

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the problems faced in women education and possible practices in women education are investigated and evaluated. This is a descriptive study in which the data is acquired via document review of the relevant field. Historical process, current problems in women education and possible practices are studied and evaluated.

In the study, it is found that women still face educational problems and have lower rates of schooling compared to men. The fact that primary, secondary, higher education practices in Open University system bears importance for women who are deprived of education is another result found in the study.

Keywords: Women, women and education, distance education, women distance education

INTRODUCTION

Developments about women education started with the republic period. During and before the Ottoman period women education remained relatively restricted and primary education was provided via infant schools or private courses within the family. However, secondary education was not provided. With the innovation act in the Tanzimat Reform Era Ottoman Empire first by opening "Inas Rustiye" (Girls' Secondary School) in 1857, then "Darulmuallimat" (Women's Teacher School) and "Istanbul Darulfunun" (Istanbul University Girls' Department) in 1874, higher education was provided to a small number of women. (Gelislı, 2005)

Republic administration took any precautions for the educational, social, cultural and economics development of woman citizens. Women gained the right to elect and be elected with Turkish Civil Law in 1926. After the declaration of republic, coeducation started at primary schools in 1924, in secondary schools in 1927 and all schools were opened for girls, too. Atatürk brought equity of man and woman, via introducing many innovations.

Ataturk stressed four basic issues in his speeches.

- ✓ **Woman and man should be equal in education**
- ✓ **Woman's primary concerns are motherhood.**
- ✓ **Woman should be in every aspect of social life.**
- ✓ **Woman should be equipped with strong knowledge and should be virtuous in order to perform her motherhood and her role in the social life (Kayadibi, 2003).**

In the later years of the republic, some regulations about woman education took place. There are also clauses in the constitution that stress equality for girl-boy all children regarding access to education. According to 42th clause of constitution "primary education is compulsory for boy-girl all citizens and state school are free". The 1739 numbered Basic Law of National Education 4. Clause, it is stated that "Educational constitutions are open for anybody regardless of their language, race, gender and religion. There is no privilege for anybody, family or group". In the Basic Law of National Education clause 4 it is stated that education is provided to anybody regardless of their language, race, gender and religion and in the clause 8 it is stated that there is equality of opportunities for male female every citizen. In 2012, with a change in the clause in question, compulsory education was regulated 12 years as 4 year primary school, 4 year secondary school and 4 year high school. It is basic duty of Ministry of National Education to provide every student with compulsory education, equality of opportunities and remove obstacles for education. Ministry of National Education is also responsible to actualize these goals via supporting and developing national and international projects. (Tunc, 2009, Tor, 2016). With these regulations, constitutional rights are presented to women without any gender discrimination.

Turkey has also legitimized women's educational rights by signing international agreement. In the 1989 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, World Summit for Children and 1990 World Declaration on Education for All and many other documents and agreement it is accepted that education is a basic human right. As a basic educational strategy, is projected that everybody should at least take education at a primary level. (Tunc, 2009)

Turkey guaranteed to develop policies and regulations about women education with engaging in Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1985) and Turkey Children Right Agreement (1990). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is one of the most important human right document regarding equal access and equal opportunities. In the clause 10 titled "Right to Education", liable parties are to provide women with equal educational right with men and remove any obstacle hindering women to have educational rights.

Turkey ensured to reach a 100% of women literacy in parallel with the agreements stated above (Demiray, E., 2013. Tor, 2016). With these agreements all of the rights and equalities are recognized without any discrimination for man and women.

