2001 as a result of diminishing number of holdings (Table 1). The number and area of the holdings in each size group declined between two censuses. Around 65 percent of farmers have less than 5 hectares of land. The most noticeable change, however, is the fall of the share of farms larger than 100 ha. The shift toward decreasing in this size group indicates that even the holdings which have the potential of being used productive and effective way are faced with the fragmentation process too.

Out of the Agricultural Censuses, a statistical research performed by the State Institute of Statistics in 2006, depending on the sampling method (T.C. Başbakanlık... 2008) It may present an opportunity for making a comparison among the results of censuses and the situation of the recent years. The results indicate that the share of smaller farms and the share of land used by them in the whole agricultural area are both declining. The utilized agricultural area per holding is averagely 13.1 ha in Turkey.

Table 1. Number and Area of Agricultural Holdings in Turkey by Size

Size classes	1991 Agricultural Census		2001 Agricultural Census	
	Number of holdings	Area (ha)	Number of holdings	Area (ha)
Total	4 068 432	23 451 099	3 076 650	18 434 822
Holdings without land	101 610	0	54 523	0
Under 0.5	251 686	66 706	178 006	48 199
0.5 and under 1 ha	381 287	251 109	290 461	195 247
1 and under 2 ha	752 156	1 004 250	539 816	737 802
2 and under 5 ha	1 274 609	3 866 896	950 840	2 953 162
5 and under 10 ha	713 149	4 675 069	560 049	3 812 703
10 and under 20 ha	383 323	4 921 663	327 363	4 388 440
20 and under 50 ha	173 774	4 648 743	153 685	4 207 550
50 and under 100 ha	24 201	1 498 249	17 429	1 121 855
100 and under 250 ha	10 266	1 385 662	4 199	547 693
250 and under 500 ha	1 930	653 808	222	69 554
500 ha and over	441	478 944	57	352 617

Source: Tarım ve Köyişleri Bakanlığı (2009, p.25)

Holdings in Turkey, on the other hand, are not only small, but also fragmented as seen in Table 2. However, the rate of holdings with more fragmented lands decreased from one census to another. The rate of holdings, the area of which is made up of 4-5 parcels comes to 21.6 percent and the area used by them reaches 16.2 percent of the total area in 2006. The number and rate of the most fragmented holdings are declining and the reason of that shift is probably depends on the big loss in size of the parcels after fragmentation process, so that they cannot be divided any more.

Table 2. Fragmentation of the Area of Agricultural Holdings

	Agricultural Census 1991		Agricultural Census 2001	
	Number	%	Number	%
Number of parcels	21 601 272		12 323 405	
Holdings with land:				
Total	3 966 822	100.0	3 022 127	100.0
1 - 3 parcels	1 716 301	43.3	1 708 259	56.5
4 - 5 parcels	904 028	22.8	615 313	20.4
6 - 9 parcels	759 531	19.1	484 520	16.0
10 parcels and more	586 962	14.8	214 035	7.1

Source: Tarım ve Köyişleri Bakanlığı (2009, p. 3)

Fragmentation and migration processes changed the used types of land. Population in rural areas is aging as a result of the migration of younger household members and the old inhabitants who can hardly cultivate the land prefer to have the land cultivated through tenancy.

Shareholding is a common land use form in Turkey. There are two kinds of shareholding in Turkish agriculture; traditional and capitalistic ones. Traditional shareholding dominated in large holdings, especially in the Southeast Anatolia Region, which provide landowners (landlords) a great controlling power not only on agricultural activities, but even the daily life of the shareholder's family and the right to capture bigger share from the goods

produced in the holding. As long as the huge holdings getting smaller and fragmented, these traditional relations weakened and they exist only in some places. Shareholding phenomenon is, however, becoming dissimilar in the course of time. Small sized farms, the owners of which are mostly old, rent their farm land to the persons who have entrepreneur spirit and also capital to be used in agricultural activities. The controlling power is in the hand of tenant in this case and the weak side is the land owner. That type of capitalistic shareholding form is becoming more and more common as a result of the changes in the rural areas. The data for 1991 and 2001 show a remarkable shift towards the farms under more than one form of tenure. The number and the area of the holdings which are owned, owner like possession or cultivated under a single form tenure (except rented from others) decreased highly (Table 3).

