



Rural women and agricultural extension in Turkey

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to discuss the role and importance of education and extension services to rural women development in farming systems (animal husbandry, dairy and livestock production, protected cultivation irrigated and non-irrigated field crop production, orchard growing etc.) education level, availability of local handcraft activities and job creation possibilities in Turkey. Human resource and its qualifications are very important in terms of reaching the community and economic development. The importance of women in the world in development for more than 30 years has become remarkable. Therefore, all countries including developed and developing countries have conducted some studies oriented to women in the framework of the human resource development. Although women play a major role in food production in many countries of the world, agricultural information is not effectively reaching and benefiting these key persons in the food security chain. There is a recognized need to improve agricultural extension work with rural women. A significant problem is that in many courses of study, in-service training and education in extension methodology there is insufficient examination and discussion of the roles of rural men and women in agricultural production and rural development. Too little time allocated to gender analysis and a participatory approach aimed at solving the problem of how extension work can effectively be carried out with rural women. Although women are one part of the two gender groups in the community, they have less benefit from the resources compared with men particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, indicators of rural women are much lower than women living urban area. This situation is also valid for Turkey. For this reason, extension training for adults in the framework of the adult education has been considered very important area for the people dealing with agricultural production with respect to develop qualifications of population, to provide new skills and to increase their efficiency.

Key words: Rural women, women development, rural education, extension services, Turkey.

Introduction

Agriculture is one of the important economic sectors in the developing countries. In addition, it is also important in terms of social aspects because of the majority of people living in rural area. For that reason it is important to improve rural women's life and status and to protect their rights under the economic reform³. Rural women do play multiple roles in the world's agriculture systems. They may be mothers, housekeepers, wage laborers, agricultural processors, market women and entrepreneurs as well as agricultural producers. Many women and girls work as unpaid family laborers; many are primarily involved in production of the family food supply, many works intensively in the fields only during the peak labor season, many girls between 10 and 15 do substantial amounts of agricultural labor, particularly in North Africa and the Middle East⁴. As an example, the conservation of crop genetic diversity in farmers' fields is important for future food security. Recent research on women and biodiversity has emphasized the importance of women's knowledge in plant domestication and biodiversity conservation⁵. Benefit degree of farmers from agricultural extension services and delivering efficiency of extension services to farmers are important issues to raise productivity at the farm level⁶. For this reason the education and extension activities are considered in the study to discuss the role and importance of education and agricultural and non-agricultural extension services to rural women development in agriculture sector in Turkey.

About 29.5% of the population lives in rural area in Turkey in 2007. Of men population 93.8% is literate while this ratio is 80.6% for women in 2000. Based on 2006 statistics, participation of women at the age of 12 and older to labor force in rural area and urban area is 33.5 and 20.7%, respectively⁷. Agriculture is witnessing rapid changes due to applying new technologies and economic conditions. Participation of rural women to agricultural activities is considerably important and they contribute to family income in developing countries like Turkey where majority of the population is employed in agriculture⁸. For that reason the role of women is becoming critical in the agricultural production activities. Generally women play an important role in livestock production, post harvesting activities, food processing for family consumption and crop marketing. According to the research results conducted in different regions (six provinces) of Turkey, daily working time of rural women is 10.39 hours per day. About 48 percent (4.98 hours) of this total workload is spent for the agricultural activities and 50 percent (5.21 hours) for house works by women⁹. However, extension services devote only small amount of their time and resources to women farmers. Only 5 percent of the total time and resources of extension institutions are devoted to women farmers on the World basis. This value is 9 percent in the Near East countries where Turkey takes place¹⁰.

About situation in Turkey, some facts and figures for women can be summarized.

- i. Turkey is one of the twenty most populous countries in the world. About 30% of the total population (74 million) lives in rural areas and works in the agriculture. This value is lower than the World average, but it is higher than in developed countries.
- ii. Generally education level of women population is low and as well as education opportunities and household income compared with men. Women get the least benefit from the education opportunities among the groups living in the community.
- iii. Although women participation to agricultural activities is very important, their status in the farm holdings is considered as a non-paid family labor⁹.
- iv. Most village extension workers were male in Turkey as in Tanzania and other developing countries¹¹. To reach this status as active women farmers is important, especially changes from region to region are observed.
- v. In Turkey, as in many countries, extension services units has spends and devotes very little time and resources to women farmers.