In the 10th clause of the agreement, the state guaranteed to take precautions stated below;

- ✓ **ensuring equal opportunities not only urban areas but also in rural regions in terms of supplying occupational and art guidance; this equality is ensured at preschool, general, technical, vocational and high technical education and vocational instruction;**
- ✓ **they are provided with equal terms of participating in the same instructional program, examinations, attending to the courses of the similar instructors, in the same buildings and with the same educational materials;**

- ✓ removal of the stereotyped roles between men and women from any level of education process is ensured with coeducation and various educational methods are to be developed as well as innovative materials and curriculum studies;
- ✓ Same opportunities are ensured for men and women for scholarship and similar donations.
- ✓ same opportunities are ensured for women to fill the gap between man and women of older ages, especially in terms of literacy rate, with life long learning strategies and continuing training;
- ✓ educational programs are revised to prevent girls from leaving school and new strategies are developed for those who have already left at a certain level;
- ✓ same opportunities are provided in order for participating in sportive activities and physical education;
- ✓ information and advice about family planning and promoting family health and well-being is provided. (KSGM, 2008:6 cited in Demiray, E., 2013)

In India, Mexico, Namibia and Turkey, innovative learning approaches parallel to formal education are developed and adapted to traditional face to face educational system. In addition, some programs are adjusted for disadvantaged groups. For example, the programs of open high school, founded in 1992, and open vocational high school, founded 1995, use information and communication technology and face to face techniques. These programs present a low school fee, arbitrary books, and online learning materials. These programs are intended to reach different groups such as the physically handicapped, convicts; citizens live in rural areas (especially girls) and young people leaving school to work.

According to data from 2011, the rate of graduating from open high school is 27% and vocational open high school is 19%. Total number of graduates is 835.000. This is an achievement for those students who do not have the chance to finish continue high school after finishing primary school. Yet, still many young people do not have the advantage of accessing to these opportunities. (UNESCO, 2012)

Turkish Republic accepts all citizens equal before the law and sets legislation to protect and develop this equality. Law and regulations, while not differentiate between men and women, sometimes bear results not in favor of women and many women do not find the chance to benefit from their rights. One of these deprivations is women's right to education.

Purpose of Study

In this study, the problems of women education and possible practices of distant education in women education are investigated and evaluated.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive study using document review attaining and analyzing information from the literature of the relevant field. Historical process, current problems in woman education and possible practices of distant education in women education are analyzed and evaluated.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Problems in Women Education

Woman, being an active role in the family, contribute to social system's progress by doing her duties properly. Social system is like a social network consisting of social constitutions. Drawback in a social constitution affects all social entity. Therefore, considering the noble image of woman as an individual in the family is vital for her role and responsibility in the social life. It is necessary for woman to have the same

educational rights with man to gain her worthy place and perform her duties in the society. Societies which do not ensure this equality procure proper development (Kayadibi, 2003).

Possible problems and diverse handicaps are faced in the society while applying women rights. One of the most important handicaps is gender discrimination and attitude in the society. Many countries in the world are observed to ignore subjects about women and women rights in their basic development policies and strategies. Likewise, in many countries there are laws that are opposing or banning the equality of women and men.

According to reports by UNICEF, especially discrimination against women is at an unacceptable dimension. Discrimination against women starts at an early age by giving more importance to boys than girls in the family with the effect of traditions, culture and stereotypes. Boys have more advantages from mother and father in terms of accepting more attention of general health care and education. It is a fact that women do not have equal place in any social layer. One of the main reasons for this situation is inequality between men and women which in turn causes educational problems. Throughout the history, problems about women education have been one of the biggest problems of humanity. 21 century Turkey also has not been different in terms of overcoming these problems. Women coming after men in the field of education should be evaluated in terms of a healthy, consistent and balanced society and family structure (Ozaydınlık, 2014).

In every part of world, societies' educational and cultural level is measured with the importance they give to the equality of education between men and women. Education is one of the most important issues societies' future and development. Education is especially important for countries like Turkey which has a high rate of young people population. Turkey has registration, attending and completing problems at a basic educational level. While basic education is protected by law in Turkey during the republic period, education of the population, especially that of women, is not at a preferred level.