Holdings which cultivate only the area under their possession amounted to 85 percent of the total holdings and their area reached 71 percent of the total in 2006. The rates were 85.9 percent and 77.8 percent in 2001 respectively.

Table 3. Land Tenure of Holdings

	Agricultural Census 1991		Agricultural Census 2001	
	Holdings	Area (ha)	Holdings	Area (ha)
Total holdings with land	3 966 822	23 451 099	3 022 127	18 434 822
Under one form of tenure	3 964 962	23 443 689	3 016 834	14 952 655
Owned/in owner like possession	3 901 389	23 227 689	2 597 111	14 342 427
Rented from others	46 636	135 815	92 792	563 828
Other single forms of tenure	16 937	80 185	9 604	46 400
Under more than one form of tenure	1 860	7 410	322 617	3 482 168

Source: Tarım ve Köyişleri Bakanlığı (2009, p. 3)

Land use of holdings also shows the general structure of agriculture from another aspect. As seen in Table 4, only wood and forest land enlarged (22.7 percent). All other groups lost their shares at different rates. Agricultural land, cropland and field crops incultivated areas decreased about 20 percent and the decline in land under permanent meadows and pastures was about 40 percent. Land left temporarily fallow declined between two censuses about 14.5 percent. In order to decline the fallow area 'fallow land reduction project' implemented in Central Anatolian Region promoting the production of pulses, instead of leaving land fallow. Although the fallow area decreased as a positive impact of that implementation, the situation changed in due course concerning world markets for the pulses. While Turkey was a country exporting pulses, began to be an importer.

The land use distribution is changing depending on the size of holdings. The bigger the holdings are, the larger the share of arable land in the total area of the holdings is. The share of fallow area is also increasing depending on the widening of the holdings' lands. Horticulture and orchard areas concentrate in the size groups of less than 5 ha, 5-9, 10-19, and 20-49 ha. Smaller farms are more convenient for vegetables, fruits and flower cultivation.

Agricultural holdings are mostly specialized in field crops (25.7 percent), and orchards are at the second place (20.8 percent). Animal breeding is mostly performed as a mixed form (beef and mixed cattle, sheep and goat - 16.7 percent) (Tarım ve Köyişleri Bakanlığı 2009, p.4).

Table 4. Land Use of Agricultural Holdings (ha)

	Agricultural Census 1991	Agricultural Census 2001
Total land	23 451 099	18 434 822
Agricultural land	22 371 576	17 723 501
Cropland	21 449 482	17 165 463
Arable land	19 509 423	15 362 984
of which:		
Land temporarily fallow	3 203 411	2 737 560
Land under permanent crops	1 940 059	1 802 479
Land under permanent meadows/pastures	922 094	558 038
Wood or forest land	196 823	241 461

Source: Tarım ve Köyşleri Bakanlığı (2009, p. 3)

62.3 percent of the agricultural holdings performed both crop production and animal breeding, while the share of holdings producing only crops reached 37.2 percent in 2006. Holdings in which solely animal breeding activities performed attained barely 0.5 percent. Depending on that fact, 66.4 percent of the total area was used by the mixed farms, while 33.5 percent of the total area was used by the holdings producing only crops and hardly 0.03 percent of the land was used by the animal breeders (ibid, p.2).

Irrigation is a key factor for forming a crop pattern. 1,3 million holdings reported that they were irrigating the land and their irrigated area reached 3,5 million hektars in 2001. The share of irrigated areas was approximately 19.8 percent of the total agricultural area according to the results of 2001 census. However, in 2006, 24.1 percent of the areas used by the holdings were irrigated.

As to the livestock production, 1-4 cattle owned holdings constitute of 59.7 percent of total holdings which raise cattle and 10-19 cattle owning holdings breed the most cattle with the rate of 25.4 percent within the whole holdings which have bred stock. The major of sheep and goat breeding holdings, on the other hand, have 20-49 animals and their share in total sheep and goat breeding holdings reaches 25.3 percent, while 36.1 percent of all sheep and goats are under the possession of the holdings with 50-149 animals (ibid, p.3).