In Turkey, therefore education and extension services for rural women should be delivered to rural areas like in the World. When these studies are conducted, two points should be taken into account. Firstly women status in the traditional structure should be improved and extension studies should be focused to arise on producer identity of the women. Hence, it can be contributed to increase the role of rural women in the community, and poor extension services for women can be improved, since currently information in relation to agricultural activities and innovations are disseminated to women by husbands.

Extension Studies Oriented to Rural Women in Some Countries Experience sharing from the Rural Development Project for Taourirt-Taforalt in Morocco, coping with constraints to reach women:

The Rural Development Project for Taourirt-Taforalt is implemented in eastern Morocco, an arid region where livestock raising (sheep and goats) is a major economic activity. In recent years, as a result of prolonged drought, the area's natural resource base, particularly its rangelands, forests and water resources, has deteriorated sharply. This situation impacts negatively on the income levels of the people living in the area. The project, launched in 1998, was specifically designed to address these difficulties¹². Its main objectives are to halt the degradation of natural resources; improve agricultural and livestock productivity and support the integration of social and economic components, with an emphasis on including rural women in development activities. The project has faced various social, institutional and technical challenges in its efforts to work with women in the project area:

- i. The project realized that targeting women as a separate group in the community would not lead to significant and sustainable improvements in women's livelihoods. Instead, it is working with men, convincing them to be attentive to women's needs and to respond to these needs through the allocation of adequate community resources.
- ii. Reaching out to women requires more women extension agents than currently available in the extension services. The recruitment of additional women, the logical solution, is unfeasible because of budget austerity.

- iii. Development projects impose new burdens on women in terms of time. This is why the analysis of women's workload is important, and projects should include actions to reduce women's burdens (e.g. the construction of potable water networks, the provision of fuel-efficient stoves, machines for grinding grain, etc.).
- iv. Development projects impose new financial constraints on women. For instance, if the project provides women with animals (goats, sheep and rabbits), it should also ensure that women have access to affordable animal feed, veterinary care and technical information.

Rural women and agricultural extension in the Sahel: Women play a pivotal role in agriculture in the Sahel. In Burkina Faso and Mali, for example, an estimated 93 and 78%, respectively, of women is active in agriculture. High levels of rural poverty coupled with a fragile agro-ecological environment make the contribution of women's productive activities to the household and community a crucial element in the survival of the rural population¹³. The extension is different for women and men. Women need direct extension on the crops and livestock they grow or have responsibility for the specific activities that they carry out or want to learn and the skilled tasks they perform. Extension and agricultural support services must identify, work with, and learn from their female clients. Extension activities and messages must match the varied activities of rural women. Women need a wider range of information than do men. Agricultural extension services cannot supply the wide range of information and training that women require and therefore collaboration with other agencies is essential.

Agricultural Development Project in Syria, experiences in developing rural financial services:

In 1996, the Project launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform aims to improve the socio-economic situation of the rural population in the coastal areas/midlands of Syria by enhancing agricultural productivity¹⁴. In Coastal-Midlands Agricultural Development Project's most important achievements in relation to its credit component were to create income-generating activities for rural households; reduce unemployment among young people, especially those who had not completed their studies; achieve household self-sufficiency through on- and off-farm production, depending on the type of loan; increase household income, encouraging household financial self-sufficiency; foster rural women's economic independence and increase their confidences in their ability to manage small enterprises alongside men.

