



The Challenges in the Economic Integration of Syrian Women Living in Türkiye

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ABSTRACT

Syrian women constitute a significant part of the refugee population migrating to Türkiye. In the refugee crisis that started in 2011, humanitarian aid was given priority. However, meeting the needs of Syrian women who have been living in Türkiye requires long-term plans aiming at their economic integration. At this point, the difficulties experienced by Syrian women take place in a wide range. At the last point of the refugee crisis, from the 2023 general elections to the changing attitudes of the employers, the dynamics of the society were greatly affected, and the difficulties experienced in the economic integration of Syrian women continued to increase. As Syrian women are a crucial part of the refugee crisis, it is necessary to investigate the problems they face to propose solutions. Researching and identifying these problems is not only significant academically but also useful for policy-makers in identifying the main issues when developing policies for solutions. Thus, this study examines the difficulties experienced in the economic integration of Syrian women living in Türkiye. It has been determined that the problems experienced are collected in certain areas: working conditions, cultural, social, and bureaucratic problems. The difficulties of Syrian women are discussed under these headings. As a result, inadequate regulations lead to abuse by employers and unfavorable working conditions, and this reduces the motivation of Syrian women to seek employment.

Keywords: Syrian Women, Migration, Economic Integration.

Türkiye’de Yaşayan Suriyeli Kadınların Ekonomik Entegrasyonunda Yaşanan Güçlükler

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Öz

Suriyeli kadınlar, Türkiye’ye göç eden mülteci popülasyonun önemli bir kısmını çocuklarla birlikte oluşturmaktadırlar. 2011 yılında başlayan mülteci krizinde insani yardıma öncelik verilmiştir. Fakat, uzun bir süredir Türkiye içerisinde yaşamakta olan Suriyeli kadınların ihtiyaçlarının karşılanması artık ekonomik entegrasyonlarının desteklenmesi gibi uzun vadeli planları gerektirmektedir. Bu noktada, ekonomik entegrasyonları henüz sağlamamış olan Suriyeli kadınların bu konuda yaşadıkları güçlükler çok geniş bir yelpazede yer almaktadır. Mülteci krizinin geldiği son noktada 2023 genel seçimlerinden iş verenlerin değişiklik gösteren tutumlarına kadar toplumun dinamikleri büyük oranda etkilenmiş ve Suriyeli kadınların ekonomik entegrasyonunda yaşanan güçlükler artarak devam etmiştir. Yalnızca Türkiye’nin değil aynı zamanda dünyanın da gündemini oluşturan mülteci krizinde Suriyeli kadınlar konunun önemli bir dinamiğini oluşturmaktadır. Sosyal entegrasyonun ekonomik entegrasyon ile bütünlüğü göz önüne alındığında ve bu konuda öne sürülecek çözüm önerilerinin sorun durumlarının tespit edilmesine bağlı olduğu düşünüldüğünde Suriyeli kadınların yaşadıkları sorunların araştırılması ihtiyacı doğmuştur. Bu sorunların araştırılması ve tespit edilmesi akademik olarak önemli bir konu olmasının yanında politika yapıcılar için de ana sorunların tespiti için bir referans noktası olma özelliği taşıyacaktır. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma Türkiye’de yaşayan Suriyeli kadınların ekonomik entegrasyonunda yaşanan güçlüklerin incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Yaşanan sorun durumlarının çalışma koşulları, kültürel, sosyal ve bürokratik problemler olarak belli alanlarda toplandığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu başlıklar altında ele alınan güçlüklerin literatür bağlamında tartışılması sağlanmıştır. Sonuç olarak, yetersiz düzenlemeler iş verenlerin istismarına ve olumsuz çalışma koşullarına sebebiyet vermekte, bu da Suriyeli kadınların iş arama motivasyonlarını düşürmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Suriyeli Kadın, Göç, Ekonomik Entegrasyon.

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Introduction

The impact of the Syrian refugee crisis has been devastating for the whole world, and immigration has influenced both the host countries and the refugees themselves (Amiri et al., 2020). A considerable influx of Syrian refugees has affected some countries more intensively. Türkiye is one of the countries that have experienced this considerable influx of Syrian refugees. During its history, Türkiye has faced five major migration waves, but the distinctive feature of the latest one is that the majority of immigrants consist of women (Kaşka, 2020). Most importantly, 71% of Syrian refugees in Türkiye are women and children (Reyhanoğlu, 2015). This makes the situation of Syrian refugees particularly critical. Considering that Syrian children need their parents as a caregiver, but they have only one parent with them, the status of Syrian women gains more importance.