In light of the foregoing data the main problems of Turkish agriculture can be summarized as follows:

Structural problems are in the front rank, such as:

- Ongoing population pressure on agricultural lands leads to the fragmentation of the parcels through the real division of heritage and to the small sized farms;
- Small and scattered farm land decreases the productivity and increases the production costs;
- Millions hectares of land is being left without cultivation because of the jointly owned parcels and the ageing rural population;
- Agricultural areas are decreasing due to the diversification (e.g. urbanization, tourism, infrastructure, industrialization) and soil erosion;
- Limited implementation of technological facilities in agriculture. (The less technological development in agriculture is realized, the more agriculture depends on weather conditions. Since the arid climate dominates in most of the regions, providing with irrigation water and the necessary investments for irrigation becomes inevitable. The development in that area is not so hot.)

Problems concerning marketing of agricultural products:

- The high input prices on which high taxes are imposed and the low level of productivity increase the production cost per unit of agricultural products, while the market prices of them are not high enough to compensate the costs;
- Farmers are not organized for marketing their products (weak cooperations). Since the marketing power of the small scale holdings' owners is weak they do not have any advantage on the free market and agricultural activities are in generally not profitable for them.

Investment attitude in agriculture is not widespread due to the low income level of average farmers:

- Constraints in obtaining credit from the bank (e.g. lack of security element) restrain using of loans for production and particularly for investment;
- The loans are taken up generally for meeting production costs or daily requirements;
- The shortage of the investments affects productivity negatively and leads ultimately inadequate production increase.

Transformation Phenomenon in Turkish Villages

The problems of agricultural sector affecting the population in rural areas whose main source of income is agriculture. Agriculture is not a sector which creates sufficient revenue for the farmers in many regions any more. Implemented agricultural policies are not satisfactory to provide sufficient income to the people who are working in agricultural activities and therefore to keep them in the sector. As agriculture the basic employment source for the rural areas and other economic activities are not common or widespread, e.g. other fields of activity are limited in rural areas, the deterioration in agriculture in many regions leads the migration; the effected people are leaving agricultural activities and ultimately the rural areas as well. Since the vocational knowledge and professional competency of the people who only worked in agriculture hitherto is not adequate to get a new job, the only formula for surviving would be the migration from rural areas in order to find a working place in another settlement where they could work as unskilled workers. Therefore the deterioration of agricultural situation and decreasing the advantages of agricultural activities are the most important reasons of leaving the rural areas. The people who continue to stay in villages and to work in agricultural sector mainly do it as they are faced with a necessity or have no option. That fact is not valid for the villages, the lands of which are productive, farmers are comparable wealthy, produced crops or animal products are being marketed without any difficulty.

It is then obvious that all villages cannot be considered in the same group. Some of the villages with wide productive agricultural lands, generally conscious producers, locations near to the big markets show a performance and potential. The existing non-agriculture employment possibilities close at hand enable finding supplementary works or mass employment surplus in the villages without the need to migration. The only threat concerning these villages is urban sprawl in short and medium term and to lose productive farm lands to enlarge cities. Such villages are a role model for the villages which are showing improvement tendency.

The second group of villages shows a stagnant economic structure. Even if they faced with migration, economic activities were continued to some extent, but the number of children diminished due to the migration of young villagers. There is an aging problem. Economic investments do not exist in or around the villages, agricultural works are carried on depending traditional knowledge, agricultural products are not marketed in large quantities and any mounting evidence concerning the development of village is observed or even any

remarkable development is anticipated. Stagnant economic structure is restraining the expectation of a promising future for the villagers.

The third group of villages is composed of villages which do not look bright, their population decreased until a small number of families, and poverty dominates. The people who remained in the villages do not have even an option of migration, they bow to fate and survives there.

However, each group of villages has different types, some peculiarities and it is not so simple to classify them (G. Eraktan, S. Eraktan, Gudowski 1999, p.77-83, 81-82; Aksoy, Badiel, G. Eraktan, Kuhnen, Winkler 1988, p. 103-104).

