



TURKISH INDUSTRIALISTS' AND BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

# TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY: EDUCATION, WORKING LIFE AND POLITICS

**Executive Summary**

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Meşrutiyet Caddesi, No.74 80050 Tepebaşı/İstanbul  
Phones: (0212) 249 54 48 - 249 07 23 • Fax: (0212) 249 13 50

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# FOREWORD

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*The following report entitled "Towards Gender Equality: Education, Working Life and Politics" is the executive summary of the original study prepared by Professor Mine Tan and Associate Professors Yıldız Ecevit and Serpil Sancar Üşür in Turkish.*

### **Prof. Mine Gögüş Tan**

Mine Gögüş Tan is Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Ankara University. She is a graduate of the Law School of Ankara University. Tan received her M.A. degree in sociology at the Washington State University, USA and Ph.D. in sociology of law at the Ankara University. She has taught and published on women and education, history of women, history of childhood and sociology of education.

### **Assoc. Prof. Yıldız Ecevit**

Yıldız Ecevit is a graduate of Hacettepe University. She received her master degree at the University of Kent, U.K. and obtained her Ph.D. degree from Sociology and Social Anthropology Department of this university. She is Associate Professor at the Sociology Department, Middle East Technical University and also teaches in Gender and Women's Studies Graduate Program. She has publications on women and economy, new technologies and its effect on women, women and development, women and poverty, employment and unemployment, feminist theory and methodology.

### **Assoc. Prof. Serpil Sancar Üşür**

Serpil Sancar Üşür graduated from Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science. She obtained her Ph.D. on political science in 1989 and has become Assistant Professor of political theory in 1997. She is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Science, Ankara University. She is the director of Woman Studies Center of Ankara University. She is also the director of Women and Gender Studies Graduate Program. She teaches political theory, methodology and gender studies. She has several publications on related issues.

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# **1. GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION**

According to the internal legal order and the international commitments, education is one of the basic human needs and rights in Turkey. It is defined as one of the necessary conditions of individual empowerment and social development. In the Turkish constitution (Article 42) it is stated explicitly, that no one can be prevented from making use of the right to education and that elementary education (for girls and boys) is compulsory and free in state schools. The state is assigned the responsibility of supporting the disadvantaged pupils through scholarships.

A review of the international data demonstrates that, especially in the low income countries, the returns to the investment made in women's education has proved to be greater than men's. "Education is essential for improving women's living standards and enabling women to exercise greater 'voice' in decision-making in the family, the community, the place of paid work and the public arena of politics". In addition to such improvements, increase in women's education was found to be highly related to a decrease in population growth and child mortality rates thus helping to raise a healthier and better educated generation of children in Turkey.

## **1.1. Achievements**

Education has been one of the most sought after objectives of the women's movements ever since the Ottoman period. The realization of this demand for large segments of the female population, however, was made possible under the Republican governments. Some of the achievements of the Republic in this respect can be stated as follows:

- The legal framework supportive of women's equal participation in education
- Increasing rates of literacy, schooling and higher education for women
- Considerable progress in girls' compulsory elementary education the length of which was finally raised from 5 to 8 years in 1997
- Direct relationship observed between increased levels of education and women's retention
- Co-education at all levels
- Corresponding rates of women teachers and students

- Rising employment rates for highly educated women
- Large proportion of women in such esteemed fields as medicine and law
- Total number (23,099) and the proportion of women academicians exceeding those of their counterparts in some of the industrialized countries
- Local and regional efforts of public and non-governmental organizations to initiate non-formal education and training systems to reach women and girls in rural communities and other disadvantaged and marginalized groups
- The critical voice of the women's movement and a rich volume of publication in women's issues deepening women's awareness and strengthening demands for social change and action
- A long history of academic interest in the field which is now organized as a multidiscipline, postgraduate program under the name of Women's Studies.

## **1.2. Facts and Figures**

In spite of the gains made in the process, the relationships between the educational system and the other institutions are complex and the educational opportunities and school experiences of women reflect the gender disparities of the social structure and culture. Enrolment ratios at all levels of education are low as compared to developed countries. The gender gap in elementary and secondary schooling is closing but women still lag behind men at all levels.

*Literacy* is a more pressing problem for women than for men. The target of raising women's literacy rates to 100% by the year 2000, one of the commitments Turkey made in Beijing, has not been realized. The literacy rate is 77 % for women and 94 % for men.

Girls still have less *access to education* than boys. The enrollment ratio at the elementary level is 79 % for boys and 68 % for girls. This means that the number of girls remaining out of the school system is close to 1.5 million. The female share in enrolment varies considerably by regions and the imbalance tends to be much greater than for boys. For the male population the ratios were 93 % in Mediterranean region (Antalya), 60 % in South East Anatolia (Diyarbakır) and 72 % in East Anatolia (Erzurum) but for the female population they went down to 75%, 39 % and 41 %, respectively. Even in such "developed" regions as Istanbul, Ankara and Antalya the total numbers of the girls not enrolled in school reach as high as 408,559.

International comparisons demonstrate that the deprivation of women in education is not destiny. School life expectancy for women (total number of years an individual is expected to stay in school) in 30 countries out of 81 is longer for women than for men. Turkey ranks third among the countries which have the widest gender gap in school life expectancy. In England, the school life expectancy is 16.7 years for women and 16.2 for men whereas in Turkey it is estimated as 8.5 for women and 10.6 years for men.

Although the pre-school education has nearly a century old tradition in Turkey, facilities are inadequate and the ratio of enrolment is low: 7.3 % for girls and 7.9 % for boys. The ratio of allocated amount of resources for pre-school education is only 0.25 %. The scarcity of resources at this level is indicative of the fact that mothers (or other women relatives) are still expected to be the main caregivers to pre-school and young school children.

In the 1999 - 2000 school year the share of female students in *elementary education* was 45.8 %. The eight year reform in 1997 has given an impulse to the positive development. In the first three years following the reform, enrolment increased by 12 % for girls and 8.3 % for boys. Enrolment of girls at 6th grade which was 357,412 in the 1996-1997 school year increased by 7.3 % to reach 587,246 in 1999-2000.

At the *secondary level* the deprivation of the girls becomes more visible in the vocational and technical education. In 1999-2000, of the 1,175,537 students in high schools 45.2 % were female whereas the share of 316,189 women in the vocational technical schools was 37.5 %.

**Table 1. Female Share in Education (1999-2000)**

|                                 | <b>% of Total Students</b> | <b>% of Total Teachers</b> |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Pre-school Education            | 47.6                       | 98.9                       |
| Compulsory Elementary Education | 45.8                       | 43.8                       |
| Secondary Education             | 41.9                       | 40.4                       |
| General High Schools            | 45.2                       | 43.2                       |
| Vocational and Technical        |                            |                            |
| High Schools                    | 37.5                       | 37.4                       |
| Higher Education                | 40.4                       | 35.8                       |

Source: Statistics 2000, Ministry of Education, ÖSYM Higher Education Statistics 1999-2000.

Historically vocational technical education has been differentiated by gender. In 1975, however, standard curricula and coeducation were accepted in order to abolish gender discrimination at this level. As the gender specific names of the schools were unaltered no significant change has been observed in the student composition. The female share is 87 % in girls' vocational technical schools and 10 % in boys'. In religious instruction schools established to train intermediary personnel for religious posts which can only be filled by men, the ratio of women is an exceptional 50.2 %. In the last three years prior to the eight year reform enrolment ratios in religious education had increased 10 times more rapidly for girls than for boys. In the three years following the reform, female share decreased much more slowly (by 14 %) than male share (by 41 %).

