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Local Policies and Vulnerability Women's Labor: Case of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality¹

(Research Article)

Yerel Politikalar ve Kadın Emeginin Kırılabilirliği: Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi Örneği

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ABSTRACT

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Vulnerability of women's labor is one of the most important issue about gender discrimination. Economic, social, political, environmental and natural risks are influenced by gender dynamics and have important differential impacts on men and women. At this point, local governments have important role to ensure equality between men and women in the field of labor force, as in every field. Because, local governments have important roles about solving social problems and ensuring local development, as well as providing many local and common needs. In this paper, the vulnerability of women's labor has been considered from the perspective of local governments. In this framework, first of all, the policies of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality about against to vulnerability of women's labor has been examined. Then the level of impact and satisfaction of these policies have been tried to be measured by making in-depth interview with 13 women working in Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality. According to the findings which obtained from the study, the administrators of the institution have a very important role in the level of satisfaction and policies towards the vulnerability of women's labor in the relevant institution. With this, it can be said that the policies on the relevant subject generally remain at the legal level, and there is a problem in reflecting the legal level in reality.

Anahtar

Kelimeler:

Kırılabilirlik, Kadın
Emeginin
Kırılabilirliği,
Belediye
Politikaları ve
Kadınlar,
Belediye
Politikaları

ÖZET

Kadın emeginin kırılabilirliği, cinsiyet ayrımcılığı hususundaki en önemli konulardan biridir. Ekonomik, sosyal, politik, çevresel ve doğal riskle, toplumsal cinsiyet dinamiklerine göre kadınlar ve erkekler üzerinde önemli farklı etkilere sahiptir. Bu noktada her alanda olduğu gibi işgücü alanında da kadın-erkek eşitliğinin sağlanmasında yerel yönetimlere önemli görevler düşmektedir. Çünkü yerel yönetimler birçok yerel ve ortak ihtiyacın karşılanmasının yanı sıra toplumsal sorunların çözümü ve yerel kalkınmanın sağlanması konusunda da önemli rollere sahiptir. Bu çalışmada, kadın emeginin kırılabilirliği, yerel yönetimler açısından ele alınmıştır. Bu çerçevede

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öncelikle Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nin kadın emeğinin kırılganlığına karşı izlediği politikalar incelenmiştir. Daha sonra Kayseri Büyükşehir Belediyesi'nde görev yapan 13 kadın ile derinlemesine görüşme yapılarak bu politikaların etki ve memnuniyet düzeyi ölçülmeye çalışılmıştır. Çalışmadan elde edilen bulgulara göre ilgili kurumda kadın emeğinin kırılganlığına yönelik politikalar ve memnuniyet düzeyinde kurum yöneticilerinin çok önemli bir payı bulunmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, ilgili konudaki politikaların genellikle hüksal düzeyde kaldığı, hukuksal düzeyin gerçeğe yansımada problem yaşandığı söylenebilir.

1. INTRODUCTION

The question of this paper is; “What are the policies of local governments regarding the vulnerability of women’s labor and what are women’s opinions or satisfaction levels about these policies?”. In the paper an attempt has been made to find an answer to this question in the example of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality (KMM).

Answering this question is important at both academic, social and administrative levels. Because women, women’s labor, the vulnerability of women’s labor are important and relatively neglected issues all over the world. By answering this question, first of all, attention will be drawn to the vulnerability of women’s labor. Secondly, exemplary information will be provided on the policies that can be made on the subject in possible crisis environments. At the same time, the paper will contribute to the literature.

Vulnerability of women can be discussed at five fundamental levels: Biomedical vulnerability, social and cultural vulnerability, economic vulnerability, legal and political vulnerability and educational vulnerability (www.developmenteconomic.org). This paper will be examine vulnerability of women from the perspective of economic vulnerability.