Expectations and judgments of human being are related to their own assets and those of the people they can observe around. The concepts of wealth and poverty are formed according to the observed pattern. Farms are classified taking into consideration the situation of the village; i.e. a farm with less than 10 ha land is a small scaled farm, while a farm with 50-75 ha land is satisfactory for feeding a family and the one with about 200-300 ha land is a large farm, according to the assessment of villagers in a village with wide production areas, productive soils, and bountiful harvest for marketing. In a very impoverished (for instance a mountain) village with very limited cultivation areas, on the other hand, a farm with 0,2-1 ha land is a small one and 3-10 ha land is a satisfactory size for a family. In some villages there is no idea about the size of a satisfactory land too. As a matter of fact, no farm larger than 10 ha area exists there or thereabouts. Hence they do not express an opinion about vast or large sized farms as well (ibid, p. 35). That standpoint of relative poor people indicates not only the situation of being content with what they have, but also the effects of the circumstances of the milieu and existing resources.

Consequently, transformation can be different for each group of villages too. However, the unchanged characteristic of transformation is the migration from the villages. It seems that the main reason of the migration is looking for a solution to the economic difficulties.

Another reason of the migration is the attractiveness of cities. Differences between rural and urban areas, such as way of life, expectation of raising living standards, e.g. getting access to better health and education opportunities, cultural and social services and even realizing higher social status to the family member are important issues that accelerate migration process. Maiden, for example, tend to prefer to get marry with the men who live and work in the cities or press their husbands after marriage to migrate to the cities Arslan 2010, p. 389). This is another motivation element for migration and thus another reason of aging in the villages.

Poorness, poverty, unemployment and insufficient civil services in rural areas make the villages not a viable location. Besides, the pressure of terrorism in Southeast Anatolia can be mentioned as another reason for the migration from rural areas. This migration is not only toward the cities in the same region, but to the all regions around the country. The people who migrated to a place attract their townsmen to migrate or they directly call their relatives to the same place. Some ghettos begin to emerge around the cities which consist of the people who came from the same place of origin.

Migration is the result of the lack of ability to feed on the people and provide them with humanly living conditions in rural areas (ibid, p. 383). Migration not only weakens working potential of some villages, but creates numerous problems in migration-receiving urban areas. Many cities transformed to big villages, since the migrated villagers did not change their way of living in the cities. Additionally, communal problems such as slum areas, illegal buildings on treasury's estate, not being able to be a city-dweller and carrying on the characteristics of village life, urban unemployment, radicalism, a rapid increase of crime rate and social-psychological problems are some of the consequences of migration.

Gender Issues in Turkish Villages

Gender issues in rural areas can be considered from two points of view; the role of gender in the work environment and gender equality in the villages.

The rate of women in the total employment was 29 percent in Turkey in February 2012. That figure indicates the low women's employment ratio in Turkey. The rate of women who work in agriculture in the total agricultural employment was 44 percent according to the figures of the same period. About half of the women are working in this case in agriculture and agricultural activities are the main field of activity for women (Turkish Statistical Institute 2012b).

Though it is not precisely the same in all regions and for all working areas, the sexual division of labour is more or less similar in rural areas throughout the country. Horticultural works, animal feeding, housework, preparing food for consuming in winter, and even works in fields are among the women's duties. Except from the large and medium sized holdings, housewives and the maiden in the households occasionally work as hired agricultural workers. In some regions, where the employment opportunities are limited, and households that are landless or have small scaled land dominates, e.g. Southeast Anatolia, working in agricultural area as a worker is the only way of earning money. All the family members, including children, go to the other regions where there are possibilities for getting a turn of work at the harvest of some crops, such as hazelnuts, cotton, grapes, pulses etc. Women work 7,5-9,5 hours daily in all regions and in every case more than men (Kutlar, Özçatalbaş 2008, p.245). A female labourer who is employed also as itinerant and/or temporary agricultural worker works up to 18 hours Kara, Aktaş 2007, p.77).

Hard works, such as tree trimming, mechanical harvest, soil cultivation etc are mostly responsibility areas of men. The field works carried out in the places far from the village and relations with public authorities are generally undertaken by men. However, women are at least of assistance to their husbands at each stage of works.

The hard works undertaken by women are in general a result of the domination of established paternalistic family order. The women's adoption phenomenon of their place and role in the family is transferred from one generation to the other as a firm attitude. The anticipated tasks from a new bride married into a family and (in some cases) maltreatment that she confronted is repeated to her daughter- in-law in the future.

Children help their parents in each working area in accordance with their gender, beginning with very early ages. Parents are role model for children and the traditions concerning relations in the family, attitudes, behaviors and frame of mind assimilated by children.

