

## STATUS OF WOMAN IN ROSE FARMING IN ISPARTA-TURKEY

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### Abstract

*Women do housework in rural areas and at the same time are involved in agricultural production outside home. For this reason, in agriculture which is a labour-intensive sector, the work load of women is higher than men in the sector. However, jobs done by men are socially more prestigious and more profitable. It is the fact that women's activities are mostly part-time, often free and more home-based. Women work with hourly, daily or unit-based wages as unpaid family workers during the production and harvesting stages of agricultural products (cotton, hazelnut, tea, rose, etc.). In this study, it was aimed to determine the life and working conditions and problems of agricultural female workers in rose production, which is one of the most important agricultural products in Isparta province. The sample size was calculated by simple random sampling method and a questionnaire study was conducted with 147 women. The vast majority of women interviewed are primary school graduates, and most of the women have no social security. It was found that the interviewed women were not effective in making decisions in general and did not have control over their income.*

**Key words:** rose, women, status, Isparta, Turkey

### INTRODUCTION

Women face permanent obstacles and social and economic constraints that prevent them from becoming more involved in agriculture while they play an important role in agricultural growth in developing countries (Alkire et al., 2012; Sraboni et al., 2013) [1,16]. In most respects, women face more severe constraints than men in developing countries. They are physically weaker than men, have lower education level, less income, and less control over their income. Moreover, they have less bargaining power when selling their products and labour, less participation in decision-making bodies, less access to production inputs and resources and lower employment opportunities (Basu and Basu, 2011; Hossain and Jaim, 2011) [2, 6]. In Turkey, as in other developing countries, women make vital contributions to the agricultural economies. They are often engaged in domestic activities and participate in agricultural production. Agriculture is a labour-intensive sector, and in parallel, women's workload in the sector is higher than

men. However, the works done by men are socially more prestigious and more profitable. The women work either at lower fees or unpaid, despite the fact that they have more work to do. Their activities relate to part-time, unpaid, and usually home-based work. They work with hourly, daily or unit-based wages and as unpaid family workers during the production and harvesting stages of agricultural products (cotton, hazelnut, tea, rose, etc.) (Gulcubuk and Yasan, 2009; Rad et al., 2012) [5, 15]. This has been verified by the official statistical data. The labour force participation rate in 2016 is 30.4% for women between the ages of 15-24 while it is 54.3% for men (TUIK, 2018) [17].

Table 1. Employment types and distribution by gender in agriculture

	Female (%)	Male (%)	Total
Regular employee/Casual employee	37.0	63.0	100.0
Employer	7.5	92.5	100.0
Self employed	11.3	88.7	100.0
Unpaid family worker	76.7	23.3	100.0
Total	44.9	55.1	100.0

Source: TUIK, 2018

As it can be seen from the Table 1, the low labour force participation rate for women is mainly due to being busy in unpaid family workforce.

Rural women in Turkey work quite hard as paid workers at certain periods due to both family workforce needs and economic reasons. This also applies to Isparta province in which roses (*Rosa Damascena*) are produced intensively. The economic return of the rose oil is attractive, but it is labour-intensive.

Although not precisely known, about 15,000 tons of rose flowers are produced around the world.

The main countries where the rose flowers are produced are Turkey, Bulgaria, Morocco, Afghanistan, China, Iran, India, South Africa and Saudi Arabia.

Turkey (7,250 tons in 2016) and Bulgaria (5,750 tons in 2016) are the most significant ones. The rose oil and rose concretes produced in both countries are fully processed in the world perfume and cosmetics industry. Turkey alone meets around 48% of the world's rose oil production and most of the roses (80%) are grown by women in Isparta province (General Directorate of Cooperatives, 2017) [4].

The aim of the study is to present an overview on the roles and condition of women and to determine the issues women face in rose farming.

For this purpose, the social and demographic structure of women, their working conditions and participation in decisions-making are examined in the study.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research was conducted in 8 villages located in the districts of Keçiborlu, Gonen and Central Townships in Isparta. The villages are selected because they have the highest rose production in the area. The sample size was calculated using the Simple Random Sampling Method and found as 147. Therefore, a face to face questionnaire was conducted with 147 women engaged in rose farming. The proportional distribution was used in the analysis of the obtained data.

Charts and graphs were created and interpreted in accordance with the purpose.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### *Women's social and demographic characteristics*

The social and demographic status of women provides information on both women's status in society and gender roles. Furthermore, the women's role in society affects women's labour force participation economically.