Worldwide, women earn less, can save less, work in less secure jobs and are more likely to be employed in the informal sector. They have less access to social protection programs and less capacity to absorb economic shocks than men. For example, findings on the impact of COVID-19 predict that women’s economic status and production opportunities will be disproportionately affected compared to men (www.turkey.un.org). The vulnerability of women’s labor is an interdisciplinary issue. The issue is discussed from different perspectives. In this paper, vulnerability of women’s labor will be discuss fom local policies perspectives.

The aim of this paper is to reveal what kind of policies local governments have developed against the vulnerability of women’s labor and what measures they have taken and to investigate how women are affected by these policies and their satisfaction levels in the example of KMM.

Gender discrimination is one of the most important issue in the world in all its dimensions. In addition, gender equality is one of the 17 goals expressed in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) throw 2030 by United Nations (www.sdg.un.org). Vulnerability of women's labor can be discussed under this title. At this point, it is important to measure the policies implemented to solve this problem and the level of satisfaction with these policies. With this aspect of the paper, it is thought that it will shed light on an important social, political and economic problem.

The methodology of the paper is based on the qualitative analysis method. Within the framework of the question of the paper, it is aimed firstly to search the literature on the vulnerability of women’s labor. Afterwards, it is aimed to investigate the activities or policies

of KMM on the relevant subject. Then it is aimed to reveal the thoughts and satisfaction levels of women working in KMM on this issue by making in-depth interviews with 13 women.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is pointed out that women are marginally more likely than men to be in non-regular employment and those most likely to lose their work and incomes are casual workers and the self-employed in International Labour Organisation's (ILO) report about India employment (ILO, 2020). In the report prepared by the ILO in 2017 which name is "Gender In Employment Policies And Programmes: What Works For Women?", Issues related to women's working life were discussed and strategies to prevent the vulnerability of women's labor were researched (ILO, 2017).

Lazarus and Steigerwalt discussed the vulnerability about women in electoral system in the book the name "Gendered Vulnerability: How Women Work Harder to Stay in Office" (Lazarus and Steigerwalt, 2018). It is pointed out in the book that, women politicians more electorally vulnerable than their male counterparts. Lo Bue and others examined in their paper that gender inequality in vulnerable employment: Forms of inadequate earnings, and lack of decent working conditions (Lo Bue at all., 2021).

Gender discrimination in labour market and vulnerability of women's labor is discussed comparatively in rich countries and less developed countries (Bertrand, 2018; Blau and Kahn 2017; Cortes and Pan, 2018). In rich countries, where the vast majority of workers are wage employees in the formal sector, an extensive literature has shown that women earn less than comparable men and are under-represented in high-paying jobs.

In UN-HABITAT's report titled "Gender Mainstreaming In Local Authorities Best Practices", women were generally examined from the perspective of local governments with examples from different countries (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Insarauto's article titled "Women's Vulnerability to the Economic Crisis through the Lens of Part-time Work in Spain", published in 2021, the vulnerability of women's labor in economic crises is discussed (Insarauto, 2021).

Kasearu et al., examined the vulnerability of women's labor on the labor market and in European countries in their study which is published in 2017 and titled "Women At Risk: The Impact of Labor-Market Participation, Education And Household Structure On The Economic Vulnerability of Women Through Europe" (Kasearu at all, 2016).

When we look at the literature, it is seen that the subject of the vulnerability of women's labor is examined in the above-mentioned and more studies. The difference of this study from the studies in the literature is that it looks at the fragility of women's labor from the perspective of local government and examines the subject with in-depth interview technique. At the end of the literature researching, there is no identical study was found with this study. It has been seen that various international organizations have written reports examining the women's issue from a general and broad perspective in relation to local government, articles have been written in many different countries, however, it has been observed that they are not in the subject and technique that this study focuses on. In this respect, it is expected that the study will add a unique value to the literature.