Owing to the civil war in Syria, more than 3 million Syrian refugees have migrated to Türkiye since 2011 under Türkiye's open-door policy (Atar et al., 2022). At this point, Türkiye is expected to shoulder the responsibility of supporting Syrian refugees by implementing the necessary policies. However, the majority of host countries, including Türkiye, have not been able to successfully provide economic self-sufficiency for these refugees (Krafft et al., 2022). The intense wave of immigration to Türkiye is the primary reason that has burdened the Turkish government, and this has created significant challenges for both the Turkish government and refugees (Atar et al., 2022). Although legal changes have been made in order to enhance Syrian refugees' economic and social integration in Türkiye, the problems have persisted to increase (Demir, 2018). Thus, Syrian refugees living in host countries like Türkiye require critical attention and comprehensive support as a vulnerable group by organizations and governments.

All of the refugees are the direct subject of most of these problems by means of affection from these problems. Many of them have fled their home countries due to the trauma of war, seeking their basic right to live in a foreign land. They are foreign to this country by means of culture and language because of many reasons. To form a new life, they need to have economic independence, and for this to be provided, they need economic integration into this new country. Nevertheless, when they try this, almost all of the Syrian refugees face the problems mentioned above. However, certain vulnerable groups are much more affected because of their vulnerable position. Especially women are much more

vulnerable in this issue when considering the patriarchal culture of Turkish and Syrian societies (Kaldık, 2021).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Türkiye have provided support to Syrian women, but the increasingly large population of Syrian women needs more support to live in decent conditions (Özgür Keysan and Şentürk, 2021). They have complex problems that can be evaluated as interconnected, which is why considering the most pressing concern is crucial to facilitate solutions for problems of Syrian women living in Türkiye. At this point, the most significant problem affecting various aspects of their lives is employment due to their immediate needs depending on earning income. Gender roles and cultural sensitivities increase the vulnerability of Syrian women, so economic stability with employment supports their socialization, sense of dignity, and self-sufficiency (Şahin and Nashwan, 2021). Syrian women may face a wide range of challenges without a source of income. That is why their participation in the labor force is a necessity. For example, Erenoğlu and Yaman (2020) indicate that economic problems lead to many challenges in meeting health needs, and this can create a considerable amount of health problems. At this point, Akbarzada and Mackey (2018) highlight Syrian women's current problems related to healthcare access. In this regard, Çöl et al. (2020) emphasize the low usage of contraceptive methods by Syrian women and the high rate of consanguineous marriage and marriage under the age of 18 among Syrian women. These findings highlight the necessity of the economic integration of Syrian women in Türkiye.

In this sense, like all issues that should be evaluated, challenges in economic integration are coming forth as significant issues because any challenge means that it is an obstacle to acting on this issue. If challenges so these obstacles could be identified well, it may be possible to outreach a meaningful solution and allow Syrian women into economic life much more easily. Without identifying the problems, reasonable and beneficial solutions are not possible. Implementing policies through employment is significant; however, integration is not an issue that can be completely solved by directly implementing employment programs. It is important to identify problems faced in depth for developing solutions. This study's research question is: "What are the main challenges faced in the process of economic integration of Syrian women living in Türkiye?" Thus, this study aims to determine the difficulties experienced in the economic integration of Syrian women refugees living in Türkiye

since their settlement in Türkiye and to reveal their current situation. To do this, we will first look into the working conditions of Syrian women, which are highly challenging for them compared to men (Meyer et al., 2022). After that, we will investigate cultural problems that can be reviewed under two main subjects: language barriers and patriarchal structures in Turkish and Syrian society (Alkan, 2022; Yaman, 2020). Then we will continue with social problems and policy problems, which are highly integrated with each other and other challenges as well. After that, we will review bureaucratic problems, a significant issue that includes state-specific issues such as legal frameworks, problems in registration, documentation, etc., and gender-blind state officials/authorities. Lastly, we will analyze sustainability issues that have multi-dimensions. Then we will give a conclusion with suggestions on possible steps that could be taken to tackle these issues.

Employment and Working Conditions

Syrian women are less employed than Syrian men (Çevik et al., 2018). In addition to having less employment than Syrian men, Syrian women are exposed to discrimination and exclusion in various ways (Meyer et al., 2022; Yalim and Kim, 2018; Yamaner and Herzog, 2021). For example, Syrian women face low wages when they want to be employed (Esen and Soylu, 2023; Quak, 2019). At this point, the experience of Syrian women should be explained with intersectionality, as it reveals a complex experience of the intersection of both immigrant status and being a woman. In this regard, studies found that Syrian women earn less than the Turkish population while also earning less than Syrian men (Arslan et al., 2016; Güler, 2022; Okyay, 2017). This problem highlights the significance of intersectionality for Syrian women. More importantly, their experiences cannot be simplified to just being immigrants or women, as they face a unique set of challenges as Syrian women. These complex experiences result in low wages in the first place. As a result, low wages constitute one of the most basic problems Syrian women encounter in the workplace.