There are many children who do not continue to primary education while primary education is compulsory and protected by law. In 2003, seven and a half million people are still illiterate. Thinking that the total population is 65 million, this is a relatively big number. It can be said that the situation does not change so much in 2009. In order to change this negative table, recuperative developments are needed in terms of women education. The number of children (especially girls) at the age of primary education (6-14), who are out of formal education, is 1012000.

In Turkey, there are important difference and imbalance in terms of accessing to education both between regions and gender. Gender related inequalities are also clear in rural areas compared to and urban city centres. According to numbers by SIS (State Institute of Statistics), the rate of illiterate women is 16.59% while in rural areas this rate reaches 30.76%. In 2006, literacy rate for men is 94%, while for women it 81%.

According to schooling rate of 2006-2007, the rate of boys at the age of primary education is 92.25% and that of girls is 87.91%. The schooling rate of women is not at a proffered level while it shows an increase year by year (Tunc, 2009).

According to UNICEF (2003), among the reason why girls are not continuing to school are;

- ✓ Traditions and religious believes;
- ✓ Stereotyped gender roles;
- ✓ Instructional programs and re-created gender roles in child care-education;
- ✓ Low statue of women;

- ✓ **Early marriages;**
- ✓ **Seeing education as a contradiction for socially accepted roles (Tunc, 2009).**

Social gender inequality shows itself in Turkey in education, just like showing itself many other fields. In 2010 Turkey Millennium Development Goal Report, it stressed that while at primary education gender discrimination has been removed, the rate of girls who do not continue to secondary education is still highly worrisome (Ozaydinlik, 2014).

Diverse studies have shown that girls have similar educational problems such as economic insufficiency, gender discrimination, domestic work, looking after siblings, family's indifference, early marriages, working at agricultural labour, dispersed rural settlement.

In Turkey educational services are not balanced provided for men and women (Demiray, E., 2013. M. E., 1992. SIS, 1997).

In another research, primary reasons are attitudes towards "Girl/Woman Education", environment's effect for not sending girls to school, family members, customs and traditions, level of income, domestic work, early marriages, school expenses, attention and importance given to education, mobile teaching, lack of schools in the environment and similar factors (Tunc, 2009).

The most important problem of women is unschooling and unemployment. Looking from gender base, the number of unemployed and unschooled women is higher when compared to men in OECD countries.

In 2014, the rate for men at the age of 20-24 is 16,4% while for women it is 19,4. However, in Turkey the problem seems bigger. The rate for men is 20,5% while, it is 51% for women (see Table 2).

It is seen that the rate of unschooling and unemployment is in favour of women when compared to men. In OECD countries, the highest rate of unschooling and unemployment in terms of gender factor is in Turkey and Mexico (TED, 2015).

Tablo 2.
The rate of unschooled and disemployed 20-24 year old women and men of Turkey and OECD (TED, 2015)

	Unschooling and unemployed women	Unschooling and unemployed men
Turkey	51	20,5
OECD	19,4	16,4

In OECD countries, there is a significant difference in terms of gender dispersion at an undergraduate level. Turkey has a rate of 37% dispersion for women, while OECD's is 30% for fields like science and engineering. Likewise, the rate of women finishing undergraduate programs in OECD is 58% while in Turkey it is 49%. In addition, the rate of post graduate and doctorate for women in Turkey is 48% and 45%; while in OECD it is respectively 56% and 47%. A remarkable difference shows itself in the academy graduate rates. In 2014, the rate of women graduation from vocational higher schools and associate's degree to all graduates of Turkey is 14%, while in OECD this is 3% (TED, 2015).