3. VULNERABILITY AND VULNERABILITY OF WOMEN'S LABOR

3.1. Vulnerability

Vulnerability is an interdisciplinary term. It is generally defined as an internal risk factor of the subject or a system that is unprotected to hazards and corresponds to its main tendency to be affected, or sensitive to damage. It represents the physical, economic, social susceptibility or tendency of a community to damage in the case a threatening circumstances (Cardona, 2003). In addition, vulnerability can be defined as the insufficiency of a system to withstand against the perturbations of external stressors. It is a concept that has been used in different research area (vulnerability to climate change, vulnerability in socio-ecological system, conflict, war and vulnerability, vulnerability in human ecology, vulnerability in hazard literatures, entitlement and vulnerability and livelihood and vulnerability) but there is no consensus on its definitions (Adger, 2006; Hufschmidt, 2011; Paul, 2013).

According to Proag, vulnerability has been defined as the degree to which a system, may react negatively during the occurrence of a dangerous event. Therefore, in accessing resources, maintaining a secure livelihood, or effectively recovering from a disaster, people can become vulnerable. The individuals who can achieve to capital, tools and equipment, can recover most quickly when a disaster strikes and they are usually strong individuals. So that the most vulnerable people are the poorest, who have little choice but to locate themselves in unsafe settings (Proag, 2014). Between all different definitions, this research focus on in particular, vulnerability of women's labor.

3.2. Vulnerability of Women's Labor

According to the ILO, women are worst affected by the crisis due to their unequal position in the labor market. The first reason for this is that most of the women work in unstable jobs, in informal jobs, and therefore they are more likely to be fired. In this context, the fact that the sectors in which women work are the most vulnerable to the crisis reveals that they lost their jobs during the crisis. In addition, since women workers are scattered and unorganized, it is not easy for them to resist (ILO, 1998: 27).

Diane Elson pointed out that in addition to the invisibility of domestic labor, the visibility of labor force participation is poor, as women often work in informal, home-based, part-time, seasonal, low-wage jobs (Elson, 2004: 50). One of the main reasons why women are the first to be laid off in the crisis is related to the gender roles expected of them in society. In society and business life, men's labor is seen as a paid job and the income of women is considered as a contribution to the family budget. This situation is used as an pretext for the dismissal of women. At the social level, it is accepted that men work, make livelihood of the household and women and children are dependent on their father or husband is complemented by the idea that women are responsible for housework and maintenance labor. Unpaid housework and maintenance work are not considered like work and women who do housework are also considered like unemployed. With a double-side insignificance, both the job itself and the woman doing the job are considered unimportant and the labor of the woman is ignored. Paid jobs which deemed appropriate for women are also an extension of housework and care work imposed on women. Such as labor, nursing, teaching, hostess, secretarial work in textile workshops (Öztürk, 2010). This situation reveals the vulnerability of women's labor. For example, there is much evidence that women are the specific victims of the Asian crisis that began in 1997. While the crisis caused to the dismissal of women as a priority, it also created more working hours and worse working conditions for women. In addition, the workload of

women in the home has increased. At the same time, the crisis negatively affected the labor force of migrant women and men and triggered backward migration. The effects of this crisis were felt not only at the local and national level but also at the international level. In the face of unemployment, privatization and rising prices, women had to develop new strategies for survival. One of the most burning results of this was that women had to work under difficult conditions and for low wages. Secondly, women participated to industrial production by in house production for example, clothing, shoes, toys, etc. Similar transformations have taken place in Latin American countries (Whitson, 2007: 122).

Capitalist development and crisis processes are among the factors that affect women's labor at a significant level. During these periods, women contributed to market production with some in house works, they provided child and patient maintenance services as wage workers. In addition, the number of jobs produced by unpaid labor has increased. Eisenstein said that women developed strategies such as finding an informal job in this process; that they sell their handmade fabrics in local markets; further points out that they had to sell their own bodies or that of their daughters (Eisenstein, 2005: 507; Öztürk, 2010).

4. FIELD STUDY

The term local government generally refers to a territorial unit with certain boundaries, a legal entity, an institutional structure, powers, duties and a degree of financial and other autonomy set by general and special statuses (Yılmaz Aslantürk, 2018: 142).

Under this title, the importance of local governments in terms of the vulnerability of women's labor will be discussed. Then, policies regarding the vulnerability of women's labor and the level of satisfaction of women with these policies will be examined in the case of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality.