Since the employment rate of Syrian women is around 20 percent (Çevik et al., 2018), it can be said that the probability of finding a job is very low for this vulnerable group. Even if Syrian women are employed, there is no job security, and they are the first fired ones in case of need (Okyay, 2017). In other words, it is difficult for Syrian women to find a job in Türkiye, and it is more difficult for them to be permanent in the job they find because they have to make a great effort to get a job. Subsequently, Syrian women must take the risk of

continuing their job with the possibility of losing them at any moment. As a result of the process into which they put so much effort and concern, Syrian women are paid less than Syrian men, Turkish men, and Turkish women (Esen and Soylu, 2023; Öğüt, 2021). Furthermore, it has been determined that Syrian women must work longer hours than others to maintain their jobs (ILO, 2020).

In case of necessity, because Syrian women cannot find any other option, accepting jobs with low wages and long work hours is their only choice. As Syrian women choose these undecent working conditions, the problems they experience in economic integration continue to increase. At this point, a cycle appears in the process of the economic integration of Syrian women in Türkiye because as long as Syrian women accept these low wages and long work hours, these jobs continue to be offered especially to them. The difficulties experienced by Syrian women have become chronic as Syrian women are forced into this cycle. Moreover, changing this cycle is complicated because employers also benefit from this cycle. In this regard, Arslan et al. (2016) state that employing Syrian refugees without social security and for lower wages is highly abused by employers. At this point, the intervention of policymakers to prevent this abuse is crucial. This necessary intervention is only possible with effective policies. Humanitarian assistance was at first critical in improving bad conditions, but now employment has become essential for Syrian women. Most importantly, policies should focus on allocating the resources to create decent working conditions because bad working conditions are a significant obstacle preventing Syrian women from participating in the labor force in Türkiye. In addition, mechanisms monitoring the employers can be another solution policymakers should consider in the economic integration of Syrian women in Türkiye. Taken all together, working conditions are on the agenda as an unresolved issue for now.

Language and Cultural Problems

Culture is a broad term with many dimensions, including social behaviors, institutions, religion, language, social norms, beliefs, arts, customs, and so on among individuals in societies (Tylor, 1871). Under this issue, this study will investigate two significant issues which can be evaluated under the cultural dimension. These are culture of patriarchy and language barriers for Syrians.

First of all, as Connell (1990) argues, all societies have a patriarchal structure that is affected and promoted by different institutions. Different norms in these different societies determine the level of patriarchal changes and differentiation among them. Considering the

social structures among the Syrian people, it can be said that Syrians have a strong level of patriarchal culture (Alkan, 2022). Even before the Civil War started, Syria had a very low female participation level in the labor force. The highest rate in its history is 21% of the female population was active in the labor force in 2000. According to World Bank Report, just before the civil war started, this rate was 13% which is not a satisfactory rate (Zhao et al., 2022). This is mainly caused by social structures and the continuation of religiously motivated traditional approaches (Rabo, 1996). Religiously motivated traditions (non-legally but according to customs) ban Syrian women from even being willing to participate in the labor market. This issue is not a cultural conflict in Türkiye, as Türkiye has a similar social structure. However, in current conditions, the issue becomes much more dramatic because women are not only vulnerable because they are women but also because they are forced migrants (Alkan, 2022). This causes them to live both dependent on their husbands and under unacceptable conditions. They are similarly, using a social structural norm as a survival strategy shows us a dramatic condition. Some Syrian families even claim that they do not want their daughters to marry at an early age, but harsh economic conditions can force them. This is acceptable because it was seen as normal even before the Civil War started (Yaman, 2020). In addition, it shows us how a patriarchal social structure turns into a survival strategy when conditions are aroused. On the other side, these child brides lose their chance of determining their own future from the start.