The role of women in South Korea: The tradition of total female submission persisted in Korean villages until relatively recent times¹⁵. Traditionally, men and women were strictly segregated, both inside and outside the house. Yangban women spent most of their lives in seclusion in the women's chamber. It is said that the traditional pastime of Nolttwigi (a traditional folk game for women, Nolttwigi is like a western seesaw) a game of jumping up and down on a seesaw-like contraption, originated among bored women who wanted to peek over the high walls of their family compounds to see what the outside world was like. Economic necessity gave women of the lower classes some freedom as

they participated in farm work and sometimes earned supplemental income through making and selling things. An interesting regional variation on traditional female roles continued in the late 1980s. In the coastal villages of Cheju Island, women divers swam in search of seaweed, oysters and other marine products and were economically self-sufficient. Often they provided the main economic support for the family while the husband did subsidiary work—took care of the children and did household chores.

Extension Studies Oriented to Rural Women in Turkey

In Turkey, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) is charged with agricultural extension services. Ministry has started to spread Training and Visit Approach (T&V) in country basis from 1984. T&V approach is taken as a basic for extension activities. According to this, Provincial Agricultural Directorate carries out agricultural extension activities at the province, county and village base. However, these extension activities mainly oriented to male growers¹⁶. Agricultural information is a complex phenomenon which is made up of government departments, commercial companies, foreign experts, consumer lobbies various types farm man and woman, intermediate organization, other institutions¹⁷. Information impacts agriculture production by affecting the economic quantity and timing of inputs and activities, ranging from quantities of fertilizer, timing and quantity of irrigation and the timing and efficacy of both risk reducing and production enhancing inputs¹⁸. Although extension services oriented to rural women have been conducted for many years in Turkey, the scope of these activities focused on mainly to develop skills of women in relation to home economics and hand crafting. As a result, apart from a few pilot projects, there is no any systematic and regular agricultural extension projects targeted to rural women^{2,9}.

Extension services directed to rural women in Turkey are examined with respect to agricultural extension and non-agricultural extension (home economics) in the paper. Firstly non-agricultural extension targeting to develop traditional role of women is examined and later agricultural extension activities are considered.

Non-agricultural extension studies: MARA has started extension services in Turkey oriented to rural women in 1954 focusing non-agricultural subjects such as extension studies of home economics. Currently extension activities in relation to home economics are being performed by technicians of home economics affiliated with MARA¹⁹. The main aims of these extension services are to provide knowledge and skills to rural women in terms of home affairs and hand crafting activities. Also, in the framework of “Village Institutions” affiliated with the Ministry of Education, children originated from the rural area are trained to be village teachers in these Institutions between 1937 and 1954. Hence the teachers graduated from the Village Institution could be acted also as extension agents in addition to their teaching duties. This initiative is important in terms of considering the women and men as the main actors for the development in the rural area²⁰. In addition to MARA and Ministry of Education, other institutions delivering non-agricultural extension services to women as follows: i) Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, ii) Ministry of Education, iii) Ministry of Industry and Commerce, iv) Southeastern Anatolia

Project Regional Development Administration, v) Development Foundation of Turkey, vi) Co-operatives of Agricultural Production and Credit, vii) Association of Turkish Chambers of Agriculture, viii) Non-Governmental organization for women, ix) Universities Extension and Women’s Studies Centers.

In recent years for non-agricultural extension in the national level MARA has implemented some important projects and activities with Ministry of Health, UNICEF and universities. The projects which are focused about training of iodised salt usage in rural areas, physical and mental development of children, education of 6–14 ages children, food preservation and nutrition and health etc.

Agricultural extension studies: In Turkey, the most important institution with respect to convey the information in relation to agricultural production for the rural women is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. The Ministry of Education follows it. However, looking at the services delivered to women, it can be mentioned that women are not considered as the main actor for development of the country by the organizations of both public and non-governmental. It is being seen that women are the secondary element for the community development. Women work is also often considered as helping the husband, who is taken to be the farmer even when most of the time he is not there²¹.

