Gender Inequalities in the World and in Turkey

Nuray Kizilaslan and Halil Kizilaslan
Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, Gaziosmanpasa University, 60240 Tokat/ Turkey.

Abstract: Gender inequality has always tended to be disadvantageous for women in countries of the world. UNDP has developed gender-based indices to measure every aspects of this inequality and issued the rates of countries. In this study the first ranking and last ranking countries in terms of index values in 2003, and Turkey are compared. The correlation between GDI and GEM index values and components of these indices with respect to each of the countries are evaluated with Pearsons correlation coefficient. It has been found that there is a strong positive correlation between GDI and male real GDP per capita in Turkey, there is a positive correlation between all components and GDI in Norway, and in Niger, there is a positive correlation between GDI and female and male life expectancies. GEM indicates that in Turkey there is a positive correlation between GDI and women’s share of administrative positions, and of professional and technical workers; in Iceland and Yemen there is a positive correlation between GEM and each of the components. Accordingly, it has been emphasized that some other factors (such as differences between rural and urban conditions or other factors) have to be differentiated while calculating GDI and GEM values. Therefore, it can be said that gender inequalities will display many disparities in various terms.

Keywords: Gender-Related Indices, Gender Related Development Index (GDI), Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM), Gender Inequality, First Ranking Country, Last Ranking Country, Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

Within each country, there are significant disparities, gaps: among regions, between the sexes, between urban and rural areas and among ethnic groups[3].

Starting with the French Revolution, women has been struggling for having equal rights with men and combined their struggle with women movement of the 19th Century; they continued their struggle in the 20th century and have made a spectacular progress in closing gender gap. At that point, the ties between gender equality and the process of democracy has been strengthened continuously, and gender equality has become a sine qua non of democracies. In democratization processes, the capacities of societies to enable women to use their basic individual rights and freedom and to protect and improve these rights have begun to be taken into account.

This process has resulted in continuous efforts for carrying gender equality issue to human rights platform in order to prevent nationwide and worldwide gender discrimination. As it is known, the reflection of these efforts in national and international regulations is the widespread acceptance that women have to be enabled to use all of their rights to participate in political, economic, cultural and social life in the way men do. One of the significant proof of this acceptance is The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”, which is often described as an international bill of rights for women. Turkey signed and became a party to this convention in 1985, and the convention came into force in 1986 in Turkey[3]. However, in gender equality issue no sufficient progress has been achieved worldwide yet. Even it is known that in some societies there are serious disparities between the situations of men and women in terms of basic indicators.

Two different indices developed by UNDP(United Nations Development Programme) indicate the extent of gender inequalities in every country of the world. UNDP has influenced to a great extent by some studies while developing indices to monitor human development and the changes in the conditions of women, and to make comparisons between countries[4].
The method used in calculating gender-related indices is based on the assumption that unless the condition of the group with the lowest status in society, that is, the status of women is improved, the success of men will be understated, the progress in the society will be slow[4]. Gender-related indices are Gender Related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM).

However disputes over the method of calculation of these indices are continuing. Some authorities argue that some other components are not included, and the values are not reliable, and some others argue that the aspect of human wealth is neglected[14,7,10,9]. In this study the indices and indicators calculated by UNDP are used.

In this study, the status of Turkey and other countries according to the said indices are examined. The relationship between index values of Turkey and the high and low ranking countries and the components in the indices are examined by means of Pearsons correlation coefficient, and comparisons are made between countries. MINITAB statistic program is used in calculating Pearson correlation.

**Gender Related Development Index (GDI):** UNDP has developed this index to measure gender inequality in terms of human development variable. These index components are shown on Figure 1.

Since Human Development Report (HDR) 1995, GDI and GEM have become permanent variables of human development index (HDI). HDR 1995 states that HDI measures average achievement of a county in basic human capabilities. It indicates whether people lead a long and healthy life, are educated and knowledgeable and enjoy a decent standard of living. As for GDI, it measures achievement in the same basic capabilities as the HDI does, but does take note of inequality in achievement between women and men. The method it is used makes the value of human development index to decrease in the case of inequality. It assumes that the higher the gender-related inequalities are, the lower the level of development of that country is. GDI is simply the HDI adjusted downwards for gender inequality[15].

