

## PAPER DETAILS

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## THE PLACE OF TURKISH WOMEN IN SOCIETY

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During the Twentieth Century, many regions in the world have been the scene of vast and rooted changes. These changes have been formed partly by political and military factors such as occupation, annexation, revolution, and partly by economic factors such as industrialization, urbanism, civilization and right of general vote. Among these changes, especially women's status and role in the society occupy an important place. As Bayard Dodge has stated: «The habits of women living in the world show a more rapid change in the duration of our lives than the change that took place in the last two thousand years.»



Atatürk's courageous reformist effort to free women from second-degree, passive and solely means of production or exchange. The main aim was to develop the abilities of the woman that was born with, by supplying her with equal education possibilities and to provoke their participation in affairs by recognizing them political rights. It was to have Turkish women serve for the people in world by promoting their social, professional knowledge and experience.

This unshakable belief of Atatürk found its expression in a speech of his which was made only a few years after the proclamation of the Republic. «There exists no possibility of the development of a society, unless primary goal is made together with its men and women» (S.D. 11)

What is the degree of realization of Atatürk's vision with unique precision, after these 40 years by now?

It can be declared without hesitation that the reforms that have been tried to be realized under the guidance of Atatürk's political leader have not been sufficient to achieve the goal of a national society, entirely, in spite of the sincere efforts of those sincerely believing in Atatürk's vision.



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According to the 1965 census, the general population of Turkey is 31.4 millions. 15.4 millions of it are females. 70 % of the general population, i.e. 70 % of it live in villages. 15.4 millions of the people living in rural areas are females. When the way of settlement is taken into consideration, 72 % of the Turkish women live in villages and 13 % live in cities. When this differentiation is taken as a basis, it is required to divide this population group into three in order to define the status of Turkish women in society.

1. Women in rural areas.
2. Women in half-developed or developing areas.
3. Women in urban areas.

### **I. Women in Rural Areas**

As the model of a society in transition, the problems of Turkey is no doubt the education, training of women, who constitute 3/4 of the Turkish general population, turning them into conscious citizens. The rapid growth of the population of Turkey renders the solution of these problems difficult, everyday.

As seen in all the developing countries, the illiterate population who can read and write in villages



pect to nation wide proportion in the ca  
is controversial. One of the factors also  
ficult, is the lack of balance between th

**Table II. Distribution of the population at  
selected provinces, regarding**

Literate				
Cities	Male %	Female %	Total %	M
<b>Developed provinces</b>				
İstanbul	85.33	67.56	77.26	
Kırklareli	77.44	58.79	68.83	
Eskişehir	78.70	54.21	66.65	
İzmir	76.89	53.06	65.47	
<b>Underdeveloped provinces</b>				
Hakkâri	29.35	3.38	17.61	
Adıyaman	35.28	6.57	21.17	
Siirt	32.89	7.77	21.05	
Urfa	34.41	8.06	21.46	

The differentiation of education ca  
between regions can be observed much

In the Eastern cities where no influ  
can be traced, since education is not reg  
the entire female population is left out o

Age categories are also another factor



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been derived at that the proportion of education increases as the age of women increases.

In Table III, it can clearly be observed that age shows an increase from young generation to high age. A majority of the village women lack knowledge on subjects closely related to themselves and their families according to the results of a research made in Çankaya. 25 out of 486 women did not have an idea of the monthly and yearly income of their families. (4) The same research also revealed the existence of ignorance on the contraceptive methods which are being implemented since 1960.

Meanwhile, another point worth learning is that although women are ignorant on subjects which interest them and their families, they are enthusiastic towards meeting their needs. For example, in the Gündül research 88 % of the women have agreed to birth control, 43 % of these women declared that they did not wish to have more than two children.

In spite of her unsatisfactory knowledge and skills, Turkish women occupies a very important place in the life of Turkey. Incidentally, in the 1965 Census, it was found that in the distribution of economically active females between the ages of 15-64, against the 4.7 millions in the agricultural sector, there exist only 289-197 women. The educational qualities of this group are as follows:



As it is seen, the widest women group consists of 4 millions of people, who contribute the majority of the country, lacks education, and is deprived of its social and economic rights.

Other than insufficiency of education, the traditional circles which are not industrialized and their social mobility should also be added. This hinders the village women in the traditional social culture, the place of women in the family as second-degree citizen who only raise new products to production in a certain degree without any contribution.

In the majority of the villages the traditional respect to family structure still exists. The woman joins her husband's family. According to the traditionalist families the men eat the meals first and the women eat the remaining. When these customs, which are a symbol of the man's absolute hegemony in the family, and the ignorance of women with respect to health and education, the health of the village women is endangered. Incidentally, a research which was conducted in Central Anatolia has shown that, unlike industrialized countries, men are more healthy than women.

Other than the insufficiency of education, the women suffer, one of the main factors which hinders their social and economic mobility is the traditionalist family structure.