Table 2. Women's social and demographic characteristics

	Number	Ratio (%)	
Age	21-40	42	28.5
	41-50	44	30.0
	51-80	61	41.5
	Total	147	100.0
Education Level	Primary	114	77.5
	Secondary	12	8.2
	High	14	9.5
	University	7	4.8
	Total	147	100.0
Occupation	Housewife	139	94.6
	Civil Servant	5	3.4
	Farmer	3	2.0
	Total	147	100.0
Marital Status	Married	137	93.2
	Single	10	6.8
	Total	147	100.0
Marriage Procedure	Arranged Marriage	86	58.5
	Companionate Marriage	42	28.6
	Elopement	9	6.1
	Total	137	93.2
Number of Children	n/a	4	2.7
	1-3	125	85.0
	4-6	18	12.3
	Total	147	100.0
Social Security	Yes	21	14.3
	No	126	85.7
	Total	147	100.0
Membership of Cooperatives	Yes	27	18.4
	No	120	81.6
	Total	147	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data

General findings suggest that the marital status of women, the number of children, education status, demographic factors and gender perception are extremely important for women's participation in the workforce when

the results of a limited number of empirical studies for Turkey are examined (Ozer and Bicerli, 2003; Dayioglu and Kirdar, 2010; Kilic and Ozturk, 2014) [14, 3, 10].

In rose cultivation in Isparta, it is observed that most of the women participating in the research are 41 years old and over, and their education level is primary school. They are mostly housewives, married in arranged marriages, have 1 to 3 children and do not have social security. Furthermore, they are not members of any cooperative or association in general (81.6 %) (Table 2).

The low level of women’s education, mostly dealing with housework, marriages in the direction of their families, and not having social security make women disadvantaged in the society.

**The Economic Status of Women**

Gender inequality, or in other words sex-based division of labour, plays an important role in what women and men can and cannot do (Kilic and Ozturk, 2014) [10]. In this context, women are usually responsible for housework, child and elderly care while men are responsible for joining the workforce and bringing money home. The situation of women does not look good from an economic perspective as well as in social and demographic characteristics.

Gender-based division of labour, urban migration, disintegration in agricultural structure, weakening of traditional family structure, the stresses of balancing family and working life and the low level of education for women are considered as significant elements among the public-specific reasons for the low level of female employment. However, the structural changes in the economy, applied policies and social transformations have become important factors in the decrease of employment in general, in female employment in particular (Hotar, 2011; Karabiyik, 2012) [7,8].

In relation to the economic situation of women in the study, the following were also found: They make the highest income from the rose product according to their works and earn an average of 5,269 USD per business per year. Women’s own income source is the money they obtain from their spouse and most

of them have no other gain apart from the pocket money. Also, the ownership of the families’ agricultural land is mostly their spouse. Nearly half of the women have an experience of 11 to 20 years in rose cultivation. Despite such a great deal of experience and work, it is expected that they have a limited decision-making ability within the household due to not having enough income sources.

Table 3. The Economic Status of Women

	Number	Ratio (%)	Average (USD)*
Income Source by Activity Type			
Income Earned from Rose	147	100.0	5,269
Non-Business Agricultural Income	24	16.3	896
Non-Agricultural Income	14	9.5	845
Source of the Women’s Income			
Pocket Money from Spouse	77	52.4	
Salaried Employee	8	5.4	
Working as an Agricultural Worker	16	10.9	
No Earnings	46	31.3	
Land Property Status**			
Own	48	32.6	
Spouse	97	65.9	
Other	29	19.6	
Experience in Rose Farming (year)			
2-10	27	18.4	
11-20	44	30.0	
21-30	28	19.1	
31-40	29	19.7	
41+	19	13.0	

Source: Authors’ calculations based on survey data

\*Calculated according to the average exchange rate of the CBRT (Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey) year 2016 (1 USD= 3TL).

\*\*There can be more than one answer because the land is very fragmented.

**Participation of Women in Work and Decisions**

In the context of household employment, women and girls who are in unpaid family works have a heavy work load. In addition to routine tasks like housekeeping, cooking, washing and water transport, women also have to do a lot of time-consuming tasks which require high body strength, such as vineyard works, wood transport, bread making and animal care. According to the data obtained, rural women in Isparta

province spend at least three hours per day for housework and child care. Their leisure time is not even an average of two hours a day (knitting, resting, watching TV and religious activities). In rural area, the labour intensity of a woman is not just about housework. At the same time, the fact that women have to work in agricultural production places them in the position of heavy workers (Kizilaslan and Yamanoglu, 2010) [11].