Municipalities, as the closest units to the public, have a special importance in the provision of public services. Particularly, municipalities are important today in order to save the central government from its cumbersome structure under the increasing duties and responsibilities and to realize the change that will strengthen the relationship between the state and the citizen (Arslan, Çiçek and Baykal, 2017: 2554).

Local governments are important mechanisms on the creation of policies and activities that directly affect our daily lives. These policies and activities should be created by taking into account the needs and demands of everyone living in the city. Because the processes of experiencing the city of women, men, LGBTI individuals, children, the disabled, the elderly and immigrants differ for many reasons. One of these reasons is gender inequality.

The inequality created by gender roles, which pushes women to a secondary position and makes it difficult for them to participate in employment and all areas of social life, differentiates the needs, demands, priorities and problems of women. For women who spend most of their time at home and in the neighborhood they live in, and also who spend time outside these areas, the policies of local governments and the services they provide or not are of vital importance. The mud of the street, the absence of electricity-water, kindergartens, shelters, the failure of street lamps, the hours of public transport, stops, streets and places that ignoring the disabled women, negatively affect women's lives and cause gender inequality to deepen (KEİG, 2019). For this reason, municipalities are very important and worth examining in terms of women and women's labor, which are a component of urban life.

4.1. Case of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality

Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality, one of the 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey. Turkish Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216, has authorized to carry out all kinds of social and cultural services for women in municipalities to develop and for this purpose, to establish social facilities, to open, operate or have vocational and skill training courses, to cooperate with universities, colleges, vocational high schools, public institutions and non-governmental organizations (Law, 5216). Municipalities can implement all these services through their strategic plans.

In Turkey, in accordance with the public financial management and control law no. 5018, all public institutions and organizations and municipalities with a population of over 50,000 are obliged to prepare a strategic plan. In this context, municipalities prepare a plan that includes the next five-year goals, objectives and strategies. Municipalities act in accordance with these plans and general national development plans. In addition, annual reports on the activities of the municipality are prepared and published on the municipality's website. Strategic plans and activity reports have the effect of reinforcing democratic values such as transparency and accountability in the functioning of municipalities, use of resources, etc.

In the study, the strategic plans and activities of the Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality (KMM) published after the 2019 local elections will be examined within the framework of combating the vulnerability of women's labor.

In KMM's 2020 activating report under the title of Basic Policies and Priorities it has been stated that protection of public spaces in cities, especially open and green spaces; improving access and security; reconstruction within the framework of human-nature relationship, sensitive to women, children, the elderly and disabled individuals (AR, 2020, s. 35). In the same report, under the title of rural development, it has been stated that "Institutional and local capacity for rural development will be developed in order to raise living standards in rural areas. Positive discrimination will be applied to the groups, and producer organizations will be ensured to be the leading institutions in social solidarity, cooperation, education and financing." (AR, 2020, p. 36).

In the report, under the title of social activities; It has been stated that Huzur Çınarı Family Counseling and Guidance Center, which continues some of its activities on digital platforms with the effect of the pandemic, makes live broadcast programs through social media. In these programs live broadcasts were made under the titles; Epidemics and Uncertainties, Psychological Causes of Violence Against Women, What Is Chronic Unhappiness?, How To Get Rid Of The Habit of Procrastination (AR, 2020, p. 108).

In KMM's 2020-2024 strategic plan it has been stated that, with measures for the rural community; improving the vocational qualifications of the rural workforce, Social security for agricultural sector workers, especially women, Activating occupational safety and worker health services, programming anti-poverty supports to contribute to the increase in production and employment, reducing the disadvantages experienced by women and young people in the labor market, improving care and other social service provision for the elderly and children (SP, 2020).

It will be ensured that protection of public spaces in cities, especially open and green spaces; improving access and security; reconstruction within the framework of human-nature relationship, sensitive to women, children, the elderly and the disabled. In order to increase the access and security of public spaces, local administrations will be supported to conduct a needs

analysis for vulnerable groups on the basis of neighborhoods and to increase the quality of service (SP, 2020-2024).