**Table 2. Enrolment Ratios in Religious Instruction** (% of total students in vocational technical education)

|           | <b>W</b> | <b>M</b> |
|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1993-1994 | 18,7     | 20,4     |
| 1996-1997 | 21,8     | 18,3     |
| 1999-2000 | 21,3     | 12,6     |

Source: State Institute of Statistics, Statistics on Education 1993-1994, 1996-97; Statistics 2000, Ministry of Education

In the 1999 – 2000 school year one out of every five women in vocational technical education was enrolled in religious education. The high proportion of female enrolment in religious education gave support to the arguments about the violations of the basic objectives of these schools and their role in reproducing traditional gender segregation in a secular school system.

The gender gap in higher education enrolment has disappeared in many parts of the world. In the Caribbean, Western Asia, New Zealand, USA, Eastern Europe and Western Europe women's enrolment has actually surpassed that of men. Enrolment ratio at higher education is quite low and there is a significant gender gap in favour of men in Turkey.

**Table 3. Third Level Enrolment in Selected countries (%)**

|          | <b>W</b> | <b>M</b> |
|----------|----------|----------|
| Bulgaria | 51.6     | 31.2     |
| England  | 56,3     | 48,6     |
| Iran     | 13.1     | 21.9     |
| Turkey   | 15,2     | 26,5     |

Source: <http://unesco-stat.unesco.org>

As in most regions of the world, liberal arts is the one field of study most frequently chosen by women in Turkey. Many women also enroll in health sciences which include medicine, dentistry and nursing. Large proportions of women study mathematics and science although men still have a larger share in this field. Engineering, technical and agricultural studies are the fields of study men tend to dominate.

**Table 4. Participation of Women In Higher Education, 1999 – 2000**

|                           | <b>(% of Total Students)</b> |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Language and Liberal Arts | 57.8                         |
| Maths and Science         | 46.6                         |
| Health Sciences           | 53.3                         |
| Social Sciences           | 40.0                         |
| Applied Social Sciences   | 43.0                         |
| Technical Sciences        | 23.0                         |
| Agriculture and Forestry  | 32.1                         |
| Arts                      | 55.2                         |

Source: OSYM Higher Education Statistics 1999-2000.

According to the UNESCO reports in all parts of the world women tend to teach at lower levels, men at higher levels. Pre-school education is the only level at which women *teachers* predominate in Turkey. At higher educational levels women are a

lower percentage of teachers and at the third level men teachers largely outnumber women. A large majority of women teachers at higher education are in such "appropriate" fields as liberal arts. The ratio of women is largest in the lower teaching positions and decline towards higher ranks with better pay and tenure. The ratio of women among full professors, however, is a high 24% compared to most other countries.

### **1.3. Obstacles**

Two main groups of factors contribute to the educational inequality between women and men:

#### ***Economic, social and infrastructural barriers***

With 12.7 million students, 500,000 teachers and nearly 60,000 schools in elementary and secondary education and 1.5 million students at the third level, education stands as a gross and troubled endeavour in Turkey. The school system is under the heavy pressure of *the high rate of population increase*. The number of combined classes at the elementary level is high, and overcrowding in classrooms prevail at all levels. Total *public expenditure for education* is 2.7 % of GNP, which is lower than many developed and developing countries.

The share of education which was 13.2 % of the consolidated budget in 1990 decreased to 7.1 % in 2000. The inappropriate design and application of structural adjustment policies resulted in *declining investment in education infrastructure*. A further problem is related to the spending in that the high proportion of personnel expenses leave less resource for other needs. Although the compulsory education is free in state schools, efforts to create additional revenues have led to introduction of user fees. In the low income groups unable to afford school expenses the lack of resources constrained the girls' access to education more than the boys'.

Illiteracy is one of the most important signs of the *unequal distribution of power and resources* in a society. In virtually every country where illiteracy is high, women are more likely than men to be illiterate. Illiteracy is generally observed among poor women in rural areas and especially those speaking unofficial languages. "The remote location of rural communities and the *distance* that students must travel to school tend to affect the retention of girls more than the boys. Disparities in girls' and boys' school attendance also reflect different demands

on children's time". Children and more often girls than boys are kept away from school to *help on family farms or in care of younger siblings*

The long periods of *armed conflict* and the targeting of civilians, including women, children and teachers as well as the *displacement of people* led to closing of schools and made attracting and retaining teaching professionals difficult in rural Eastern and Southeastern regions.

Demographic and Health Surveys in Turkey found that the most frequent reason cited by girls for leaving school was "family did not send". This expression may be linked to the *family's financial situation* and perceptions by parents of the value of education as well as *traditional discriminatory practices and negative stereotyping of girls*. Another barrier for girls on the way to school *was early and forced marriages* usually involving a brideprice in the rural areas. Girls' motivation was also found to diminish when motherhood was the only role they saw for themselves and when role models were lacking.

### ***Discriminatory educational practices***

The gender equality in education is certainly not confined to enrolment. Equal number of girls and boys at all levels of education is the necessary condition but not the sufficient condition. The quality of education provided bears importance as well and this quality is determined by the *organization, processes and content of education*. "Any attempt to understand the full impact of schooling on gender divisions must analyse not only the distribution of forms of knowledge and qualifications on the basis of sex; it must explore also the subtle ways in which the educational process brings to life and sustains sexual divisions". The school is after all one of the major agencies of socialization which help to reproduce the asymmetrical power relations of the wider society by teaching girls to be women and boys men.

According to UNESCO reports at the primary level, one of the reasons for leaving school girls in most countries frequently cited was "did not like school". Research in Turkey confirms these findings in that "did not like school" is the second most important reason for women's dropping out of school. This may be associated with the low quality of teaching or teaching facilities as well as "the internal workings and the environment of the educational institutions, factors which make the experience and the horizons of girls more circumscribed than that of boys".

The school is based on a patriarchal family model. Not only the number of women teachers decrease at higher educational levels but also "important" subjects like maths or science are usually taught by men. Women are also under-represented in *leadership and management roles* in education. In the 1999-2000 school year only 5 % of elementary and secondary school managers and 4% of deputy managers were women. There are also relatively few women at the decision making level in the Ministry of Education.

Although coeducation is the overriding rule of the system, gathering the girls and boys together under the same roof does not guarantee the mixing or equal treatment of the members of different sexes. In some schools *seating arrangements, washrooms or physical education and sports facilities* are used to segregate the sexes. The most effective use of sexist arrangements was observed in the field of religious education schools where girls covered their hair and were separated from boys in class, canteen, schoolyard and during the official ceremonies. Even in the other types of secondary schools control over the sexuality of the girls is part of the *sine qua nons* of the system. Make-up or hair and skirt lengths are the subjects of inspection as a part of daily routine of school life. According to Regulation of Discipline and Awards in Secondary Schools (art.17) school management can exercise the right to ask for a medical report on virginity to determine a girl's "chastity".

*Subject choices* at secondary school have important influences over the kinds of training and employment which are open to girls and boys in later life. Girls are clustered in so-called verbal fields like languages, arts and social sciences and boys in scientific, mathematical and technical subjects. "Teachers or advisors can take a decisive role in the process of pupil choice and encourage specialization along gender lines".

Studies have shown that boys receive an unequal *share of teachers' time and attention*. "Although girls are criticized at least as often as boys for academic mistakes, boys are far more often reprimanded for misconduct". These negative interactions account for a large share of the extra attention directed at boys and teach girls to remain silent and unseen to avoid such encounters.

"A review of the elementary and secondary *curricula* shows that social studies, literature and history syllabuses fail to give full due to the range of activity of both

sexes, and incorporate values and assumptions which downgrade and devalue women's experience and achievements". Although women have raised children for thousands of years, and taught for more than a century there is no place for their experiences in the field of education. Research reported persistent use of *gender stereotypes in educational materials*. In the mathematics syllabus for 1<sup>st</sup> grade students the first female figure displayed is a Snow White. The science syllabus for elementary schools opts for the example of "jealous chicken" in a game to develop democratic thinking in children.