Turkey ranks 96 in terms of its HDI in 2001 (it is the latest data). In 2001, Gross Domestic Product per capita in US Dollar according to purchasing power parity decreased by 16% of the level of 2000. This decrease caused Turkey to fall 16 ranks below its places on Human Development Index in 2000[15].

The status of Turkey, of the country ranking highest and of the country ranks lowest in the first year when gender-related indices are developed and in the last year when data are collected are compared with respect to 1992 and 2001 results on Table 1.

**Fig. 1:** GDI Components Developed by UNDP to Measure Gender Inequality In Terms of Human Development

Turkey ranks 81 in terms of its GDI in 2001[15]. The Table implies that the GDI value of Turkey falls from 0.744 to 0.726 in 1992. Turkey is a developing country in 2001 as it was in 1992.

A GDI value of 1.000 indicates that people have achieved to improve their basic capacities by also achieving gender-related equality. However, Table 1 shows that even the country ranking highest has not attained the goal of 1.000. Therefore it is not wrong to state that in no society has achieved complete gender equality yet.

The countries where social gender-related inequalities are relatively low and that rank highest in 1990 and 2001 are the Nordic countries. In 1992 Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark were in the top group, and 2001 Norway, Iceland, Sweden, Holland were the highest. These countries put policy of minimizing gender inequalities as the focus of their social policies. Yet, even in these countries, the relative status of women is, to certain extent, behind the status of men. Still, in the last ten years the disparity between GDI and HDI values has reduce to a minimum[5].

By means of Pearsons correlation coefficient, the status of Turkey and the status of countries ranked highest and of the countries ranked in terms of values in 2003 are examined, and the correlation between GDI value and index components is examined. A summary of statistics for the results are listed on Table 2.

Examining Table 2, the following conclusions are drawn regarding the countries.

In Turkey, GDI and male real Gross Domestic product per capita (GDP) correlate with a strong positive coefficient of 0.876. As the index value increases, male real GDP per capita increases also. Even if there is a positive correlation with respect to other components, it is a weak correlation. Additionally, female real GDP per capita and index value correlate with a positive but weak correlation of 0.294. Therefore, it must be noted that the real income
of males is the determinant of Turkey’s GDI value. Then, Turkey’s index value implies that there is disparity between the income of women and men. Moreover, when women workforce in domestic front, a part of informal economy (both in rural and urban sphere) is taken into account, a much more serious disparity is noticed.

In Turkey, women in rural sphere both participate in agricultural sector as domestic workforce, paid agricultural workers, and administrators of agricultural enterprises and make contribution to the income of family with activities in non-agricultural sector (carpet weaving). However, their contribution is not taken into account. Furthermore, if they are paid, their

| Table 1: GDI Values of Turkey and Some Other Countries in the World. |
|-----------------|----------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                | Sweden   | Norway         | Afghanistan    | Niger          | Turkey         | Turkey         | Turkey         | Turkey         |
| Female Life Expectancy At Birth (Year) | 81.1 | 81.7 | 44.0 | 45.9 | 68.6 | 72.8 |
| Male Life Expectancy At Birth (Year) | 58.4 | 75.8 | 43.0 | 45.3 | 64.5 | 67.6 |
| Female Adult Literacy Rate (%age 15 and above) | 99.0 | 100.0 | 12.7 | 8.9 | 70.1 | 77.2 |
| Male Adult Literacy Rate (%age 15 and above) | 99.0 | 100.0 | 44.1 | 24.4 | 90.6 | 93.7 |
| Female Combined Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratio(%) | 98.1 | 102.0 | 9.6 | 14.0 | 54.1 | 54.0 |
| Male Combined Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratio(%) | 91.9 | 94.0 | 18.7 | 21.0 | 68.3 | 65.0 |
| Female Estimated Earned Income (PPP US $) | 41.6 | 23.3 | 7.1 | 646 $ | 30.2 | 3717 $ |
| Male Estimated Earned Income (PPP US $) | 58.4 | 36.0 | 92.9 | 1 129 $ | 69.8 | 8028 $ |
| Human Development Index (HDI) Rank | 1 | 1 | 130 | 175 | 71 | 96 |
| Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Rank | 0.925 | 0.944 | 0.165 | 0.275 | 0.696 | 0.734 |
| Gender Related Development Index (GDI) Value | 0.919 | 0.941 | 0.169 | 0.279 | 0.744 | 0.726 |