Institutional and local capacity for rural development will be developed in order to raise living standards in rural areas and positive discrimination will be applied to the groups of women, young farmers, etc. (SP, 2020-2024).

When the KMM strategic plan and activity reports are examined, it is seen that policies and activities that support women are included. On the other hand, in the reports and plans examined, sexist discourses and plans and practices that can deepen gender discrimination are also striking. For example, the establishment of a women's sports center, the determination of separate swimming pool and sports hours for men and women, the determination of separate cinema hours for men and women in the elderly care home can be given as examples of sexist practices (AR, 2020).

4.2. Methodology

The model of this research is based on qualitative research. The technique of the research was preferred as in-depth interview. The in-depth interview was chosen because it provides information in a depth that best expresses the rich content that is the core of their meaning, allowing them to use their own terms rather than being imposed by us to understand how individuals construct reality (Punch, 2005, p.166).

The universe of the research is women working in municipalities. The sample of the research is women between the ages of 18-65 who are employed in Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality. In the research, it has been tried to reveal the views of the women employed in the mentioned municipality about the policies of the municipality to prevent the vulnerability of women's labor. In this framework, 13 women were randomly selected and interviewed in depth with a semi-structured interview form. Interviews required the permission of the institution, and due to the busy work schedule, the institution allowed the necessary minimum number of employees to be interviewed. The interviews were held between 1-05 May 2022 and were recorded with the permission of the participants. Ethics committee permission was obtained from the university of author's University before the interviews were conducted. In the study, the opinions of the participants have been conveyed without specifying their names, as participants 1,2, 3 and their ages in parentheses. Their thoughts have been conveyed unaltered. The data obtained from the interviews with 13 people using the semi-structured interview method were analyzed using the content analysis method.

4.3. Findings

As a result of in-depth interviews with 13 women between the ages of 18-65 employed in KMM, the opinions of women on the policies of the municipality to prevent the vulnerability of women's labor are gathered in three main points: Administrative, social and economic. The audio recordings containing the opinions of the female participants on the subject were listened to many times and specified below through various codings under three main headings.

4.3.1. Administrative

As a result of in-depth interviews, the sub-headings of the attitude of the top manager in administrative matters, the inadequacy of information on rights and the continuation of social roles in business life came to the fore.

The most frequently repeated subject by women in administrative matters was the attitude of the top manager. In countries with a strong bureaucratic tradition such as Turkey, the attitude of the manager can easily be reflected on the other personnel of the institutions and the policies of the institution. The attitude of the top manager in combating the fragility of women's labor is very important in countries such as Turkey, which have a centralized and strict bureaucratic management culture. The opinions of the participants on the subject are given below.

Participant 3(38): *"In recent years, I have not encountered a situation that would lead to a discrimination between men and women in the senior management, but I saw a lot in the years when I first started the job. For the first three years, no summer school was run and only boys worked. So they wiped out the women.. I really see support right now."* Participant 3, emphasized that the attitude of the top management is very important in this regard.

Participant 4(31): *"There were times in the management when what I said was not taken into account, but what my male colleagues said was taken into account."*

Participant 7(42): *"Some of our managers were very oppressive. Don't wear make-up, don't wear it like this, don't wear it like that.. We had to surrender to it. We suffered from this for three or four years, but then we got rid of that manager..."*

Participant 12 (31): *"...For example, in the first year I started, I was crossing my legs and I was talking to a parent and I was warned by the management that you cannot talk to a man like that. Thanks to our current manager, I can say that I have peace of mind at work. It's getting prettier. We've had very difficult times before. When I started my first job, I was exposed to mobbing and threatened with dismissal. My previous manager said that women weren't allowed to wear red pants, draw, or blend in with their make-up, and male-female friendships were never allowed in the workplace. We never got to talk to our boyfriends at work. We just started talking to new male teachers. Our previous managers were so harsh that even our gazes were controlled. We couldn't tell anyone about these problems because all the supervisors supported each other on this issue. Our current manager is very good and his subordinates are also top to bottom moderate like him. This pressure was mostly on women."*

It is important for the administration to inform individuals in the fight against women's labor and vulnerability and to make positive discrimination to women. Women, children, disabled, etc. It is a situation accepted in many countries that positive discrimination should be made towards the disadvantaged groups of the society (Women, children, disabled, etc.). In Article 10 of the 1982 Turkish Constitutional Law, it is stated that positive discrimination can be made to disadvantaged groups such as women, disabled, children etc. (CL, 1982).