In the *non-formal education programs* which show a great diversity throughout Turkey, the same gender bias or insensitivity is often repeated. In some of these programs aiming to promote traditional or "extra income-bringing" skills of women insufficient attention is paid to the link between training courses and labor market dynamics. In a Parents School program an "expert" declared that "the woman who delivers her 9th child on the field is a better mother than the teacher who leaves her 2 year old child to a babysitter". This opinion was announced and interpreted in the following day's newspapers as "the mission to raise children belongs to mother".

#### **1.4. Conclusion and Policy Proposals**

Considerable progress has been achieved in improving women's and girls' education and training at all levels in Turkey. There is also "increased awareness that education is one of the most valuable means of achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women". In spite of the constitutional and international commitments and compared to many other countries, however, Turkey still lags behind in many aspects of gender equality in education. Female illiteracy is still serious problem. Enrolment ratio of women even at the elementary level is far below that of men.

Having documented facts and figures on school attainment, it must be added that statistics do not tell the whole story of gender inequality in education. A closer look in the content and workings of the educational system demonstrate that the school experiences of the girls and boys provide them with different aspirations and habits of thought about their future status. To the extent that educational practices and materials incorporate gender discrimination and bias persisting in society schools help to reproduce and renew a conventional sexual division of labor.

At this point we are reminded (by such writers as A.M.Wolpe, R.Deem, M.David and M.Stanworth) that education is "partially autonomous", the site of diverse pressures and struggles. It is also capable of asking new questions and finding new solutions while transferring conventional knowledge. The revolutionary force of education is due partly to its internal conflicts and partly to the willpower and resistance of the human beings involved in it. Recognition of the partial autonomy of education implies that some degree of social change is possible through educational intervention. The fundamental problem is to see how education relates to gender (or class, race and ethnicity) and also how the potential of education to promote freedom can be used to the advantage of both genders.

### ***Basic approaches***

Gender disparities in education should be approached not only by developing measures to improve the women's access to education but also by adapting a series of different arrangements to alter the organization, relations, language and the syllabus of the educational system to *introduce women's voices*

The challenge, however, for a just society must always be *multi-faceted*. Considering that education is not a magic wand, such a struggle must involve the structure of the family, the economy and the cultural factors besides the form of schooling. As stated in many global conferences further progress for women requires a stronger commitment to place women's empowerment and gender justice at the heart of national and international agendas. The political will that supports development must change the conditions and structures which claim women unequal. Clearing away some of the obstacles will only provide a symbolic progress. Real transformation needs *reconstruction of the structures of the basic power relations between women and men*

A comprehensive policy of change should be formulated and implemented in close collaboration with the such agencies as international organizations, NGOs, private sector, regional and local organizations, political parties and labour unions. In order to assess the implications for women and men of any planned action, a gender perspective should be incorporated (*mainstreaming*) into the design, development, adoption and execution of all national development programmes and reform projects in education.

## ***Targets and Policies***

*Within the framework of the "Further actions and initiatives to implement the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action adopted by the plenary of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century".*

### **Policies to improve women's access to education:**

- Improve educational infrastructure by allocating sufficient resources and supporting the implementation of plans and programmes of action to ensure improved enrolment and retention rates for girls and boys
- Improve child care and pre-school facilities
- Eradicate illiteracy among women
- Ensure policies that guarantee equal access to education and elimination of gender disparities in education, including vocational training, science and technology
- Accelerate action to close the gender gap in elementary and secondary education by 2005 and to ensure free compulsory and universal elementary education for both girls and boys by 2015 as advocated by several global conferences and eliminate policies which have been proven to worsen and perpetuate the gap
- Promote measures for completion of basic education for girls, especially for those living in rural and deprived areas
- Increase opportunities for continuing education at all levels for all women and girls
- Increase non-formal educational opportunities to enhance the self-esteem and employability of women

### **Policies to eliminate gender discrimination and bias in education:**

- Ensure curricular reforms and policies to use potential of education to provide all students with access to universal values
- Rearrange curricula and central entrance examinations at all levels in order to give equal weight to such subjects of study as philosophy, arts, history, languages, maths and science

- By incorporating aspects of critical and feminists pedagogical approaches into planning of classroom activities enhance the use of democratic educational methods
- Develop gender sensitive curricula from pre-school to elementary schools to vocational training and universities
- Eliminate gender discrimination as well as gender stereotyping in educational materials as well as in the process of education
- Develop pre and in-service programmes to improve gender sensitivity of teachers
- Create and maintain positive *action* policies providing equal representation of girls in all types of education, in science, mathematics, new technologies including information technologies, and technical subjects
- Develop national capacity to undertake policy-oriented and gender-related research and impact studies by universities and national research/training institutes to enable gender-specific knowledge-based policy-making
- Develop policies and implement educational programmes, particularly for men and boys, on changing stereotypical attitudes and behaviors concerning gender roles and responsibilities to promote gender equality

Measures taken to enhance the equality of women and men in education will also help to build a child-friendly school system which has been defended since the Jomtien Conference held in 1990. Eliminating gender disparities in education will not only empower women and promote gender equality but also be a great leap on the way to a more democratic and peaceful society.

## **2. WOMEN'S LABOR IN WORKING LIFE AND GENDER EQUALITY**

### **2.1. The Dimensions of the Usage of Women's Labor in Turkey**

#### ***Women's Labor Force Participation and Basic Tendencies and Patterns Concerning Their Employment***

According to the results received from the Household Labor Force Surveys held during the last decade, the labor force participation rate of both women and men found in the population of ages 12 and older has shown a tendency to decrease, though not systematically. In the Household Labor force Survey held during April 1999, of the total population that is considered economically active, only 29.7 % of women and 68.3 % of men participated in the labor force.

The most important underlying factors that have lead to the decrease of women's participation in the labor force in Turkey are changes in economic structures, accompanying social transformations, and specifically migration from rural to urban areas.

#### ***Labor Participation Patterns in Urban and Rural Areas***

Women's labor force participation rates differs according to their place of residence. While women's participation rate in urban areas lies beneath the national average (15.8 % in 1999), their participation rate in rural areas is above average (47.6 % in 1999). In urban areas, the tendency for women's participation shows a dramatic decrease. On the other hand, in rural areas, while women's participation in labor has been decreasing on the whole, it is considerable slower that the drop observed in urban areas. The fundamental reason for women's higher participation rates in rural areas is the fact that they constitute unpaid family labor.

#### ***Labor Participation Patterns According to Age***

In urban areas, women's labor participation rates are most frequently seen in the age group of 20-24 years. As a result, the assumption that in urban areas the "female workforce is a young workforce" would not be incorrect. For older age groups, factors such as marriage, household duties and childbirth contribute to the drop in participation rates, which fades out after the age of 40. The main

characteristic that distinguishes rural women's participation from those living in urban areas is that their participation extends beyond specific age groups, that economic activity is seen in all ages after 15, and that such participation is continuous.

### *Labor Participation Patterns According to Levels of Education*

The annual participation rate of women in labor force both in Turkey in general, and in rural / urban areas accordingly, increases at every higher level education. From 1989 until today, when the whole of the female workforce is taken into consideration, while the participation rates of illiterate women, women who have dropped out of primary school and women who have graduated from primary school have diminished, the participation rates of women who have received an education beyond that of primary school have been on the increase. Between the years of 1989-1999, the rate of high school graduates has increased from 16.6 % to 20.8 %; the rate of graduates from schools providing education equivalent to high schools has increased from 6.6 % to 7.2 % and the rate of university graduates has moved from 13.8 % to 22.8%. These results are very significant in that they prove that as women increasingly acquire the skills demanded by the labor market through higher levels of education, their probability of entering the market increases accordingly.