Another issue is language barriers. Economic integration and employment projects seek to provide employment within mostly cooperation between IOs / CSOs, the Turkish government, and the capital market. In these projects, the government usually promotes Syrian employment with incentives, and IOs and CSOs mostly take the responsibility of coordination, accountability, effectiveness of projects, and capacity building of Syrians (ILO, 2022). However, for all programs to be conducted effectively, the ability to communicate in the host countries' languages is crucial. According to an AFAD (2017), report, %75 of Syrians are not able to communicate effectively in the Turkish language. This proportion is 1,5 times higher among Syrian women. The biggest proportion of Syrians who can speak zero Turkish is in-camp women, with 27,6%, which is more than 10% of their counterpart men which is 16,6%. The reasons behind this may be changeable, but patriarchal social structures may be one of these reasons hindering women from gaining their technical skills. Whatever the reason is, having the host country's language is significant for the

provision of integration into the economic life of that country. In Türkiye, this problem is still on the table (Gürsoy and Ertaşoğlu, 2019).

Stigma and Discrimination Problems

The report by the European Commission (2017) suggests that Syrian women should be considered an opportunity to create a wide range of new jobs with their dynamism instead of a heavy burden on the economy of Türkiye. According to this report, dynamism refers not only to the active participation of Syrian women in employment but also to the benefit of Turkish citizens. At this point, how Turkish people consider the employment of Syrian women is crucial to understand their respond to Syrian women in the practice because Syrian women, who are already a vulnerable group, can be considered to be more open to the influence of their environment in their access to opportunities such as employment (Akdemir, 2019). The support of the state in the public sector is the dominant factor determining the future of Syrian women in employment. On the other hand, Turkish employers are the decision-makers in hiring in the private sector. That is why the attitude of Turkish citizens has a substantial impact on the employment of Syrian women (Özdora Akşak and Dimitrova, 2021). Furthermore, other employees, mostly the Turkish population, affect the workplace atmosphere when they work with Syrian women together. In other words, both the employment of Syrian women and the atmosphere in which they work are greatly influenced by host citizens. Thus, how Turkish citizens perceive Syrian women is one of the most significant factors in the employment of this vulnerable group.

Racism amongst the working class is another problem. This is generally not in a nationwide organized manner but at an individual level or locally organized level. There are repeat cases of tension rising issues on small scales. In women workers, this does not turn into direct violence, but an exclusionary approach is also highly spread among them as well. According to Kaldık (2021), the leading causes of this are cultural barriers; more than that, workers are not happy with the new competition with these new "guests". It can be said that this is similar to the 90s protests in Britain with the nationalist slogan of "British jobs for British workers" (Anderson, 2010). In this case, again, workers are merging their class identity with national identity and identifying the enemy as not employers' class but, again, workers' class from different nations "who should not be there." There is a widespread belief among Turkish citizens that refugees have a negative impact on the economy and reduce employment

rates in Türkiye (Aras and Duman, 2019; Yitmen and Verkuyten, 2018). On the other hand, Çevik et al. (2018) indicate that Syrian women bring diversity to the economy and have contributed to a 0.5% decrease in the unemployment rate. Contrary to the opinions in Turkish society, it is seen that Syrian women contribute to employment and the revival of the economy. However, the conflict between statistical information and the opinions emerging in society can bring about significant social and cultural problems because it can evolve into an imbalance of supply and demand.

The great wave of immigration to Türkiye has caused a population increase of more than 3 million (Alhaffar and Janos, 2021). Hence, the Syrian population has emerged, seeking employment in many branches, such as healthcare and education (Arar and Orucu, 2022; Assi et al., 2019; Sharara et al., 2021). According to the literature, the dynamism they bring also creates an essential opportunity for themselves (Çevik et al., 2018). At this point, significant social problems that prevent Syrian women from reaching employment appear in society with various concerns. Barazehs (2021) states that the basis of these concerns is that Turkish citizens perceive Syrian immigrants as a threat to them in terms of security. Unlike other social settings, the fact that the workplace requires coordinated work and compulsory communication is a fundamental problem because Turkish citizens still have ongoing concerns about accepting Syrian refugees. The migration of Syrian women to Türkiye started in 2011 (Doganay and Demiraslan, 2016), but in 2023, this issue is still on the agenda in society. For example, in the 2023 elections, parties with opposite views made different promises that Syrian refugees would be temporarily or permanently in Türkiye. So, the status of Syrian women has become politicized (Irgil et al., 2023). Employment of Syrian women becomes more problematic as it is discussed whether they will stay in Türkiye longer. Since this debate has continued for more than ten years, negative attitudes toward Syrian women have been formed among the public. It is increasingly challenging for Syrian women to participate in employment due to their uncertain social position.