In this context, with the Civil Servants Law No. 657 in Turkey, regulations have been made in favor of women over time. For example, in 2016, the right to work part-time until the child starts primary school age have been provided. Although being aware of these and similar rights may seem like an individual responsibility, the management should also take responsibility and inform. Many women cannot use these rights because they are not aware of their rights and new developments. The opinions of the participants on the subject during the interviews are given below (Law, 657).

Participant 3(38): *"There were times when we were ignored and not included in social activities. Our legal rights were not clearly told to us. We have two-thirds legal right after birth, and we weren't able to use it because anybody did not told this. We had problems with our syndicate rights..."*

Participant 13(40): *“During the Covid period, mostly women were on leave. This, of course, was a problem in terms of retirement and premium, but frankly, it was to my advantage because I have a child. I didn't know beforehand that I had certain rights. When I became aware of my rights, I realized that it was too late. I did not see any positive discrimination. There has been much more important positive discrimination for women lately.”*

Participant 2(37): *“In some cases, I received positive discrimination and support as a woman from the senior management.”*

Participant 1 (40): *“I received positive discrimination and support from my workplace.”*

Participant 8(33): *“We did not see a distinction in the pandemic. The most of those working in mask sewing were women during the pandemic.”*

Participant 10(47): *“I did not see any positive discrimination or special support.”*

Participant 2(37): *“In some cases, I received positive discrimination and support as a woman from the senior management.”*

Participant 5(35): *“I have not experienced a situation involving positive discrimination for women within the institution. I think very differently about this. Because I am a woman, I do not want positive discrimination for me.”*

As a result of in-depth interviews, one of the administrative issues affecting the vulnerability of women's labor has emerged as the attitude of the management in the problems experienced with the service recipients. Many women are disturbed by service recipients because of their gender, and this may cause them to leave the business life. At this point, the attitude of the management is important. Some of the participants stated that they could not find the support they expected from the management, while others stated that they received the necessary support.

Participant 4 (31): *“I am a teacher here. Sometimes there is problems with students and parents. In that times management support me against to them.”*

Participant 1 (40): *“I had a lot of problems with the people I served in my working life. On the other hand, because of being a woman, there can be different kinds of looks and different kinds of conversations by men. I have some experienced like this. I was verbally disturbed. Thankfully, our administrators intervened. They solved the problem.”*

Participant 7(42): *“I have been exposed to harassment by the men in the group I serve. I usually solve my problems myself.”*

4.3.2. Social

As a result of the interviews, the topic of social roles of women and the impact of social identity in the workplace came to the fore in the social dimension of the vulnerability of women's labor.

The social roles of women are an important factor affecting women's labor. The fact that home and child care is seen as the responsibility of women in traditional societies causes women to give up on working life sometimes and makes their labor at home unrequited. Almost all of the participants said similar things about this issue. Many of them stated that their spouses help them in house or child care, let alone being a partner.