| Table 2: The correlation between GDI Values and Index Components According to Pearson Correlation – Calculated Correlation Coefficients |
|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Index Components | Norway          | Turkey         | Niger          |
| Female Life Expectancy At Birth (Year) | 0.795 (P=0.205) | 0.139 (P=0.861) | 0.696(P=0.304) |
| Male Life Expectancy At Birth (Year) | 0.795(P=0.205) | 0.238(P=0.762) | 0.377(P=0.122) |
| Female Adult Literacy Rate (%age 15 and above) | 0.897(P=0.103) | 0.250(P=0.750) | -0.266(P=0.734) |
| Male Adult Literacy Rate (%age 15 and above) | 0.897(P=0.103) | 0.333(P=0.667) | 0.007(P=0.995) |
| Female Combined Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratio(%) | 0.500(P=0.500) | 0.577(P=0.423) | 0.190(P=0.810) |
| Male Combined Primary, Secondary and Tertiary Gross Enrolment Ratio(%) | 0.672(P=0.326) | 0.471(P=0.529) | -0.039(P=0.961) |
| Female Estimated Earned Income (PPP US $) | 0.753(P=0.247) | 0.294(P=0.706) | 0.431(P=0.569) |
| Male Estimated Earned Income (PPP US $) | 0.970(P=0.303) | 0.876(P=0.124) | 0.531(P=0.469) |
wages are below the wages of males. 89% of women working in agricultural sector are seen to be serving on the domestic front in return for no wages. These women carry out production activities as a part of their responsibility to their families, and they cannot receive direct material income in return for their efforts. Moreover, the working hours for women are longer compared to that of men, and they have almost no time for themselves and no leisure time. Additionally, in rural areas, there are no convenience foods like the ones produced in industrial countries; rural women in developing countries such as Turkey prepare foods themselves. This is not registered in economy.

The correlation between index values and index components of GDI of Norway, which has ranked first out of 144 countries, is examined.

It is observed that, in Norway, there is a strong positive correlation between GDI and these index components. Only female enrollment ratio and index value correlate with a weak positive coefficient of 0.500. These values indicate that gender inequality has minimized in terms of essential components and that no component has effect on index value. It is possible to say that this country has minimized the gender-related inequalities to a great extent. However, that the index value of this country is not exactly 1000 means that this country, still, has to make progress in this issue.

The results of the correlation between the GDI value of Niger, which ranked lowest in terms of GDI 2003, and these index components are listed also.

In Niger, there is a strong positive correlation between the index value and female (0.696) and male (0.778) life expectancies. There is very weak correlation with other components. In Niger, with respect to the components of index, gender inequality is observed in adult literacy, enrollment and real GDP per capita as statistics show.

Correlation test reveals that the index value in a country will probably tend to rise as male and female life expectancy rise in this country.

Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM): The movement for gender equality of late 20th century is closely linked to the human rights movement. But the concept of women’s participation in governance on an equal footing with men dates back at least to the 4th century BCE[11].

UNDP has developed GEM to measure the extent of women participation in political and economic life. It is generally consistent with the UNDP’s valid concerns about gender issues, especially in developing countries[14].

This index attempts to measure women’s power to take the advantages of the opportunities and to enjoy the capacity of using economic resources, reaching professional opportunities, taking part in decision-making processes in economic and political life, to have access to political opportunities. In this index income aspect is not evaluated in terms of its contribution to basic human development, but it is evaluated in terms of economic power and a wider range of alternatives and opportunities. Being employed at professional and administrative positions means being at a decision-making position and taking advantageous of opportunities of career progression. This is vital, because even if women have access to educational opportunities, this may not be enough for them to have power in society.

