

Chapter 27

Local Governments on the Way at the Provision of Gender Equality

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ABSTRACT

The provision of gender equality has been a critical agenda for public administrations and organizations. In Turkey, both local governments and central government has been dealing with initiatives towards the provision of equality of man and woman. At that context, Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior, Foreign Affairs and European Union Department 2010 Circular on “Human Rights of Women and Girls” is an important Circular in terms of local governments and the issue of gender in Turkey. At the study, the local governments’ relation with the issue of gender equality has searched. At that framework, firstly, the concepts of gender and gender equality have explained. Secondly, the national documents in related to women in Turkey, and Local Equality Action Plans of six provinces in the context of the Republic of Turkey Ministry of Interior and United Nations Protecting the Human Rights of Women and Girls and Development Joint Program have been explained to search the local governments’ relation with the issue of gender, and lastly some practices of local governments have explained on the issue of gender equality.

INTRODUCTION

Increasing the quality of life of women in urban physical space is a critical issue on the international scale and the issue of rising the life quality of women should be included in the agenda on behalf of the cities, the population is increasing in our cities, and the population increase makes it obligatory the issues such as benefiting from the opportunities equally for the citizens and enabling the urban and spatial needs of the citizens quickly and healthily (Altay Baykan, 2015: 10). For centuries, women have taken a back seat in the society and this fact of having taken a back seat leads to the victimization of women in our country and in the world, and when looking at the old times, this fact was not taken into consideration,

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but the requirement that women have equal rights with men in the globalizing world has been embraced (Külekci and Canbay, 2012: 36).

The women who have been faced with gender discrimination suffer from inequalities in those following issues; to have legal, political, and economic, social rights, to exercise their rights in related to legal, political, and economic, social rights, and resource ownership concerning land and capital (Üner, 2008: 7). The inequalities have been sustaining between men and women in lots of significant areas; women's mortality and morbidity ratios surpass the rates of the men, in traditional aspect concerning women's employment in comparison to men, the women have been employed at low-paid jobs at a narrow range of occupations in comparison to men, and the wage of women are 60-70 percent of wages in comparison of the wages gained by men (World Bank, 1995: 2).

In Turkey, there have been miscellaneous steps on the central government and local government level to cope with the gender based problems. The Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services, General Directorate of Status of Women the Report of 'Woman in Turkey' (2019) in related to the illiteracy rate in both sexes, it is pointed out that "the illiteracy rate has demonstrated an increase when going from the younger age groups to the older age groups, from the urban population to rural population and from the West regions to the East regions" (General Directorate of Status of Women, 2019: 22). In addition, at the same Report of 'Woman in Turkey' women's employment problems are listed, and some of the problems clarified as follows (General Directorate of Status of Women, 2019: 42); "There is no gender-based discrimination in the laws regarding women's entry into the working life or about their attendance to the work after the entrance. However, there are some examples of discrimination that faced such as certain jobs and professions not being accepted as socially appropriate jobs for women, not being treated fairly in the distribution of duties, dismissing women first in times of economic crisis, and keeping wages low especially in the informal sector. Since jobs and professions in the labor market are differentiated as woman's jobs and man's jobs, women concentrate only on traditionally accepted jobs, and are willing to work in lower status and paid jobs..". At the Report titled 'Woman in Turkey', women deputies' number in the parliament in the general elections of June 24, 2018, is declared as 104, the representation ratio is indicated as 17, 45% (General Directorate of Status of Women, 2019: 55).

In that context, the concept of gender explains that femininity and masculinity is socially established and that concept also pointed out femininity and masculinity are learned patterns as a comprehensive concept and the concept of gender has broad expansions (Özaydınlık, 2014: 94). The necessities in terms of ensuring gender equality are declared as; the structuring of the policies of the public on a central and local scale in a gender-sensitive manner and the structuring of the policies of the public on a central and local scale with taking into account the impact to the women, and putting in the front row the policies and services that benefiting women's lives (Demirdirek and Şener, 2014: 11).

The reason of the positive expectation from local governments in achieving equality between men and women is the egalitarian steps realized on the local level, the Gender Equality or Woman-Man Equality Commissions in the recent period have been established and these commissions have been set up within the context of the local governments, thanks to these commissions, local governments take the liability of considering the women and men's equality, local governments take the responsibility of taking into account the women-men equality in the provision of local services and those local services' organization (Erdoğan, 2017: 129).

In the study, firstly, the concepts of gender and gender equality have been explained, later the basic statistics on woman and man in Turkey have been clarified, and the national documents that have been prepared in related to women have been explained concerning local governments relation with gender.

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