Participant 13(40): *“My husband doesn't help at all with housework.”*

Participant 6(49): *"My husband never helps me with housework. My daughters and I work at home."*

Participant 11(48): *"My wife never helps with housework. When my children cried at night, they used to tell me that your daughter was crying. My husband does not even sit next to me, especially when she is with her family. Sometimes he can help me a little, but he can't do it with his family because his family blames him. My shift starts after the actual workplace."*

Participant 2(37): *"My responsibilities at home, of course, have some difficulties if you are a wife and mother. Unfortunately, we can't say that work end, let's go home and rest. Household responsibility, spousal responsibility and child responsibility... Work ends here and begins at home. There is a pressure of social roles. My husband helps me with this but is not a partner..."*

Participant 1 (40): *"I have difficulty about work because I am married and have children,. During the Covid period, most people were on unpaid leave and were mostly women.."*

The transformative and transformatory effects of institutions on society are known. In this regard, local governments need to carry out various awareness-raising activities (seminars, training, etc.). Because the acceptance that home, child or elderly care should be the responsibility of women is a social phenomenon and requires a change in mentality. In addition, the vulnerability of women's labor should be prevented through home care services, nursery services, etc. In addition, positive discrimination and flexible working hours for women who are pregnant or have children and their spouses can be supported.

The roles and identities given to women at the social level can be reflected in women's working life, and this directly affects the vulnerability of women in their working life.

Participant 12(31): *"..For example, in first days at my working life, I was talking to a parent who had crossed legs and I was warned by the management that you can't talk to a man like that. My previous manager didn't allow women to wear red pants, draw, or mess with their make-up, and male-female friendships were never allowed at work, and we never spoke to our boyfriends. We just started talking to new male teachers. This pressure was mostly on women."*

According to the statements of participant 12, gender discrimination and roles are reflected in working life and this situation affects work peace and as a result, the vulnerability of women's labor is triggered. It is possible to see this from the statements of participants 9, 8 and 4.

Participant 9(26): *"I was getting annoying sexist warnings from my co-workers that your smiling face could be a disadvantage for you. I reported this problem to the administration. I was also pressured by the administration to change my smiling face. When women come to managerial positions, they try to act like men. I can clearly say the distinction between men and women at my workplace. Especially in career advancement, there are very important problems. I hear talkings such as "You will give birth, you will work at home, who will run this place etc."*

Participant 8(33): *"Not much attention is paid to men's clothing, but women's clothing is interfered with. Even when buying clothes, I worry if I can wear it at work."*

Participant 4(31): *"I sometimes feel pressured by my colleagues because of being unmarried. They ask me always: "Are you not getting married, isn't it time now..."*

Providing employment and working order according to merit without gender discrimination in working life and taking measures to transform the society in this regard should be included in local government policies.

4.3.3. Economic

The economic dimension of the vulnerability of women's labor is generally seen in this subjects; women doing the same job receive lower wages than men or have an uneven distribution, women's wages are working in the agricultural sector or informal and service sectors as a family worker, etc. (UNIFEM, 2003).

As a result of the interviews, almost all of the participants stated that the wages were insufficient, but they stated that they did not experience any gender discrimination in the distribution of wages. The opinions of participants 7 and 5 on this subject are as follows:

Participant 5(35): *"I don't think that the problems in the workplace are related to men or women. This is an individual situation. Because there are too many female and male employees who have been wronged. I think it has to do with the person, not the gender... We should leave the problem of men and women in the workplace and look at it as a general business problem."*

Participant 7(42): *"Woman or man, I think it doesn't change. In fact, there is the issue of being strong or weak. This also depends on the administrator you work with. There is no gender discrimination, there is a distinction between the strong and the weak."*

Regarding the vulnerability of labor, most of the participants stated that there is a distinction between the strong and the weak rather than the distinction between men and women. They stated that a weak woman or man in the socio-economic dimension may experience vulnerability.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of the study show that especially administrative and social structures play an important role in the fragility of women's labor. The study is partially supported by preliminary studies. For example, Hız and Karatas made the following statements in their study published in 2016:

The transformation process in labor markets deepens the segregation based on gender, causing more stratification of labor and women's labor experiencing unique problems. In this process, capital has started to use women's labor, which is more vulnerable, cheap, docile and insecure than male labor, as a substitute labor force through the gender-based division of labor (Hız and Karataş, 2016). Another study on the subject is Urhan's article which published in 2009. According to the study; The fact that women in the labor market are secondary labor, with the effect of flexible employment patterns, the high increase in women's labor, which is defined by unskilled, irregular and home-based paid work, has brought the organization and representation problems of working women to the agenda. (Urhan, 2009: 87-88). These studies support this article.