If the reduction of the number of people who work in agriculture is connected with the creation of new employment possibilities, it becomes an indicator of economic development in the country. However, if the people who work in agriculture leave agricultural works and villages in order to be employee in casual employment areas, that ought not to be considered as an indicator of development. The fact that approximately half of the economic active women work in agriculture is not a conclusion of the importance of agriculture for women. Economic and social necessities of using female labour force in agriculture as unpaid family worker and manpower deficit came into being because of the male labour looking for a job out of village make it unavoidable for women to work in agriculture. The number of male labour in agriculture was 3.030 thousand and of female labour was 2.390 thousand in February 2012. Most, if not all of female labourers have an unpaid family worker status. The number of women who worked as unpaid family workers (though the sectors where they were employed was not mentioned in the statistics) was 2.060 thousand in the period of February 2012 (ibid, p. 2). It can be imagined that the most of them ought to work in agriculture.

Traditional role of being woman in the rural areas has some peculiarities:

- Women in small sized and landless farms work both at home and in agriculture (in the field and garden, animal feeding as well) and also generally in other people's farms as a casual employee.
- Wages of female labour in agricultural sector is generally about 75 percent of the wages of male labour (Turkish Statistical Institute 2012c, p.1);
- Even if women earn money out of the farm they do not spend that money for themselves;
- It is generally unavoidable to take circumstances and predestination for granted;
- Co-decision process is not common in all regions and villages, in households as well. It changes from one region to another, but averagely 30-40 percent of women subscribe to a resolution in the family. However, that rate was found 10 percent in Southeast Anatolia (G. Eraktan, Aksoy, Kuhnen, Olhan, Winkler 2002, p. 181).

An increase of rural women's role in economic life depends on some changes in prevailing conditions in rural areas. The most important issue is to determine whether there is a surplus of female labour in agriculture. If there is a surplus, or the increased mechanization level creates such a surplus, what kind of employment possibilities is available for them? Is the capability or education level of women good enough for being an employee in other fields of work? What would be the effects of changing working areas of women on the transformation of agricultural population? What kind of working areas could be created in rural areas?

There are some restrictions which prevent women working out of agriculture. They can hardly work in a place out of the village. Education possibilities for girls are mostly depending on the region they live. The interest to get the girls educated is higher in the western regions. That matter is also connected with the girls' demand to attend to school. The marriage age is averagely 18-19 in villages and to let a new bride to go work is not a common attitude. Traditions play there a determinant role too.

The conservatism related to women in towns and around the big cities becoming widespread to the rural areas which have in reality a more democratic structure. That proliferation is affecting the thoughts and attitudes in rural areas.

In Muslim communities there is a general attitude that the women and men who are not near of kin could not be together in the same place. That type of behavior has not existed in the Turkish culture. At each level of community life women have been situated beside and next to their men. Gender segregation has not been seen in the Turkish communities and particularly in the nomadic population. Men and women have acted in concert in peace and wartime. Rural women in Turkey have been kept neither off communal nor economic life during the history (Arslan 2000, p.411; cited from: Kirby 1962, p.98-99).

Even Mustafa Kemal Atatürk made a speech on that fact in 1925 and brought up an issue. He said "I saw fellow women who covered their faces and eyes very strictly and with caution, not in villages but especially in towns and cities during my tours in the country. I suppose, that situation is surely a reason of torture and bother for them particularly in that hot season. Men fellow; that is rather the consequence of our egoism... Our women are also insightful and thoughtful like we are. If we explain them our national morality and illuminate their brains with light and pureness there is no need to be selfish. They make their faces visible to the world. And they can observe the world carefully. There is nothing to fear in that issue. I warn it cordially that to persist in continuing that situation and fanaticism cannot retrieve us from the tendency of suspecting the disaster that awaits us." (Kaymaz 2010, p.347; cited from: Atatürk 1959).

The struggle for keeping women off communal life was particularly an implementation of the town-dweller that originated from some other countries. However, villagers began to pattern themselves after attitudes and living styles of city-dwellers.

Conservatism that is becoming widespread in most cities has an effect on rural areas as well and even some behaviors and dressing, especially the styles of covering the heads, are taking example by villagers. Trying to act like the women in the cities would change the rural women; they behave as if they were also town-dwellers. Thus, the dressing style which represents a political symbol spreads through the rural areas. If it is thought as a step, the threat in this case is that a new process of conservatism is entering, concerning man-woman relationships in rural areas, which has not existed in most of the regions of the country up to the present.