Table 4. Works and Time Spent in Rose Farming

Agricultural Work	Average Working Time (Hour/Person/Year)	Ratio (%)
Release	7.5	3.1
Fertilisation	7.1	3.0
Spraying	4.9	2.0
Pruning	20.6	8.5
Hoeing	20.5	8.5
Irrigation	3.7	1.5
Harvest	177.4	73.3
Shipping	0.3	0.1
Total	242.0	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data

It is seen that in the study, the women work most in rose harvesting (%7 3.3), followed by pruning (% 8.5) and hoeing (% 8.5). Also, 21.1% of the women work in a business other than their own. They usually work in hoeing and picking on a paid basis.

In another study (Kaya and Atsan, 2012) [9], it was determined that the majority of women in rural areas were also involved in harvesting and hoeing (60.9%) and that they worked for a total of 12.7 hours a day.

In rural areas, the control of decisions often shifts to men. In our study, it has been found that half of the women have always participated in the decisions in the family (50.3%) while nearly the other half have sometimes participated (42.9%), and the rest (6.8%) have never participated. In terms of participation in decision making, deciding to purchase house and land is the most common answer and this is followed by purchasing goods and gold. They have the minimum contribution to the decisions on grown children's marriage and the decision is made by the man of the house. Similarly, the plan of the family budget is largely made by the husbands. It is also seen that they are effective in making decisions about rose production but

not in deciding on rose marketing. Similar findings were found in other studies (Kizilaslan and Yamanoglu, 2010; Kulak, 2011; Oguz and Kan, 2010) conducted in other cases in Turkey [11, 12, 13].

Table 5. Participation of Women in Decision Making

	Number of Women	%
Participation in Decisions in the Family		
Always	74	50.3
Sometimes	63	42.9
Never	10	6.8
Total	147	100.0
Decision Topics		
Children's Education	69	47.0
Purchasing House, Land	126	85.7
Purchasing Goods	114	77.6
Purchasing Gold	85	57.8
Grown Children's Marriage	24	16.3
Decisions on Planning Family Budget		
Me	14	9.5
My Partner	94	64.0
Me and My Partner	35	23.8
Family	3	2.0
Others (Father-in-law, Mother-in-law)	1	0.7
Total	147	100.0
Participation in Decisions on Rose Production		
Always	69	46.9
Sometimes	27	18.4
Never	51	34.7
Total	147	100.0
Participation in Decisions on Rose Marketing		
Always	38	25.9
Sometimes	14	9.5
Never	95	64.6
Total	147	100.0

Source: Authors' calculations based on survey data

## CONCLUSIONS

In this paper it was aimed to determine the life and working conditions and issues of agricultural female workers in rose production, which is one of the most significant products in Isparta province. Women have a heavy work load in rose farming as in the case of other rural areas. Besides routine tasks like housekeeping, cooking, washing and water transport, women also have to do a lot of time-consuming tasks which require high body strength, such as vineyard works, wood transport, bread making and animal care. They work quite

hard as paid workers at certain periods due to both the family labour and economic reasons in rural life in Turkey.

In rural areas, the women usually work in harvesting, hoeing and pruning outside the home with or without pay. In rose farming, they work 177.4 hours in harvesting, 20.5 hours in hoeing and 20.6 hours in pruning per person per year. Women's marital status, number of children, educational status, demographic factors and gender perceptions are very important on women's labour force participation rates. In terms of socio-economic characteristics, they are disadvantageous because they are individuals who have low level of education, mostly engaged in housework, married in the direction of the family's request, do not have social security, and have no income of their own. On the other hand, in terms of participation in decisions, the situation does not also seem pleasant. It is found that only half of the interviewed women are able to participate in decision making. The majority cannot participate in decisions especially about the grown children's marriage and marketing in rose products. Their spouses are influential in the decisions. It is verified with the results that they have limited in participation in decision-making within the household because they have not enough income sources.

Women in general are disadvantaged in the society. In addition to this, the situation in which rural women are socially and economically involved is further deepened the difference between women and men. The situation can only be resolved by social policies and various regulations, including government support and positive discrimination. The social perception that will change the outlook for women must also be changed. For this purpose, new approaches can be gained with training studies. The heavy burden on the rural woman must be reduced and a balance between roles based on gender must be ensured. Employment should be increased by providing new skills and equipment that will increase women's participation in the workforce, especially as paid worker.

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