Although the proportion of women participating in education is higher, the situation gets different for employment in terms of gender difference. In OECD 66% all levels of graduation finds the chance of employment while 80% men has this chance. In 2014, in Turkey, which has one of the biggest gender based discrimination of employment, 12% of women finished graduate education is stayed out of employment whereas 6% of men do not find the chance to enter in employment world. This is precisely half of the women rate. A similar picture is in the employment fields requiring a lower education than high school graduation. Turkey draws attention with a 25% gender difference rate between employment of men and women. This places Turkey among the countries with the highest rates. Among high school graduates, 17% women and 7% men are unemployed, which makes the gap between men and women bigger in terms of employment chances (TED, 2015).

Distance Education Applications

There is a strong relationship between societies' development level and educational practices. Developed countries aim to advance their societies by investing in education and spreading educational services to every part and individuals of the society. Therefore, they set their goals by intending to maximize schooling rate at every level of education. Countries' developmental level, economic opportunities, school age population, teachers' number, technological drawbacks and cultural attitudes towards education have a big role in presenting school practices to the individuals (Gelislı, 2015).

These realities show everybody that we need innovations in order to present better educational services. So as to come up with these drawbacks, both applicators and producers endeavour to find and develop different methods as well as benefiting from technology. Utilization of technology is of great importance for solutions of educational problems. Distance education application is one of the educational applications that use technology in their practices. (Gelislı, 2015).

Distance education is a system in which students and teachers are at different physical places actualizing education and instruction, using diverse technological equipments with the purpose of bringing educational services to wider groups and ensuring the equality of opportunities in education (Yalın, 2001: 204).

With the great development of internet and intranet and its usage at every aspect of life, technology has provided people with new methods and opportunities to do work at many fields especially economy. In the new world, one of the places that internet has entered is education. With internet, education has been called distance education, e-learning or electronic education (Bayam, Aksoy, 2012).

Women education is still a big problem in many parts of the world in spite of the rapid developments in educational and instructional field. Women benefit less from educational services than men and social gender inequalities continue. Therefore, distance education which do not require face to face educational expenses, is preferred since the number of women who do not continue to school after primary education is bigger than that of men. As a result, women who do not have the chance of maintaining formal education prefer distance education (Demiray, E., 2013).

In the modern world, women have to have a prestigious statue as well as being a conscious, creative, self confident and productive. In addition, it is vital for women to find their place as an individual in the society. What is more, education is of great importance for women in order to develop their position in the society. Accordingly, distance education, as well as formal and nonformal education, has great importance for the purpose of removing educational gender discrimination and purpose of development of women as an individual within the society (Demiray, E., 2013).

Distance education has an important function in women education. Women do not properly benefit from formal education as a result of the lack of resources, time, place and their bigger responsibility at home compared to men. Therefore, it is possible to provide them with the chance of finishing their education via distance education which does not necessitate face to face education and removes time and place expenses. Yet, it is not sufficient only to ensure the chance to finish educational levels but educational programs that support occupational opportunities, information about women rights, a self-confident image in the society, socially successful and contemporary individual attitude needed to be developed (Demiray, E. 2013).

Social perceptions, fertility and productivity role of women negatively affects their participation in the formal education. Society sees women as a baby sitter and housewife and do not accept any other role for women that hinders her program, tolerantly. As a result, especially married women do not easily find the chance of participating in other activities. Many studies result verifies this situation. Therefore, women find distance education appropriate for themselves. Housewife and mother role prevent class participation and flexible timing, while distance education enables solution for this situation. Women's restricted time, place and recourse increases their tendency for distance education (Kwapong, 2007:69 cited Demiray, E., 2013).

Distance education has drawn attention in many developed and developing countries including Turkey as a result of its role in removing geographical, economic and gender based educational and employment inequalities as well as complying with lifelong learning and being applicable at higher and vocational education (Sugur and Savran, 2006).

Distance education systems gives service for student groups who are geographically dispersed and are the effect of different life conditions.

Apart from its literal definition, it is possible to define distance education as an education that is applied to find solution for certain social problems. There are many other concepts that are used with distance education; some are open primary school, open secondary school, open high school and Open University. Notions about distance education are given in Figure below. Open plan school basically is a schooling model that realizes education without using school building or using it at a very small extent. In the base of open education lays the idea of using technologies that support students to learn by themselves or develop their learning skills (Kaya, 2002).