Briefly gender is not taken into consideration in “development approach without gender” and it is aimed to improve rural women status and to ensure its traditional role and duties in the community. There are no any differences from this approach for many years in Turkey²². However, there has been great interest in recent years, of the need for better understanding the farm activities of women and there has been started considerable changes in this approach because of the developments in the World and donors consider women issue are crucial for development. In the framework of this approach, some research projects going on will be mentioned later. One part of the institutions oriented to rural women in Turkey. These are public institutions which are: i) Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, ii) Ministry of Education, iii) Ministry of Health, iv) Ministry of Industry and Commerce, v) Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women and vi) Research and applied centers of universities on women research and extension. Second part is non-governmental organizations, and these are: i) Development Foundation of Turkey, ii) Turkish Women’s Solidarity Foundation, iii) Co-operatives of Agricultural Production and Credit and iv) Association of Turkish Chambers of Agriculture.

As mentioned, many organizations are dealing with extension activities for rural women in Turkey. At the beginning years home economics issues were considered as important but later stages studies targeting the increase of the women efficiency as producers have gained good position and roles. This is seen as important development in terms of awareness of the role of women in the household and community. Availability of many organizations servicing women can be considered good for women. However, the small number of rural women has benefit from the agricultural production issues delivered by the organizations. This is evident that agricultural extension studies should be re-organized and new strategies should be developed in considering the women participation and contribution to production.

In Table 1, agricultural extension and research projects targeting the rural women are summarized in. About more than half of the studies targeting rural women are implemented by MARA and with other units. MARA was implemented an important project named TYUAP (Agricultural Extension and Applied Research Project – First Phase between 1984 and 1990). In the first phase of this project, women were not considered for main client group, and target population was defined as farmers in the project. However, it was aimed to train women as an agricultural producer in the second phase of TYUAP. Seventeen projects were only supported by MARA. Two of these projects were conducted by the universities and two projects were conducted by TARIS which is agricultural co-operative and Chamber of Agriculture, 3 of them were implemented by Non-Governmental Organizations. Some of the projects were supported by World Bank, IFAO, FAO, UNICEF, UNDP, UNDF, EU etc. It is obvious that foreign donors such as the World Bank have played an important role for extension projects and programmes oriented to women in Turkey.

Some researches on rural women in Turkey: In Turkey, research on the role of rural women in agriculture is limited. To give an example, in three villages of Kalecik district of Ankara, the determining factor of women's participation to agricultural activity is the indoor responsibilities of women²⁴. However, women participate by their physical power to the agricultural production activity outside the house and on the family-owned fields. While the decisions related to plant production and livestock breeding are taken by men, the function of women is only to take part in the activities when there is a high need of manpower and in this way to reduce the demand for paid manpower. For plant production, activities such as land preparation, planting, fertilizing, irrigation or applying pesticide are the responsibilities of men. Women take part in these activities together with husband, especially where there is a high need for handwork. The participation of women decreases in machinery used activities. Utilizing machinery in agricultural production depends on the farm size and income. In farms which have suitable land size for efficient use of agricultural machinery and have sufficient income to buy these machinery, fewer women participate to plant production. The fact that women's participation to labor force decreases depending on the mechanization level in farm, can be interpreted as men head the work based on mechanization. It has been observed that women's inadequate education, timidity to use machine and traditional patterns are influential on this issue.

Another study's results are given in Table 2, which describes women's present situation compared to that of men, across rural and urban sectors, focuses on the role of rural women in agricultural production activities and rural development in Turkey⁹. Findings of eight studies on Turkey were used in the paper across various regions of Turkey. Data collected from research studies highlight the role and work of rural women in agriculture as farmers.

Results and Discussion

General: In many regions, women's participation in remunerated work in the formal and non-formal labor market has increased significantly and has changed during the past decade²⁵. While women continue to work in agriculture and fisheries, they have also become increasingly involved in micro, small and medium-

sized enterprises and, in some cases, have become more dominant in the expanding informal sector.

Discrimination in education and training, hiring and remuneration, promotion and horizontal mobility practices, as well as inflexible working conditions, lack of access to productive resources and inadequate sharing of family responsibilities, combined with the lack of or insufficient services such as child care, continue to restrict employment, economic, professional and other opportunities and mobility for women and make their involvement stressful.

Women's share in the labor force continues to rise and almost everywhere women are working more outside the household, although there has not been a parallel lightning of responsibility for a remunerated work in the household and community. Women's income is becoming increasingly necessary to household of all types.