Moghadham says neoliberal policies increase women's obligations to cope with rising prices, shrinking incomes. Moghadam argues that men's job loss and lower wages attract women more intensely to the labor market. And he says that the so-called "feminization of labor"; in other words, it means that women's participation in low-paid work in industry and service sectors has increased (Moghadam, 2005: 20).

The fact that women in the labor market are secondary labor, with the effect of flexible employment patterns, the high increase in women's labor, which is defined by unskilled, irregular and home-based paid work, has brought the organization and representation problems of working women to the agenda (Harman, 1994: 83-86). The fact that those who were

dismissed during the pandemic period were primarily women in the interviews conducted in this study also supports this argument.

Gazioglu and Korkmaz pointed out in their article which is published in 2022; higher wages differ according to the gender. In the study, in which the fragility of women's labor was examined on immigrant women, it was emphasized that especially women who emigrated face great labor losses in the workplace (Gazioglu Terzi and Korkmaz, 2022). In this study, the low wages of women is seen as one of the important problems identified.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Today, women, women's working life, women's labor and vulnerability are central importance in terms of economic and social development. Because it is unthinkable that a society where women, who make up almost half of the world's population, are excluded and women's problems are ignored, providing sustainable development.

This study deals with the vulnerability of women's labor and looks at this issue from the perspective of local governments and the example of Kayseri Metropolitan Municipality. As a result of in-depth interviews with 13 women employed in KMM and authorized by the institution, it has been revealed that the vulnerability of women's labor is mainly experienced in administrative and social dimensions.

Today, the importance of municipalities in socio-economic and administrative dimensions is increasing day by day. The methods of combating the vulnerability of women's labor of these institutions which have the authority to make regulations at the local level and the power to regulate, direct and change at the socio-economic and administrative level, will also be significantly effective. In this framework, according to the results of the study, suggestions were made to the municipalities on administrative, social and economic issues in the combating against the vulnerability of women's labor.

According to the findings which obtained from the study, the administrators of the institution have a very important role in the level of satisfaction and policies towards the vulnerability of women's labor in the relevant institution. With this, it can be said that the policies on the relevant subject generally remain at the legal level, and there is a problem in reflecting the legal level in reality.

The suggestions regarding the institutionalization of the gender equality approach in municipalities are as follows:

- Preparing gender equality awareness programs and encouraging the participation of all senior managers and municipality employees
- Developing plans, programs and practices to question and transform the discrimination faced by women at every stage (From the recruitment phase to on-the-job training, promotion and distribution of salaries and wages)
- It is recommended that the women's quota be implemented. The implementation of these quotas both to increase the number of female employees and to allow women to enter male jobs.
- Preparation of gender-sensitive budgets at all levels
- Establishing and actively working a Gender Equality Commission in the Municipality Council
- It is recommended to establish and activate structures such as the Gender Equality Unit within the municipal administrative structure.
- Suggestions for making necessary arrangements to support women's participation in socio-economic life are as follows:

- Organizing professional activities without discrimination between men and women, rather than receiving vocational training in areas that reproduce gender roles.
- Monitoring the results of activities for women's participation in employment, updating the relevant databases
- Providing information about occupational diseases seen in jobs such as housework and textile, where women work intensively
- Organizing informative trainings and seminars on women's right to work
- Designing childcare services compatible with the different living and working conditions of parents; Encouraging the expansion of nurseries as well as breastfeeding rooms
- Providing and increasing care services for dependent family members (elderly, disabled), which are generally seen as a duty of women by municipalities
- Establishment of units that will provide supportive services in order to make the migrant women's labor valuable and to avoid discrimination in the labor market
- Encouraging the participation of immigrant women in vocational courses and enabling the children of immigrant families to benefit from nursery services

One of the most important obstacles to women's participation in socio-economic life is physical and psychological violence against women. In this regard, taking measures to prevent violence for urban life, increasing the units providing services and consultancy in this field and opening shelters.

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