### *Patterns of Employment According to Economic Sectors*

A comparison of women and men according to their employment distribution in different economic sectors in Turkey shows important existing imbalances and inequalities. When the Turkish case is considered in whole, nearly \_ of the total number of employed women in 1999 were found in the agricultural sector.

As 72.2 % of women are employed in the agricultural sector, the proportions of the remainder of employed women in industry and the service sectors are 9.7 % and 18.1 % respectively. In urban areas, the proportion of women employed in the agricultural sector decreases while their proportions in the service and industry sectors increases. The service sector is the most important sector of employment for women living in urban areas. In urban areas, women's participation in the service sector has been on the increase, while their participation in the industrial sector has been on the downfall. This can be related to the fact that the service sector has been expanding and has consequently been creating more employment

opportunities for women, whereas the industrial sector has been unsuccessful in this sense.

The proportions of women and men in each sector sharply indicates inequalities based on gender. In urban areas during the year 1999, of the total workforce in the industrial sector only 15.4 %, and in the service sector only 18.9 % were women.

### *Patterns of Employment According to the Professions*

When the country is considered in general, it is not surprising to see that as a result of women being employed with a greater frequency in the agriculture sector, women in general have, thus, intensified in professions related to the agriculture sector. The second concentration field for women after agriculture is in manufacturing , more clearly it is in industrial production. In 1999, scientific and technical staff and self-employed professions contained 23 % of urban accommodated employed women. Also the rate of working women in this group is higher than that compared to the rate of men in this group (8.7 %). This data exhibits that the number of women in professions intensified in the cities and thus their tendency to work has increased.

### *Patterns of Employment According to Employment Status*

Statistics indicate that in all status groups, with the exception of unpaid family workers, at least 80 % of all working people are men. The main reason for this situation is due to the fact that an average of 70 % of women are employed as unpaid family workers. There has not been a significant change in this rate during the last decade (1989: 69.5 % and 1999: 68.6 %). This rate is important in showing how wide-spread women work as unpaid family workers. Working under such a status is significant since it does not provide any benefit (such as economic independence) other than statistically including them within the existing labor force.

### ***Unemployment***

The unemployment rates of women living in urban areas has always on the whole been higher than that of men, and in most instances has been twice as much or higher. The reason why women's unemployment rates in rural areas is lower than men's is because despite the fact that they constitute unpaid family labor, they

are considered to be part of the population of working women who are not employed in an income-bringing occupation and are thus included in the general labor force statistics.

The second dimension concerning women's unemployment is that unemployment is generally seen among young women found in the 15 - 19 age group. A conclusion that can be drawn from existing statistics concerns the fact that having a higher level of education has not reduced the high unemployment rate seen among young women. 44% of unemployed women searching for employment opportunities in urban areas are either graduates of high schools or school providing education equivalent to that of high schools. On the other hand, men with the same level of education who are seeking employment only constitute 24%. More important, in the age group of 20-24 where unemployment is most intense, the rate of unemployed women who are the graduates of either a high school or schools of an equivalent level increases to 56 % when compared to unemployed women existing in this age group. The rate of men in the same age and educational grouping is 39%. The unemployment rates of both women and men possessing higher education are much lower than the unemployment rates of women and men who are high school graduates.

Women's comparatively higher unemployment rates in comparison to men's and their comparatively longer duration spent unemployed is a complex phenomenon that cannot be simply explained by their lower levels of education in respect to men. As it can be seen in the aforementioned points, considering that women and men possess identical educational levels, women's unemployment rates are still higher than that of men. This situation is also related to the fact that women are exposed to gender segregation both while they are looking for employment and after they have found employment.

## **2.2. The Exclusion of the Female Labor Force From the Labor Market and the Basis for This Condition**

Explanations related to the patterns of women's labor force participation have been provided in previous sections. In this section, the primary focus will be on the category of housewives, which is statistically defined as a group which "does not participate in the labor force," and also unemployed women who wish to work, but have not yet found employment. An attempt to answer the very basic question

of "why women in urban areas do not participate in the labor force?" will also be made in this section. A part of the answer to be given to this question is very closely related to the patriarchal ideology that defines women's position as women, and the role that women consciously or unconsciously play in perpetuating this ideology. Another part of the answer is related to the existence and functioning conditions of an economic structure that women wish to be a part of, but are unable to. Answers from both groups will not only present the reasons why women are excluded from the labor market, but will also suggest ways in which it might be possible for women to enter this market.

### ***Reasons Related to the Supply of Women's Labor***

#### *Migration to Urban Areas*

Despite the fact that migration to urban areas decreased after the 1980s, this significant geographical mobility of the population has very deeply affected the lives of at least a couple generations of urban women and still continues to do so. Pressures to conform to the values regarding urban family pattern were placed on these migrant women, as well as to adopt the status of being a "housewife." Even though a few of these migrant women had the opportunity of entering the urban labor market by means of very marginal occupations, it cannot be claimed that working as cleaners in homes or offices, as child or patient care-givers, or as low waged factory workers has made a significant contribution to the development of the work patterns of women who have just recently migrated to urban areas. If this specific group is set aside, the impact of the first thirty years of internal migration on women who migrated to urban areas might be deemed and summed up as the "housewife-ization" effect. On the other hand, the economic difficulties experienced by urban families alongside the growing tendency of family members toward working in exchange for a wage have contributed to the change in women's perspective regarding work as well as to their actions. Consequently, in order to be able to make a distinction between the more recent attitudes from earlier ones, it is important to note that women living in urban areas -either migrants themselves or the daughters of migrant families born in urban areas- no longer view paid work as distant to themselves, and that they show a growing willingness to work outside the home.

### *Level of Education*

Today, inequalities regarding access to educational opportunities among the female and male populations that cannot go unnoticed still persist, and this situation also reflects onto statistics. According to recent data, in the Turkish case, women still lag behind men when adult literacy levels are taken into consideration. The increase in the difference between women and men that is seen with the rise in the level of education, in general, is directly related to women's lower social status and the values that society as a whole places on women. According to the findings of several qualitative studies carried out during the late 1990s, families have expressed the preference of prioritizing male children, which constituted the primary reason for abandoning their pursuits of educating female children. It must be noted here that there are also findings that indicate a slow change in these negative attitudes and tendencies toward women's education. However, although there is a growing tendency towards providing equal educational opportunities for children of both sexes, this positive attitude does not extend to include occupational choices. In other words, stereotypes still prevail when girls' employment decisions are taken into consideration.

### *Women's Responsibilities Concerning Reproduction*

In order to meet the needs of their family members, there is a series of duties and responsibilities that women both feel obliged and compelled to do, or are forced to do through the patriarchal family order. Such duties and responsibilities not only limit women's decision to enter the labor market, but also reduce their probabilities of entering this market. While arguing that women's reproductive responsibilities constitute one of the factors that exclude women from the labor market, it must be remembered that work related to keeping the household in order in addition to childcare and the care of other dependent family members is generally carried out by women alone, most frequently without the help of others. The strict structure of the gendered division of labor within the family, shaped by socially accepted rules governing female and male roles bind women tightly and leave them with pretty much no other choice than to carry out these predefined roles.

The possibility of urban women to be able to work outside the home is high as long as they have the capacity to hire housekeepers and babysitters to help with

household duties. Therefore, in order to be able to hire others to take up their household duties, women who wish to work outside the home must have earnings that would cover the costs of hiring such help.