Women migrant workers, including domestic workers contribute to the economy of the sending country through their remittances and also to the economy of the receiving country through their participation in the labor force. However, in many receiving countries, migrant women experience higher levels of unemployment compared with both non-migrant workers and male migrant workers.

Insufficient attention to gender analysis has meant that women's contributions and concerns remain too often ignored in economical structures, such as financial markets and institutions, labor markets, economics as an academic discipline, economic and social infrastructure, taxation and social security systems, as well as in families and households.

Results for Turkey: The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs (MARA) in Turkey is carrying agricultural extension and farmer training and agricultural research. MARA is also the most important institution in terms of training and extension delivered to rural women. The most common extension services conducted by MARA are related to home economics²⁰.

MARA has been conducting extension services in relation to home economics for rural women since 1954. Home economics services are performed by home economics technicians affiliated with Provincial Agricultural Directorates of the MARA. Home economics technicians mainly work at the Department of Farmer Training and Extension of Provincial Agricultural Directorates. Apart from the MARA, there are some other public farmer organizations and non-governmental organizations dealing with extension services oriented to rural women. However, these organizations can be negligible compared to MARA in terms of organization, personnel, the number of women client and activities. MARA is also the main institution for women with respect to extension services of the agricultural production because of the same reasons mentioned above. There is no legal barrier for women to participate extension activities organized by MARA. However, gender is not taken into consideration by MARA while it is conducting the agricultural extension activities²⁰, farmer is understood as a man and extension personals are also men. This leads to clients of the extension services also men²².

On the basis of Table 2 figures, it is evident that rural women are farmers or producers. It is therefore crucial to train women and provide agricultural extension services for them in order to

Table 1. Agricultural extension studies and projects for women in Turkey.

Activities or name of the Project	Year	Provinces	Subjects	Support
1. TYUAP-2 (Agricultural Extension and Applied Research Project-Phase II)	1991-1997	21 provinces	Agriculture	MARA and World Bank
1a. Women farmers Pilot Agricultural Extension Project-I	1992	Icel, Tokat, Nevsehir provinces	Vegetables, dairy fruits, vineyard production	MARA and World Bank
1b. Women farmers Pilot Agricultural Extension Project-II	1993	Amasya, Adana, Nigde provinces	Vineyard, poultry, vegetables, silkworm, tobacco production	MARA and World Bank
2. Çorum-Cankiri Rural Development Project	1982-1989	Çorum, Cankiri prov.	Rural & agricultural subjects	MARA, World Bank, IFAD, FAO
3. Mus-Bingol Rural Development Project	1989	Mus, Bingol provinces	Rural & agricultural subjects	MARA, World Bank, IFAD, FAO
4. Erzurum Rural Development Project	1987-1989	Erzurum province	Rural & agricultural subjects	MARA, World Bank, IFAD, FAO
5. Yozgat Rural Development Project	1990-1991	Yozgat province	Rural & agricultural subjects	MARA, World Bank, IFAD, FAO
6. Training of women and integration to rural co-operatives	1991-1994	National level	Agricultural subjects (20 days), Other subjects (70 days)	MARA and UNDFP
7. The project for bee production for women	1990	Giresun province	Bee production	FAO, Women's Solidarity Foundation
8. The project for Breeding Poultry for women	1990	Antalya, Rize Denizli, Konya, S.urfa, Van,	Poultry production	UNDP, Women's Solidarity Foundation
9.a-National Programme for the Enhancement of Women's Integration in Development Project (NPEWIDP)	1993-1994	National level	General	- Rep of Turkey World Bank - Rep of Turkey, GDSPW World Bank
b- NPEWIDP	1993			
10. Course of Co-operatives and producers for Tatis women stake holders	1995	Aegean Region	Co-operatives, Tatis Products, Tatis, Agricultural subjects	Tatis Agricultural Co-operatives-Izmir
11. Greenhouse Techniques	1996	Adana province	Agricultural subjects	Cukurova University Women's Studies Centre (KADAUM)
12. Chicken and turkey production	1998	Izmir province	Agricultural subjects	Ege University Women's Studies Centre (KSAUM)
13. Agricultural Extension Project for Women Farmers	2000	19 Province	Agricultural subjects, women participating	MARA
14. Agricultural Education and Extension Project for Women Farmers Union	2000	National level	Participating of women of farmers union	MARA
15. a-Collaborative Project for Rural Women	2001-2005	National level	Information network for women & children	-Rep. of Turkey / UNICEF -Rep. of Turkey
b-Collaborative Project for Rural Women	2005-			
16. Training And Extension Activities for Women Farmers to the Where Are Agricultural Development Cooperatives	2004 -	National level	Co-operatives, animal care & breeding, animal health, milking tech., hygienic milk prod., cowshed cleaning, sheep farming, bee production, greenhouse etc.	MARA
17. The project on development of rural laborers and adoption of good agricultural practices ²³	2004	Burdur province	Soil analysis & fertilizer, Animal health & husbandry	-Rep. of Turkey -European Union Central Finance Cont. Agency -The Burdur Chamber of Agriculture & Akdeniz University
18. Women Farmers Agricultural Extension Project	2000-2008	In different periods 81 provinces	Fruit growing & viticulture, cattle breeding, bee production, mushroom & greenhouse production	MARA
19. Women Farmers Knowledge Competition	2004 -	National Level	All agricultural subjects	MARA
20. Healthy Milk Production Project by Women Training in Rural Areas	2007-	Diyarbakir province	Milk production	MARA, International Agri-Technology Centre of England and Johnson Diversey
21. Developing Women and Young Girls' Capacity, Guidance for Production and to be Organized Project	2007	Van province	Seedling, vegetable cultivation in greenhouse	Rural Development and Social Services Association
22. To Ensure Economic and Social Developments of Women by Goose Production Project	2008	Kars province	Goose production	Sustainable Rural and Urban Development Assoc. and Darbogaz Development Assoc.