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The Turkish village women who is deprived economic forum which is needed to achieve an personality, despite such obstacles, although it succeeded to make rational preferences on the regarding her family and children. Another research on family planning, has shown that the rate want to learn these methods in villages is 63 % 75 % and in cities 79 %, (10) If it is also taken that, these family planning studies mostly took place in the houses at the villages or at the roads where they are present, thus causing the village women to be included in the studies, the research clearly shows that they can draw a certain way for their lives or at least have a decision to have a baby or not. Essentially, it is the mothers who have many children are the advocates of family planning. Gündül research has shown that, regarding almost in all groups women did not wish to have more children, in other words, the over-population in the family which is a heavy burden leads the Turkish women and mothers, to rule their own destinies. If it is considered the ratio of death of children (in 1965 120-150 %) and the fact that, there are 500,000 abortions per year and 120,000 the mother's death because of primitive methods, which the village women struggle without help



her daughter, has been an additional income. This money is not paid to the girl but to her father. If the girl is dead to his brother. Thus, the importance of girls boys disc creates an atmosphere of taboo. The snobbishness or actually, made to a girl shakes the family. Thus, the «honour» concept is the greatest cause of the most serious unjust actions like killing a girl.

The static status of the girls and women has caused the continuation of religious wedding. In the regions where mass communication is rare and the civil marriage has not been made. This has a big ratio especially in the rural regions.

Table V — Number of marriages per year at the

Province Centers	1950	Number of Marriages 1957	1964
Ankara	3.019	4.277	6.577
İstanbul	10.057	11.884	14.227
İzmir	3.599	4.502	5.207



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**Table VI — Yearly divorce rate in selected prov**

Province Centers	Number of divorces		
	1950	1957	19
Ankara	584 (1952)	731	6
İstanbul	929	983	1.7
İzmir	838 (1952)	951	8
Ağrı	1 (1952)	11	
Bingöl	4 (1952)	8	
Van	15	17	

As this ratio and numbers reveal, the illegitimate age is still widely dominating in Anatolia. So much like, the situation of the illegitimate children is socially registered, impossibility of going to school, have identity cards, and impossibility to recruit for service and etc. As a remedy to such difficulties Justice has taken the initiative to legalize such time to time. Thus, with three separate laws passed in 1950 over 7 million children born outside of wedlock registered as legitimate children. All these events justify the following observations once again :

1. Even the most drastic legal reforms give only with the changes in socio-economic structure and effect;



public services taken to these remote mothers and children, mobile villages create drastic differences of behavior. The children health center in a village is attached to spell and bewitchery.

In the small towns and the cities being transferred from paternalistic to democratic, the main reason for this change, the lack of centers which can take in big families. In a Turkish family in cities or districts the mother, the father, the children and the grandfather or a father-in-law or an old aunt or a sister. Unlike the families in the villages hold the authority in administration. In urban families the authority relationship between father and son is dissolved. The mother plays a buffer role between the father and the son to protect the authority of the father or the mother. The wishes of her son on the other. As a result, the relations develop between the mother and the son. The replacement of big families and replacement of the wife-husband relationship to brother-sister relationship. (16)

An important difference



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At present in 14 main cities of Turkey of which the population is over 100,000 women work in the industries of tobacco, nuts, grapes, figs, porcelains, clothing and shoes. Wages are paid to men and women who work in industries. In line with the international standards, it is forbidden for women like children to work in mines, underground and at night.

According to the international conventions on maternity protection approved in 1919, it was decided that they should be given leave after birth and during, leaves. Women have the right to get leaves before and 6 weeks after the birth, and two times a day for half hour each (or an hour each) for feeding.

Another development which is to be dwelled upon is that more and more Turkish women workers find employment in foreign countries, particularly in West Germany's industries. Electronic industries like Siemens prefer to employ Turkish workers, who go to West Germany, the Turkish government to employ them in works which require high technical skills has given keen attention. While 3,199 of the 27,501 Turkish workers in West Germany were women in 1963, this number increased to 7,658 in 1965. In 1965, 7,658 of these women workers worked for half year in West Germany, this indicates that the transfer of women workers' transfer to foreign countries is increasing.



Other than the women who work as wives or women who have professions of life compared to those who live in a British writer who knows Turkey very well, one point which the propagandists who are open to women in Turkey should know is that in other countries have few, but high qualified women teachers. But, in Turkey there are a lot of women shop assistants, secretaries, nurses, trade union employees, laborers and even armed forces. The real measure of women initiated in any country is not the number of women who belong to men is also occupied by a small number of highly talented women, but, whether a woman can do the work she wants and get paid for it on a par with men. In this respect, Turkish women have spread to various vocational fields on a

Table VII. Distribution of active population of Turkey  
with respect to various sectors

Sectors	1955		Total
	Men	Women	
Agricultural sector	4,734	5,062	9,796
Enterprisers, administrators, and clerical professions	200	200	400



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general services field, 10,042 women work in  
vice field, and 19,071 women work privately, i

If the subject is handled with more detail  
tor women mainly work in the Ministry of  
PTT services, Radio and Television, Airways. In  
women work as doctors, judges, chemists, arch  
ministrators, theater actresses, and diplomats.  
ber compared to many of the: Western countr

Apart from this, Turkish women can be pro  
such as having been elected to the Court of Ca  
made many important archeological excavation  
in the world. Some of our women artists who  
fame are opening exhibitions in European cap  
and Rome, as an independent group. Turkish v  
representing their country, with their violine  
known concert halls of the world. The number  
tors in the Turkish Universities come third af  
tes and Canada; this number is for ex. four t  
number in the Federal Republic of Germany  
press also possesses an important number of  
dents and journalists.

During the first fifteen years following th  
the Republic, various rights and possibilities r  
have been utilized by the urban/girls and won



The most important characteristic is that they are in a process of change. Turkey is one of the most dynamic, modern type of societies. The Turkish women will break their links with the past, will rise to a new level through the socio-economic structure realized in a near future.