

Chapter 1

The Determinant of the Employment–Social Protection Relation in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

Social protection can be recognized as one of the most significant social achievements of the last century. In this study one of the most important issues of labour market in Turkey - employment-social protection relationship - will be evaluated. It can hardly be argued that Turkey has a comprehensive social protection system. An important part of people who are at the age of working are not covered by the social security system with reasons such as: low labour force participation rate, prevalence of informal employment, child labour, high share of employment in the agricultural sector, the weakness of the social security system and problems of labour market regulation. This situation increases the need of social protection systems. On the other hand, weakness in coordination between the institutions those operate in the field of social assistance and lack of appropriate criteria in determining the real people in need cause inefficient and inadequate supplying of services and inefficiency in using sources.

INTRODUCTION

The major problems that industrialization process creates on the workers are the economical, physical and social problems on the individuals. Workers face many problems such as unemployment, disease, occupational disease, work accident, elderliness, and maternity. But the implementation of social protection practices, which can be regarded as the indicator of social sensitivity in the face of the problems that the workers face, is quite recent. Bismarck carried out the first practices in Germany. Increasing number of social protection practices after World War I, had an important function to mitigate the impacts created by the war on the societies and restore the trust of the people into the governments in the post-world war II period particularly. As a result of the increasing economic growth and state incomes in line with the success of the Keynesian policies, developed countries offered a wide variety of welfare

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country applications to their citizens. Undoubtedly, universally encompassing social security systems are the most significant among these applications. “The golden age” which lasted until the end of 1970s also played a key role the battle of the capitalist system against the strengthening socialism.

However, today social protection concept is considered to be more comprehensive than the rights enjoyed by means of social insurance system. Within this scope, social protection concept does not only aim to implement social insurance practices, create social security networks and regulate labor market but also to provide help to the individuals, households and societies to tackle the risks they are exposed to better and offer assistance to those who face poverty.

In comparison with the developed countries, social security practices have recently begun Turkey. The first legal arrangement was done in 1945 through the establishment of social insurances. Occupational accidents, diseases and maternal insurances are the first implemented social insurance practices. A comprehensive security system, however, was put into practice following 1961 Constitution. Social protection practices are also quite recent. Especially after 2000s, limited number of social assistance and services provided by Justice and Development Party on the condition of proving poverty by documents is way behind the developed countries. Besides, the employment-social protection relationship that would protect the labor market from the problems could not be established. The goals specified in the “National Employment Strategy Actions Plan” are quite unlikely to be achieved.

SOCIAL PROTECTION CONCEPT

Social protection is considered to be one of the most significant social achievements of 21st century. Social protection systems have enabled citizens to build civilized healthy and prosperous societies by protecting the individuals from the security vulnerability and deprivation to help them lead their lives humanely. Moreover, social protection has been able to ensure basic social and financial security so that everyone, both men and women, can survive indiscriminately. At the same time, it plays a significant role in enhancing the quality of life of the society and the individuals by improving human potential, facilitating structural change, increasing stability, fostering economic dynamism and ensuring social justice and harmony (García & Gruat, 2003, p. 1).

According to ILO, social protection is a combination of programs, standards and public regulations aiming at protecting the workers and their families from the unpredictable social and financial threat. It can be classified within three groups, which are social security, social aid and labor market regulation. Social security consists of the programs offering protection against situations arising out of unemployment, disease, employment problems or life cycles such as elderliness or pregnancy. Social aid programs provide help to the poor and disadvantaged group. While the employees and their employers finance social security, social aid is financed by the taxes (Barrientos, 2010, p. 2).

According to the World Bank (2011) if social protection is considered within a narrow scope as social security networks, social insurance and labor market interventions, wide variety of dimensions of social protection are ignored. Therefore, social protection, in the broader sense, is defined as providing help to the individuals, households and society to help them manage the risks more effectively and provide support to those suffering from poverty (World Bank, 2001, p. 9). Asia Development Bank describes social protection as the practices aiming to reduce poverty and vulnerability by enhancing the efficiency of the labor market, eliminating the risks that individuals are confronted with and by generating policies for enhancing self-protection capacities of the individuals against income loss (Hinds, 2014, p. 3).

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