### *Women's Preferences*

The professional preferences of women who have been excluded from the labor market, but who would be capable of entering the market if the conditions were appropriate, greatly affect their decisions regarding "working" or "not working." The convenience of the conditions of work, to an extent, refers to the possibility of balancing household responsibilities with the demands of working life. Hence, in this section, the preferences of women under this context will be discussed, followed by a discussion of their expectations.

Generally speaking, in making the decision to work and in choosing a specific areas or work, women tend to avoid occupations that they believe would hinder their household duties. The preferences that women frequently make reflect their desires and concerns regarding the compatibility between their household and family duties, and their working life. However, there are also other factors that lie outside such concerns that affect women's decision to enter or not enter working life, as well as the type of work they will take up upon deciding to enter working life. The wages offered by the work that has been decided upon constitutes an important factor, alongside factors such as whether or not the job includes insurance opportunities, or whether or not the job will be continuous and other such dimensions which play an important role in occupational decisions.

Another dimension that determines women's occupational preferences is related to the notion of whether or not the work to be taken up is appropriate for women. In this context, women prefer work that has been traditionally taken up by women has been deemed appropriate for women by society at large and work that women have identified themselves with.

### ***Reasons Related to the Demand for Women's Labor***

Women's labor can be excluded from employment though demand related factors. In general, demand for women's labor is lower in comparison to the demand for men's labor, and this demand is also open to conjectural fluctuations, and is weak in continuity and permanence. On the other hand, when there is a

demand, women's labor is generally attributed the following position and role: young women who have little or no family responsibilities, who view their wages as secondary or supplementary, whose tendency to voice their problems and demands either individually or collectively are weak, and who are compliant and dependent persons. This attributed role strengthens women's disadvantaged position as a labor category possessing low levels of education, skills and qualifications. Under the prevailing circumstances, it seems highly difficult that the female labor force will become integrated into the new employment and competitive strategies that are fed by changes in the technological base of production, and are based on product quality.

### **2.3. Problems and Difficulties Faced by Working Women Related to Their Working Lives**

#### ***Women Working in the Informal Sector and in Non-Standard Jobs***

There are various reasons that have caused the growth of employment in the informal sector in Turkey during recent years. Of the two reasons that are closely related to one another, the first is the increasing inequality of income distribution, while the second is the high inflation rate. Other reasons include the insufficient growth of the formal sector and changes related to production within this sector.

Groups that increasingly received smaller and smaller portions of income had sped up supplying their labor to informal sector jobs in order to be able to increase their earnings. Meanwhile, the inflation experienced after 1980, and the consequential regression in actual wages had specifically directed families with low incomes to search for alternative sources of income, and it is this tendency that had initially caused the expansion of the informal sector. As the income obtained from the informal sector increased the total income of the family, the low wages offered by the formal sector were compensated for. Through this, the informal sector also provided a means for compensating the gap left by the formal sector in the reproduction of families. The most distinctive dimension of female employment in urban areas is that women have increasingly taken up work in informal sector jobs that required practically no qualifications. In 1999, among the total of working women, those employed in the informal sector constituted 55.2%, while this dropped down to 32.5 % for men. With the expansion of the informal sector, the practice of home working became more widespread.

### *Working At Home: Home Workers*

Home working has become one of the most popular forms of work for women in the informal sector. Since it is an arrangement that lowers the cost of labor, especially if women and children's labor is used, home working has been a frequently employed strategy in the last two decades by firms that have to compete in international markets. It is during this period when part of the production process was realized at home that women experienced increased economic difficulties. This parallel has been the major reason why the structure of working at home (or employment at home, from the perspective of women) has become so widespread. In addition to this, it must be kept in mind that there are other reasons not directly related to the market for the relative increase of women working at home for a wage. The obstacles that prevent women from working outside their homes also constitute the grounds that allow them to decide to work at home. Among these are: the initial difficulty of finding a job outside the home, and even if one is found it may not be satisfactory; the low income to be received by the selected occupation may not be enough to purchase the services necessary to provide care for the children and other family members; and the patriarchal ideology that opposes working outside the home, which is generally represented by the family's male members.

### ***Women's Low Wages and Wage Inequalities Between Women and Men***

In Turkey, women's wages are always lower than men's. The difference of wages among women and men increases or decreases depending on the level of education, the sector that is in question and the condition of employment, but the general rule remains unchanged.

The fact that women's wages are low and that they almost always lag behind men's is not just an important phenomenon related to women's participation in the labor force; it is also a situation that affects women's decisions to work and causes a decline in their status within the labor market. In other words, knowing that she will be receiving a low wage not only might prevent her from entering working life, but it might also decrease the job satisfaction she receives if she in fact does decide to take the job. Since the wage received in return for her work is low, the economic independence that she would be expected to gain through work may not

be realized, or this wage may not contribute positively to her status within the family.

Both micro and macro level studies have proven that women receive lower wages than men do. The Household Income and Consumer Expenditures Survey of 1987, and the 1994 Income Distribution Study have made it easier to see the difference between women's and men's wages according to basic variables such as educational level, age, economic activity, occupations, conditions at work and the size of the workplace.

According to the results of The State Institute of Statistics' (SIS) Household Income and Consumer Expenditures Survey held in 1987, the difference between women's and men's hourly wages was 40%, which meant that on average women could only reach 60% of the wage earned by men. There is a positive relationship between education and wages. While at the level of primary school education women received 42% of the hourly wages earned by men found in the same educational level, this proportion increases for those who have received higher levels of education. The degree to which the positive contribution of education in increasing women's wages and closing the gap between themselves and men differs according to state and private sector jobs. For instance, in 1994, women with university degrees working in the public sector received 76% of male employees' monthly salary that also had the same level of education, while in the private sector this was only 68%.

Differences in women's and men's wages also exist according to different occupational categories. Both the study of 1987 and of 1994 indicate that the greatest income differences were seen among agricultural workers. When viewed according to occupations, the second most disadvantageous group of women in terms of wages are those who work in non-agricultural production activities, ie. those working in the industrial sector. In this group, the existing relationship is exactly the opposite of that mentioned above, in that women manufacturing workers in the private sector are only able to earn a monthly salary that is the equivalent to 50% of men's monthly earnings.

### ***Discrimination and Lack of Protection In Spite of Existing Laws***

When compared to many other countries, Turkey has a positive position with regards to having a legal framework that protects women from discrimination and

from unequal treatment in their working life. On the national level, the Constitution and other laws bearing judgments related to employed women form the basis for this legal framework, which aims to provide for equality between women and men, and prevents discrimination. By signing international conventions, Turkey has already committed itself to complying with the principles that aim to create equality between women and men and to protect women from discriminatory actions.

The legal arrangements used in providing equality between women and men in Turkey have always been highly influenced by international laws related to this matter. The increasing sensitivity of the international public and women's movement toward gender equality has also reflected onto Turkey. Never the less, in spite of becoming part of such a sensitive milieu and the steps taken toward establishing equality between men and women through adopting international legal arrangements, the discrimination and unequal treatment that women face in reality have not been terminated altogether. It would not be wrong to mention that women are still unprotected when job security and equal pay for work of equal value are concerned, and that despite all of the legal regulations, the problems experienced in these two areas still have not been overcome. Job security is a right that a large majority of women working for employers do not have access to, with the exception of a small portion found in the public sector. Employers can fire their workers on the basis any single reason. In addition, despite national and international legal regulations, different wages are still paid to women and men employed in jobs that have equal qualification and productivity levels for both men and women in the same workplace, hence contradicting the principle of equal wages.