MARA Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs. GDSPW General Directorate on Status and Problems of Women.

Table 2. Women's contribution to agricultural production in various regions of Turkey⁹.

Item	Agricultural activities	House works	Others (crafting, etc)	Total
Total average (hours/day)	4.98	5.21	0.20	10.39
The rate in total daily working time (%)	47.9	50.2	1.9	100.0

improve living standards in general⁹. It is also important to raise awareness of women and improve their visibility through appropriate agricultural policy.

For today, it is not possible to say extension services for rural women conducted by MARA and other institutions are enough. Accepting the women issues are important in relation to development since the late 1970s, it is very obvious that there have not been clear changes in the rural areas. It does not mean that nothing is done. The importance of women issues in respect to achievement of development objectives is understood.

However, some points should be taken into consideration during extension activities going on:

- i. Participatory approaches should be accepted and organized by the MARA not only current approaches for rural women but also a new approach like organization, bureaucracy, scope, aims, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the courses should be organized by MARA²⁰.
- ii. Women status-as passive receiver and farmer status should be improved as active and participatory farmer position. In order to ensure this aim, suitable extension programs should be conducted and developed.
- iii. In addition to enhancement of traditional role of women in livelihoods of rural households and community, extension services should be focused on to raise farmer identity of the women
- iv. Currently in the rural area, women are considered as a non-paid family labor. Therefore, women should be trained with income generating activities to change this status.
- v. Training programs for the developing of rural women should be organized in considering women qualification and capacities, production activities mainly carried by women.
- vi. Currently, the number of women extension staff is not adequate. Therefore, men extension workers can be used through suitable teaching methods in the short and midterm.
- vii. Extension staff should be donated new knowledge and use of the suitable extension techniques for rural women's development.
- viii. Women extension staff is number should be increased according to the today's need participating of women the process of the decision making for agricultural activities should be increased to develop their role in rural areas.
- ix. Extension studies and sources for the rural women is not enough level, as the pilot projects and limited targeting areas, extension studies should be provided women with equal conditions to men in terms of qualification and quantity. Hence women can be considered as one of the main clients for extension services and their roles in livelihoods of rural households and community.

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