Before entering under the influence of the Islamic culture and civilization, Turkish and Mongolian societies were administered according to customary law (Dalkesen 2008, p. 441). Customary law is a traditional common rule or practice that has become an intrinsic part of the accepted and expected conduct in a community, profession, or trade and is treated as a legal requirement (<<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/customary-law.html>>). Customary law changed during the time depending on the social, economic and cultural needs. It is regarded that there was equity between men and women in Turkish people at that era (Dalkesen 2008, p. 442). Therefore customary law did not used as an instrument for applying pressure on women.

The tradition of forcing a widow whose husband died to marry with her brother –in – law (even though he does not want such a marriage) is continuing in some regions of Turkey and the people who migrated from towns and villages to the cities transferred that tradition to the city life. Another implementation of traditional approach is the bride exchange, i.e. the marriage of a man with a girl is only permitted, if the brother of that girl marries with the sister of that man. Though it is normally an optional choice of the couples, it becomes sometimes obligatory especially in Southeast Anatolia and the girls (and sometimes the young men) are forced to accept that marriage. There are some social reasons behind that tradition, but it makes mostly the couple's life miserable.

Where the feudal system dominates (such as Southeast Anatolia) women are killed in the name of honor (Bilgili, Vural 2011, p. 67). The marriages occur often between cognate people and men consider themselves as the protector of the honor of the family and relatives. Customary law is so strong that not only fathers, brothers or husbands, but also mothers and sisters are the supporter of the decisions concerning customary killings. The major part of the community is against the violence in name of honor. However, there is also a social and cultural structure which incents and encourages this type of killings and even defends the killers (ibid). It is interesting that this type of customary killings does not only occur in the rural areas, but such killings moved to the big cities as well (and even to some foreign countries) due to the migration, over urbanization, the intensive social mobilization between villages and cities and increased communication possibilities (ibid, p. 68).

Developments and Expectations about Villages

It is rather sophisticated to evaluate the present situation of Turkish villages with their favorable and unfavorable aspects. Since the villages do not have a homogenous structure, their developments and futures cannot be similar either. Their facilities and limitations show a wide variety. However, some opportunities and threats are similar for almost all of the villages. The influences of the opportunities and threats also vary depending on the possessed facilities and faced limitations in the villages.

The developing economic conditions in the country create a better production milieu and sales occasion parallel to the increased demand for foodstuffs. Increasing export possibilities and better organized export companies initiate the way of opening foreign

markets. Just in that point, on the other hand, the accelerated import of agricultural commodities invokes a great competitive environment that harms domestic producers a lot.

The most important risk that endangers the village life is the migration process that has been hitherto handled a lot. Stagnation and structural collapse in agriculture will continue to decrease the number of active population in agriculture. Not only the villages which have no economic future, but all villages are under the risk of migration. That generalization does not apply only to the villages in which touristic facilities are highly developed. Even the villages with high productive farm lands and with investments in agriculture are subject to dwellers' migration. The reason of that challenge, as it has been explained before, is that they do not see their future to be guaranteed. Indeed, the share of persons who did not any social security was 82,1 percent in agriculture sector, while the rate was 27,3 percent in other sectors outside agriculture in the period of February 2012 (Turkish Statistical Institute 2012d).

Village life and attitudes of villagers to each other are changing in due course. Industrialization and economic development do not change the frame of mind only in urban areas, but also in rural areas. Relations among family members and relatives are weakening, while the materialist thought gains strength (Aksoy, G. Eraktan, S. eraktan. Kuhnen. Winkler 1994, p.99). Social structure is being under risk too.

The role of women in agriculture and working life in villages keeps its weight. To find job for women and to take them from some agricultural duties is not seen probable without migration while the working fields are not diversified in rural areas; even for the male labour there is a scarcity in connection with this matter.

To draw up these undesired consequences is not a result of pessimistic point of view. That is a reflection of unwanted expectations for the future which can be unavoidable unless the solution of unfavorable development is found. The optimistic point of view motivates the improvements, but to point out the problems is fundamental for taking measure.

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