It is obvious that the legal regulations related to working women -in a situation that can be defined by changing economic conditions, the global market, flexible production processes and finally a weakening organized worker's movement- have not been able to maintain equality between women and men and in fact seem quite insufficient in preventing the rise of new inequalities. The most important steps to be taken at this point would be to revise existing laws and amend articles that may give rise directly or indirectly to gender inequalities. Unless such actions are taken, the legislation that is believed to protect women from discrimination and provide equality may form the basis for another form of discrimination.

## **2.4. Areas of Action and Policies**

Since the late 1980's in Turkey, institutions were established to support and strengthen women, and to seek equality between women and men. These institutions sought to keep their work up to date with ongoing developments in the international sphere. Such steps taken in the last two decades to improve the social position of women and the effort to establish gender sensitivity have been based on the development of a women's movement both intellectually and in relation to political activism since the early 1980's.

In Turkey, even though the different efforts made by both governmental institutions and women's organizations towards establishing equality between women and men, and abolishing discriminatory legal/practical practices may not have reached the desired level, there have been some significant improvements. As a result of the increase in attention and sensitivity toward gender equality, it is very interesting to observe that this has created important positive practices and the decisions reflected in the fields of law, politics, education and health. However, although there have been a large number of propositions made regarding the working women, no concrete, effective developments have taken place in policy or in practice.

The suggestions made concerning women's increasing participation in the labor force, overcoming social inequalities faced in working life, and strengthening working women in the following sections are based on the background as described above.

### ***National Policies in Increasing Labor Force Participation and Preventing Unemployment***

In addition to characteristics that differentiate women's unemployment from men's unemployment, there are also common features that determine the unemployment of both women and men. So, it must be kept in mind that while women's unemployment does have dimensions unique to women, it also carries with it characteristics that emerge from this general framework. The problem of unemployment is still a very significant problem in Turkey. While Turkey had been a country that made 50 % or more of its fixed capital investments in the industrial sector up until the 1980s, this rate decreased rapidly after this period. Investments

made in the industrial sector were replaced by investments in the service sector and real estate. If this specific composition of investments does not change and if the proportion of industrial investments does not increase within the total amount of investments made, there will not be a significant decrease in the rate of unemployment. However, limitations to investments are not the only factor that creates unemployment, nor will simply increasing investments solve the problem. Since unemployment emerges as a consequence of multi-dimensional social and demographic processes, employment policies that encompass these dimensions as well are necessary.

### ***Policies Geared Toward Increasing Women's Labor Force Participation and Preventing Their Unemployment***

While policies pertaining to women's participation in the labor force and women's unemployment are being discussed, the issue should be approached from this general framework. However, an awareness of their unique situation must also be kept in mind, and discussion areas of a more specific nature must also be touched upon. In other words, macroeconomic and microeconomic policies should be gender sensitive. In this context;

- All institutions and organizations that deal with issues related to unemployment and employment should revise their policies, programs and activities to include a perspective on gender; in other words they should place gender at the center of their focus.
- All institutions and organizations that deal issues related to unemployment and employment should offer programs and activities providing equal opportunities for both women and men, which would constitute the second important characteristic policies aimed at preventing unemployment and increasing employment.
- In order to be able to end the imbalance between women and men with regards to unemployment, it is necessary to try to reduce the imbalance that emerges as a result of men and women concentrating in certain economic and occupational sectors and to promote women's participation in the labor market.

### *The Development of Policies Aimed at Improving The Quality of Women's Labor*

It is possible to realize gender equality in employment through reaching down into the sources of inequality itself. One of the main targets of equality policies should be to provide women and men with equal opportunities for education, and to eliminate the differences between women and men that emerge at every level of schooling.

- According to the aforementioned target, policies must be developed in order to prevent all types of legal and social obstacles, and families, educational institutions and civil society agencies should all be made avid supporters of such policies.
- All necessary arrangements should be made to provide women with equal opportunities to benefit from formal educational institutions. However, it is not sufficient enough for educational institutions alone to re-organize themselves to be able to provide a wider range of occupational education alternatives to larger numbers of women. In addition to this, both working women and families must change their traditional professional preferences for women.

### *Policies Aimed at Eliminating Horizontal and Vertical Segregation Based On Gender in The Labor Force Market*

The unequal distribution of women and men among different occupational sectors, and the concentration of each group in certain sectors (horizontal segregation) alongside the concentration of women in lower status jobs and men in higher status jobs within even in the same branch of work or workplace (vertical segregation) are situations which limit women's employment possibilities in the labor market. Therefore, an awareness of the consequences caused by both types of segregation is necessary when developing policies that aim to eliminate the obstacles (legal and social) that would otherwise keep women from working in traditionally male-dominated sectors. To this extent:

- The tendencies that direct women to choose certain sectors of work and professions should be determined and the negative effects of these tendencies should be eliminated.

- In order to assist women in their advancement to positions and of higher level responsibilities in occupations and workplaces where they are not provided with employment opportunities, it is necessary to clearly state the subjective reasons for such practices and discriminations, as well as providing support to women in reaching positions that entail higher levels of responsibilities.
- The awareness of the fact that there are practices that strengthen the gender based vertical segregation within the workplace which contradicts the principle of equality between women and men, must be one of the factors that directs the employment and placement policies of both public and private sector employers.
- The existence of such an awareness and its effect on directing employment policies is a formidable situation. However, upon instances in which this cannot be applied quotas should be set aside for women at every level of employment to prevent vertical segregation especially experienced within workplaces.

#### *Policies Encouraging and Supporting Women's Entrepreneurial Activities*

The case of women entrepreneurial endeavours to establish their own businesses has been and increasingly widespread process both at the international level and in Turkey. Small-scale enterprises, in a way, are a defence strategy developed by women from low-income groups against the diminishing family income levels and even poverty. In another respect it reflects women's desires to establish work areas in which they can move about independently and autonomously. Regardless of the factors that constitute its sources, entrepreneurial attempts should be viewed as a process that strengthens women. The increase of entrepreneurial activities among women is important in that it not only decreases their dependency on others by providing them with their own source of income, but it also provides an avenue for women who were unable to find employment elsewhere to participate in the labor market. Consequently it has become a necessity, now more than ever, to support women by informing them about the conditions of the market and obtaining bank credits, and providing them with legal and technical consultancy, in addition to information concerning product design, distribution and marketing.

### ***Policies Providing Compatibility Between Family Life and Working Life With the Aim of Easing Working Women's Lives***

If it is believed that equality between women and men is a necessity, it is important to develop policies that will create a compatibility of work and family life for both sexes. Possible arrangements to be developed are as follows:

- Previous legal arrangements are not sufficient enough to require employers to open day-care centers or other child care facilities within their workplace. The perception of considering the mother as the sole and the primary person responsible for their children's care constitutes the basis on which employers remain unconcerned with this issue. Such an attitude must be changed. Rules enforcing the obligation to open up day-care centers within the workplace should be revised to take into consideration not only the number of employed women, but also the number of employed men. Consequently, the rejection of prospective female employees on the basis that they might demand day-care facilities would also be prevented.
- Providing fathers with leave of absence following the birth of their children, or in more specific terms, coining the leave of absence for childcare as "parental leave of absence" and also permitting the individual who desires to make use of it, would not only ease the strict gender division of labor within the family, but it would also provide grounds a more equal and sharing relationships.
- When employed women are forced to leave work due to the necessities of their families, it immediately hinders their career developments. Such women should be provided with the necessary support to encourage them to take up work again, and to assist them in re-adapting to working life. Within this framework, the increase in availability of quality yet low-cost care services for children, invalids and the elderly will allow women who have left their work to fulfil such duties for their families to return to their former occupations. It is also very important to provide these women with training programs to regain their old skills that they may have lost during their absence, as well as to introduce to them new skills.