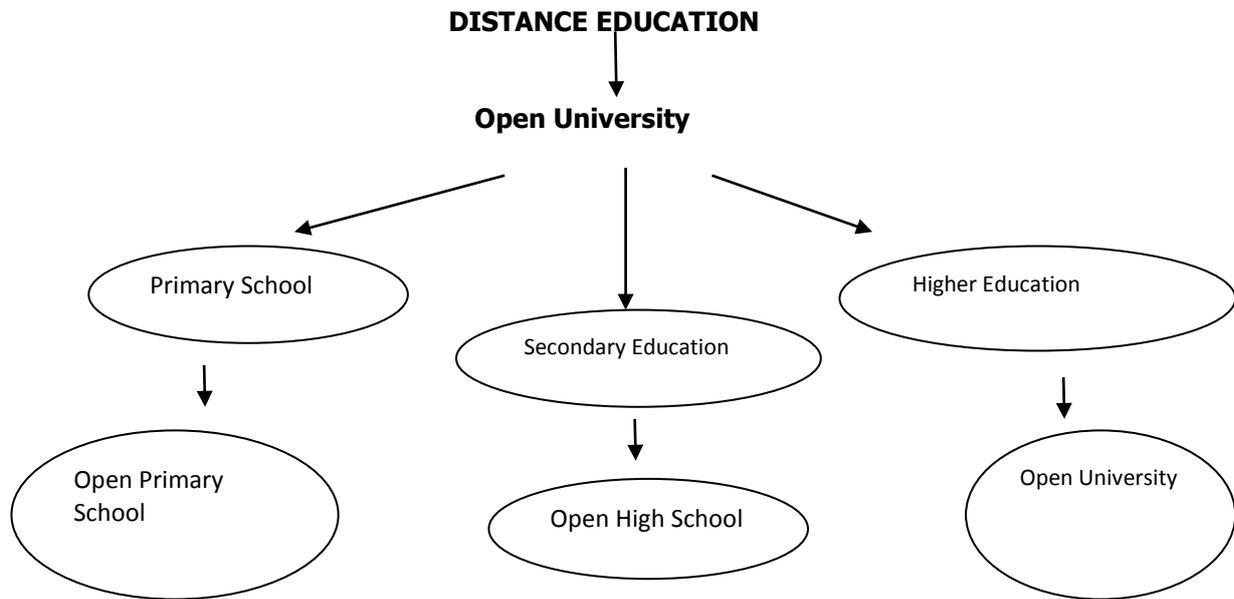


Figure 1:
 General Outlook of Notions about Distance Educations (Source: Kaya, 2002)

Distance Education in Primary Education

Open Primary School was founded under Ministry of education attached to Centre of Education with Film Radio and Television with 1651 law number dated 12.09.1997. Open Primary School is an institution under General Directorate giving distance education with centralized system. The institution is founded as school management in the centre and Open Education Bureaus in the local areas. Personel at the school management are manager, vice manager, assistant managers, teachers and other staff (Düzgün, Yıldız, 2009).

Table: 3.
 The Number of Students of Open Primary School between 1998-2008 by Gender

Gender	Aktive	Passive	Total
Male	61.811	125.540	187.351
Female	78.601	80.523	159.124
Total	140.412	206.063	346.475

In Table, it is clear that the number of active female students is higher than that of male students. This shows that female students are more eager to benefit from primary school than male students.

The role of distance education in increasing literacy rate is undeniable.

Distance Education in Secondary Education

According to the UNESCO report run in 2015, gender gap in rural areas of Turkey, which is a middle income country, is major. 65 percent of young women fail to complete the first years of secondary education. All the same, this ratio is 36 percent for men (UNESCO, 2012). This negative situation in secondary education has led to a drift into increasing the educational quality of the general population. One of these pursuits is distance education in secondary education.