Gender empowerment is recognised as both a complex and an elusive concept[13,8]. GEM components are listed on Figure 2.

In UNDP Report 2003, the index value of only 70 countries could be determined. Like other indices this index also indicates that Nordic countries rank higher in terms of political and economic status of women. Turkey is one of the countries ranking lower in GEM index. It ranks 66 out of 70 countries. Threshold value for Index is 0.30. Only Nordic Countries have reached that goal.

On Table 3, the status of the country ranking first and of the country ranking last in 1992 and 2001 GEM index, and the situation of Turkey are examined.

Table 3 indicates that the country ranking highest in 1992 is Sweden, and the country ranking lowest is Afghanistan; taking index values into consideration there is a very wide gap between these countries. The status of Turkey is not at sufficient level. 2001 data indicate that Iceland ranks first (GEM=0.847), and Yemen rank last (0.127). The gap in 2001 illustrates the extent of inequalities in the world. When the status of Turkey compared to the first ranking and the last-ranking countries in GEM index it is observed that
there is more serious inequalities in GEM than in GDI. Therefore, it can be said that the progress in standard of living, education and income does not create remarkable improvement in relative status of women, because women’s access to critical standard of living has been very limited.

With Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the status of Turkey and the first-ranking and last-ranking countries in terms of data in 2003, and the correlation between GEM and the index components are examined. A summary of statistics of results is listed on Table 4.

With respect to Iceland status, there is a strong positive correlation between GEM and all of these index components. As there is a strong positive correlation between each of these components in that country and GEM, the extent of inequality does not concentrate on only one component. Besides, Iceland has already achieved gender equality in this respect.

Regarding Turkey, there is a strong positive correlation between GEM and some index components such as the proportion of female executives in total number of executives and the proportion of women in professional-technical personnel. This means that increase in index value is directly connected to these components. In other words, any increase in these components will increase index value. There is a very weak negative correlation between the share of women in earned income and index value. This proves that the component of the share of women in earned income does not affect noticeably the GEM value. However, it is worthy of note that GEM and the ratio of females in ministerial position correlate with a coefficient of -0.909. This indicates that as GEM increases the number of females in ministerial positions decreases, thus there is a strong negative correlation. The reverse is also true. Therefore, the main factor that worsens the status of Turkey is the proportion of number of female ministers to the total number of ministers.

With regard to Yemen, there is a strong positive correlation between GEM values and index components. In other words, all of the components have a determinant role in the extent of inequality.

It is reasonable to posit that gender empowerment not only varies between nations, but also varies substantially in a dualistic form within a nation, with rural and traditional sectors registering significantly lower empowerment in comparison with urban modernised sectors. It follows that the GEM as currently calculated may essentially embody an aggregation bias which obscures such differences. Disaggregated estimation of rural GEM and urban GEM separately will avoid this and give additional insights into empowerment, especially for developing countries[12,13].
Conclusion: It must be noted that gender inequality is still an issue of great importance in the world, including developed countries to some extent. The degree of inequality may increase particularly when differences between rural and urban life conditions are considered. In preventing these inequalities, the issue of female education is vital. As the level of education increases, the negative aspects in examined component will decrease. Depending on education, life expectancy, female income per capita, the number of female ministers, executives, and proportion of female executives and professional technical personnel will also increase. Naturally, not only the level of education must improve, but also strict social norms must also change. Decrease in pressure of custom and traditions on women are important factors improving women status in the public eye.

As the status of women raises in the world, the advancement of societies will gain momentum. The knowledge and abilities of women is not exploited sufficiently. Additionally, approaching an issue from female angles will contribute to the emergence of different perspectives.

In calculating indices measuring gender-related inequalities, using different components for different countries will probably illustrate the extent of inequality better. Differences between rural and urban conditions create different values regarding gender-related indices within the same country.

REFERENCES