### ***Policies Against Segregation in the Process of Adaptation to the EU***

The European Union's (EU) policies and programs contain a perspective based on gender and this viewpoint is one of the fundamental components of the Union's strategies. According to the Union, provisions for equal opportunities and the application of equal treatment for women is a compulsory element that has to be realized in every institution at every level. Both this perspective and the special activities related to it play a very important role within the European Employment Strategy. The 'Equality Program' and 'Action Plans' prepared by the commission are based on this approach.

Equal treatment of both women and men is a basic factor of the social policy of the EU. The Union views this equality as an important factor in achieving economic success and social unification. As a candidate for membership to the Union, Turkey has to make special efforts regarding the issues of both women and men benefiting from equal treatment and equal access to opportunities. To this extent, the area of priority requiring immediate action is the revision of existing legislation dealing with working women and men.

Existing legislation marked by a paternalist protective perspective have to be revised with a women's perspective, and reaching new legislative and institutional provisions that guarantee women's existence in positions and opportunities equal to those of men, in addition to provisions that defend women in situations of inequality are all necessities for establishing a contemporary social order and for reaching compatibility with the regulations set by the European Union.

### 3. TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN POLITICAL DECISION MAKING PROCESSES

#### 3.1. Women in Turkey's Political Decision Making Processes

Rated as the 101<sup>st</sup> among 174 countries in a list considering the rate of women representation in parliaments, Turkey with the rate of %4.2 remains below the average of European, American, Pacific, African countries and is close to the average of the Middle East and Arabic countries. (Table 1 and Table 2)

**Table 1. Rate of Women in the Parliament According to the Regions**

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Northern Countries                                   | %38.8 |
| European Countries<br>(Excluding Northern Countries) | %14.1 |
| American Countries                                   | %15.3 |
| Asian Countries                                      | %15.3 |
| Pacific Countries                                    | %13.5 |
| Africa below the Sahara                              | %11.7 |
| Arab Countries                                       | % 3.6 |

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union database: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, 15.04.2000, "Women in National Parliaments".

**Table 2. Women's Political Representation in Parliaments of the World**

| World Order No | Country      | Election Date | Rate of Women (%) |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1              | Sweden       | 09.1998       | 42.7              |
| 2              | Denmark      | 03.1998       | 37.4              |
| 3              | Finland      | 03.1999       | 36.5              |
| 4              | Norway       | 09.1997       | 36.4              |
| 5              | Holland      | 05.1998       | 36.0              |
| 9              | South Africa | 06.1999       | 29.8              |
| 10             | New Zeland   | 11. 1999      | 29.2              |
| 11             | Venezuela    | 02.2000       | 28.6              |

| <b>World<br/>Order No</b> | <b>Country</b> | <b>Election Date</b> | <b>Rate of Women (%)</b> |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 12                        | Spain          | 03.2000              | 28.3                     |
| 14                        | Austria        | 10.1999              | 26.8                     |
| 16                        | Argentina      | 10.1999              | 26.5                     |
| 17                        | Turkmenistan   | 12.1999              | 26.0                     |
| 20                        | Belgium        | 06.1999              | 23.3                     |
| 21                        | Switzerland    | 10.1999              | 23.0                     |
| 22                        | Australia      | 10.1998              | 22.4                     |
| 24                        | China          | 1997-98              | 21.8                     |
| 28                        | Canada         | 06.1997              | 19.9                     |
| 30                        | Portugal       | 10.1999              | 18.7                     |
| 32                        | England        | 05.1997              | 18.4                     |
| 52                        | Israel         | 05.1999              | 12.5                     |
| 58                        | Tunisia        | 10.1999              | 11.5                     |
| 60                        | Italy          | 04.1996              | 11.1                     |
| 61                        | France         | 05.1997              | 10.9                     |
| 71                        | Bangladesh     | 06.1996              | 9.1                      |
| 72                        | India          | 09.1999              | 9.0                      |
| 82                        | Iraq           | 03.2000              | 7.6                      |
| 96                        | Japan          | 10.1996              | 5.0                      |
| 101                       | Turkey         | 04.1999              | 4.2                      |
| 110                       | Lebanon        | 08.1996              | 2.3                      |

Source: Inter Parliamentary Union database: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, 15.04.2000, "Women in National Parliaments".

**In Turkey, the women's lowest level of existence is in the political decision making.**

When we observe the highest rate of women's participation in professional jobs in Turkey, it will be much more obvious to imply and perceive the importance of female under-representation rate in the political decision making process. (Table 3 and 4 )

**Table 3. Rate of Women Participation in Turkey in Different Fields**

|                                     |         |
|-------------------------------------|---------|
| Women in the parliament             | % 4. 2  |
| Women manageresses                  | % 11. 5 |
| Women employed in professional jobs | % 33.9  |

Source: UNDP, (2000a), Human Development Report 2000, New York, s.166. Data is based on the information gathered in 1998.

**Table 4. Placement of Turkey in the World According to Participation of Women in Governmental Administrative Activities and Political Decision Agents**

| <b>Country</b> | <b>Women in the Parliament (%) (1999)</b> | <b>Women in the Government (%) (1998)</b> | <b>Women in Public Administration (%) (1998)</b> |
|----------------|---|---|--|
| Belgium        | 23  | 3   | 6  |
| Denmark        | 37  | 41  | 12   |
| France         | 11  | 12  | 12   |
| Germany        | 31  | 8   | 5  |
| Spain          | 22  | 18  | 4  |
| Sweden         | 43  | 43  | 24   |
| Israel         | 12  | 0   | 9  |
| Pakistan       | 2   | 7   | 1  |
| <b>Turkey</b>  | <b>4</b>                                  | <b>5</b>                                  | <b>17</b>  |

Source: United Nations (2000a), World's Women, Trends and Statistics, New York, ss.171-5.

## **In Turkey, social development does not mean development of women.**

Turkey remains at 48 % globally, when rated to the Human Development Index (HDI) and Gender Development Index (GDI), but stands at 91 % when analysed within the scale of Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

**Table 5. Placement of Turkey in the World Rated with Sexual Development and Support Scale Criteria**

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|                                  |         |   |
|----------------------------------|---------|---|
| Human Development Index (HDI)    | : 0.732 | (Turkey is rated as 85 <sup>th</sup> among 174 countries) |
| Gender Development Index (GDI)   | : 0.726 | (Turkey is rated as 69 <sup>th</sup> among 143 countries) |
| Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) | : 0.321 | (Turkey is rated as 64 <sup>th</sup> among 70 countries)  |

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Source: UNDP, (2000a), Human Development Report 2000, New York, ss.161-68. Data is based on information gathered in 1998.

### **3.2. The Causes of Women's Lacking Power in Political Process**

- **The family, that is thought as the 'living field of women' is considered to be outside politics.**

The area of social responsibility for women has always been framed within family life in Turkey. The family is being considered as 'private', and placed outside the 'common' life of the society. Furthermore, it is a common belief that, the participation of women in social life, without respecting the women's role as wife and mother, will be destructive to the functions of the family, which is accepted as the base of human wellbeing. Due to this belief, the social and political activities of women are controlled and drawn back by their husbands, their families and social/political actors. For this reason, one of the very first conditions required to provide for gender equality is the application of policies, which support 'more democratic families'.

- **Dominant social activity pattern for women is to participate ‘voluntary social work’ associations which do not focus on the issue of women’s empowerment, that makes them unable to change their invisibility in political decision making processes.**

Working voluntarily for aid organisations helping homeless children, the elderly and the crippled people is fitting to women’s family roles as mother and wife. By this reason, it is supported as a suitable female social activity with a minimum risk to reproduction of family relations within the patriarchal frame of reference. This model prevents women to mature their skills in representing their gender-based problems on their own and the result is a persistent lack of power in political decision making. It requires a paradigm shift related to the women’s participation patterns to social and political life that will open up the way to the organisations aiming to empower women, in terms of supporting their identity as a citizen and a voter.