Open high schools started education in 1992–1993. Open high school, which started with 45.000 students in 1992–1993 year of education, has 760.000 log-in students in the 2002-2003 year of education. While open high school served only for secondary school graduates at the beginning, it has accepted the applications of students who have left secondary school at a middle classes such as 7th since 1993. Open high school gives educational services not only to those students who are out of school age but also to students from formal education (Demiray, & Adıyaman, 2010).

With arrival of the new 4+4+4 structural educational model system, law numbered 6287, and regulations in Primary School Law published in Official Gazette on April 11, 2012 the number of female students continuing in formal education has decreased while the number of female students who study open high school has increased. Equality of opportunity means that everybody has the right to register in a school. However, there are huge differences among schools. This situation also necessitates equality of opportunities. Yet, equalization of schools cannot prevent potential differences. Because inequalities that are out of schools create inequalities inside schools. Not only inequalities at school are needed to be demolished but also those at accessing to a higher educational institution and employment are needed to be eliminated (Tosun, & Arslan, 2015).

Distance Education in Higher Education

In educational systems, which are socially of great importance, distance education finds significant application environment in parallel to formal education practices in Turkey. Anadolu University Open Education and Distance Education System is the first contemporary distance education system at higher educational level in our country (Demiray, & Sağlık, 2003). Open University system, which started distance education at Economy and Business Administration fields in 1982-1983, has increasingly broadened its scope. It is a higher education application, which has a 34 year historical background, giving service to large student groups. In 1993, Open University system has been revised with a Delegated Legislation law numbered 496, by turning Economy and Management programs into four year faculties.

In addition, open University faculty has been assigned to do affairs related to open education and prepare certificates for associate degree, graduate etc. Open University Faculty is the endeavour of using technology and developing internet and computer based educational materials and video conferences, ensuring adaptation of students to these technological entities apart from published materials and televised training. Besides, it provides academic guidance and face to face practices in the proper regions (Demiray, & Sağlık, 2003; Demiray, E., 2013).

These applications are important applications that are used to remove gender based inequalities for higher education.

When distance education post graduate programs are analyzed, it is seen that there are 82 distance education post graduate programs for 60 different programs. With 19 different programs it is understood that e-MBA programs are relatively common and it is possible to open other programs as universities have the necessary experience. In addition, it is understood that distance education certificate programs are opened with 80 different programs when universities websites are observed. The diversity and number of programs increases day by day. Naturally it is predicted that the diversity and number of these programs will also increase in the future with the support of the internet.

Accordingly, the demands of student's will also increase as a result of the support of information technologies to the distance education programs. Yet it is only possible for these demands to increase if the programs bear the desired quality. While universities

use similar programs, the key point exists in the quality of the courses and the experience and knowledge of applicators. Besides distance education, usage of information technologies is vital for formal education since learning environment and methods are mostly internet based.

Therefore, for successful distance education applications, it is very important for universities to get ready as an institution and enhance their instructors' knowledge accordingly. The distribution of 222 distance education programs at 47 universities (except certificate programs) is summarized in the table below (Babalan, 2012). Proliferation of higher education, which women do not properly benefit, presents important educational opportunities for women who work and do not continue to school as well as supporting them to graduate from higher education.

CONCLUSION

From the research, it is understood that women still have important education and employment problems; women's schooling rate is lower when compared with that of men. Reasons for educational problems of girls are economic inefficiencies, gender based discrimination among children, imposing housework to girls, girls being babysitter to their siblings, families' not giving permission for education, early marriages, working as an agricultural labourer, dispersed settlement in rural areas, and unbalanced educational services for man and women in Turkey.

The fact that primary, secondary and higher education applications which are diploma based applications in open education system are important educational opportunities for women deprived of educational services is another result of the research.

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