- **The ‘male dominated model’ in political decision-making processes has a discriminating effect.**

Similar to other parts of the world, political life in Turkey is still shaped by the norms of its male actors. The rules of the game, the conditions of success, the good/bad definitions are determined according to the experiences, values and the habits of men. So, the values of political sphere are still based on personal power, money, competence, winning or losing. These values are unfamiliar and discriminating and so politics continue to be ‘dirty’ and ‘the work of men’ for many women.

- **The political parties do not consider the equality of women and men as an issue of democracy.**

For the political parties who are represented in parliament, the equality of women and men has no direct correspondence to democracy and social development. It continues to be a subject of ‘rhetoric’ only to be remembered during election campaigns. Until a strong political will is declared aiming gender equality in political decision making by the political parties and their leaders, it is obvious that the under-representation of women will keep going on. This declaration must address the right of

women to participate the political life as one of the inalienable principle of democracy and human rights.

- **‘Women’s Branches’ of the political parties have limited legal rights hindering the participation of women in the political decision making process.**

The Law of Political Parties and the policies carried out by these parties try to keep ‘women’s branches’ in the kitchen of politics. Having no authority, no money, no representation in decision making and incapable of gender-based political action, women’s branches continue to be ‘instrument’ organisations. Women have no chance to exist in the parties on their own; women’s branches have no access to the organisational frame of the party. Women’s branches do not even have the authority to suggest female candidates as representatives to the Grand National Assembly or as a member of party executive boards. To change this present powerless situation of women’s branches it is inevitable that these branches should be the agents, where women are prepared for politics and policies for gender equality are improved. These changes require new legislation about the political parties which will guarantee women’s participation rights in terms of getting equal opportunities.

- **Providing equality for women and men still does not exist as criteria for the success of political leaders.**

The political leaders do not believe that the effort to provide equality for women and men can popularise them, support social development and improve democratic conditions. In spite of the fact, all over the world, numerous political leaders consider their successes in gender equality policies as an indicator of increasing political power and legitimation, but it is still not the case in Turkey.

- **Women working for the civil and political organisations are still incapable of networking for better cooperation towards reaching to a common agenda.**

Improving policies that will support the participation of women in the political decision making processes need more cooperation and networking

between the different women's organisations aiming to reach a common agenda. In Turkey, the partial and exclusive characteristics of the women's movement slows the process of reaching this aim. Outcome is less effort for political empowerment of women and gender equality, more mobilisation in the name of other handicapped social groups.

- **There are no sufficient supports for women to be candidates in elections and increase their chances to be elected.**

In Turkey, women are selected as candidates on the lists, only where they have no chance to be elected. Furthermore, when a few women are elected, they prefer to be loyal to their party leaders who are the real bosses of selecting candidates, rather than to be the representative of women. To realize the real political representation of women, political parties women's branches should be delegated with the legal authorisation in the process of selecting women candidates; and supported by the policies like the use of gender quota.

### **3.3. Path to The Solution**

#### *How to understand equality*

- Firstly, 'equality' is **the equality before the law** and expresses the principle of **treating everyone as equal**. This is the 'negative' definition of equality and it suggests the necessity of providing **equal opportunities** for everyone without any discrimination.
- In addition to this definition, equality for people who are not in equal social circumstances, sometimes may require presenting **different opportunities** in terms of the reached social results. In a way, this is the 'positive' definition of equality.
- In order to create equality of both women and men, **the level of social power and visibility have to be equalised**, where both genders benefit from the social opportunities. In other words, to reach the equality between unequals, sometimes differentiated opportunities and legal rights are needed. Women are historically discriminated social groups in the globe, whose conditions require some positive discriminations in legal rights and social/political opportunities where appropriate and necessary.

### ***And democracy...***

- It is obvious that in order to create gender equality, it can only be possible when women have equal political representation. This is a requisite due to the principle of **having the right to decide on one's own life** , which is the basic principle of democracy and an undeniable fundamental human right.
- If men reserve the right to decide on the fundamental issues and problems related to women's lives, which men never experience, then **how democratic can be the relationship between the 'representative' and the 'represented'** ; this is the subject under debate.
- If women are **not** able to participate directly in the decision-making processes related to their own lives, it proves that the reality of existing modern democracies is, **democracies without women** .

### ***Solution frameworks require special measures.***

The process of equalization of women and men in political decision making, should be carried out in harmony with the international conventions and decisions made by the European Union and United Nations that are already ratified and/or confirmed by Turkey. The bases for solutions have been defined as SPECIAL MEASURES in CEDAW that is Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women.

## **3.4. The Tools to be Used on The Path to Solutions**

### ***Defining Priorities in Supporting to Civil Organisations***

It is a must that, to support all kinds of civil organisations including women's organisations, aiming to create gender equality in political sphere. The priority of supporting must be given to the projects of these civil organisations which have targets as follows:

- Projects aiming to support the organizations, which are networking for gender equality agenda,
- Projects with the aim of watching the political decision mechanisms, both in the public and private sector, through the perspective of gender equality,

- Projects aiming to support the participation of gender sensitive civil organizations to the policy making procedures, related with gender issues.

### ***Gender Sensitive Legislation***

One of Turkey's international commitments is to provide a legal foundation for gender equality. Within the context of gender sensitive legislation, which will define the new rights and responsibilities to different civil and political actors, the following legal arrangements are in discussion :

- The 10<sup>th</sup> article of the Constitution, which defines equality, should be rearranged. Rewritten article must include the definition of necessary 'special measures' in order to create equality, and delegate responsibilities for this target to the government, to the parliament, and to all public and the civil institutions/agents .
- The 'Equality Law' that is promised in Turkey's 'National Action Plan' needs to be passed.
- New rights aiming to empower 'women's branches' should be legalized in 'Political Parties Law',
- During the determination of financial supports to the political parties allocated from the Governmental Budget, new criteria should be implemented rewarding the efforts for gender equality and a separate budget for women's branches should be supplied,
- The Election Law should be amended to provide representation of women, at least 1/3 candidates quota, in the lists of general and local election.
- In the decision making boards/committees formed by governmental appointments, the principle of balanced gender representation should be one of the respected criteria and norms of this principle need to be defined and legalized.

### ***Institutional Reorganizations***

- National Mechanism of Turkey (Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women- DGSPW) responsible for the gender equality policies and to develop and follow-up the implementation of them, should be supported in terms of legal authority and resources.

- In order to provide and to support the gender equality policies, a kind of ‘coordination units’ should be established within the related ministries and public institutions, in collaboration with DGSPW.
- Delegation of authorities, resources and responsibilities between the local and the central units of the governmental institutions are necessary for implementing gender sensitive policies, programs and projects, in the name of spreading gender equality perspective to nation-wide.
- The institutions and centres involved in research, data collecting, budgeting and auditing should be encouraged to collaborate on projects dealing with the problem of gender inequality.
- Due to the target that, the public services should aim equal valued results for both sexes, public institutions and civil service agents should redefine their perspective, with the guidance of **gender impact assessment** methods.
- Reorientation efforts, demanding gender sensitive participation models and policy-making mechanisms, in political parties should be supported.

### ***Defining New Priorities in Policy Making***

- In developing, implementing and monitoring the public policies, ‘**gender mainstreaming**’ should be one of the main focus.
- In the budgeting and resource allocation processes ‘**gender Budgeting**’ perspective should be one of the main dimensions.
- ‘**Action plans**’, ‘**time-bound targets**’ and the ‘**implementation programs**’ should be prepared, in order to realise the policies aiming equality for women and men.