Social problems lead to much more significant and different problem situations. For example, Syrian women who are not recruited legally are employed for lower wages and illegal jobs. More importantly, child labor is increasing in the families of Syrian refugees who are directed to unregistered work (Aras and Duman, 2019; Uyan-Semerci and Erdoğan, 2022; Karadag Caman, 2021). Greater problems arise as a result of preventing the fulfillment of needs through normal means. For example,

the fact that children who work illegally cannot receive sufficient education also affects society. Syrian women working in illegal jobs are deprived of many legal rights and may have difficulty fulfilling their caregiver duties. For this reason, it can be thought that the children of Syrian women also start to work in illegal jobs. Syrian refugees are seen as cheap labor (Jamali et al., 2020), and therefore, Syrian women are likely to refuse to participate in economic integration in the face of discrimination and exclusion. According to research by United Metalworkers Union within cooperation with İstanbul University, Syrian women workers earn less than half their Turkish male counterparts (Hurriyet, 2017). This shows both how capital holders are using both racist forms and patriarchal forms for their interest. Similarly, most of the Syrians in Türkiye work as informal workers, and a very definitive percentage of women in the active labor market are also in informal sectors (ILO, 2020).

The study conducted by Ögütte et al. (2022) during the Covid-19 pandemic period comparing British and Syrian women living in Türkiye is crucial in terms of its findings related to economic issues. They found that British women had different concerns, while Syrian women showed direct financial concerns. For Syrian women, employment in Türkiye has been a problem for a long time. Maybe at this point, it can be said that British women, Syrian men, Turkish men, and Turkish women living in Türkiye have more support from their surroundings. On the other hand, Pele (2020) indicates that Syrian women have to work to earn a source of income in Türkiye because their spouses go to war. This situation may create the impression that any job that will be given to Syrian women will be done under any conditions that will be offered to them. Syrian women refugees are vulnerable and open to abuse. That is why the difficulties experienced by Syrian women in employment in Türkiye can only be prevented if they are empowered and supported. For this, NGOs and other organizations make outstanding contributions and put forward projects that directly target Syrian women (Dağtaş and Can, 2022; Duman, 2020). In conclusion, the difficulties experienced by Syrian women in Türkiye are obvious; the challenges they experience in employment are many and diverse, and projects and programs are essential.

Policy Problems

One of the primary reasons that prevented the economic integration of Syrian women is that the Turkish government did not take long-term measures because it planned the temporary hosting of Syrian refugees (Adalı

and Türkyılmaz, 2020; Memişoğlu, 2018). Considering that Syrian women will return, it can be thought of as more reasonable to set short-term goals rather than invest in integrating them into society. For this reason, employment for Syrian women was not supported, and humanitarian assistance was given priority (Matlin et al., 2018; Pandir, 2020). However, as the increasingly large population of Syrian women need more and more help, limited resources may prevent them from receiving equally high levels of assistance at all times. Uncertainties about the temporary or permanent status of Syrian women may have affected not only the government's policies but also the motivation of this population for social and economic integration. At this point, the continuation of aid rather than providing employment opportunities may have prevented Syrian women from striving for employment. In this regard, in a study, 83% of participants who are currently unemployed Syrian women in Türkiye stated that they are not looking for a job (Çevik et al., 2018). Job searching motivation in this population is as important as the job opportunities provided.

The war in Syria is not over, and it is uncertain when Syrian refugee women will return (Aslan, 2021; Şimşek and Çorabatır, 2016). More importantly, with the increase in the number of pregnant Syrian women, new needs and permanent settlements arise (Korukcu et al., 2018; Samari, 2017). However, the economic integration of pregnant Syrian women is challenging, and the employment rate of non-pregnant Syrian women is quite low. In this regard, Çevik et al. (2018) highlight that unlike the general Syrian population in Türkiye, the employment rate of Syrian women is approximately 20 percent (Çevik et al., 2018). This difficulty in economic integration cannot be explained solely by increasing pregnancy rates among Syrian women. Thus, revealing the difficulties experienced in different problem areas that interact with each other is crucial in terms of understanding the challenges experienced in the economic integration of Syrian women in Türkiye.

A considerable number of Syrian women informally work in Türkiye. (Arslan et al., 2016). Therefore, the work of Syrian women is irregular, and their standards are uncertain. Also, Syrian women workers are vulnerable to abuse. For example, Syrian women face longer work hours (Körükmez et al., 2020) because informal works require more effort and give less income. It is thought that Syrian women are helpless, so they have to accept the conditions offered to them by employers who consider their vulnerability as an opportunity to reduce their expenses. In addition, employers may see them as cheap labor because they consider that the number of jobs Syrian

women are capable of is less than Syrian men (Rohwerder, 2018; Şahin and Nashwan, 2021). In this regard, Syrian women mostly work in child care, house cleaning, service sectors, and agriculture in Türkiye (Mazlumder, 2014). Similarly, Memişoğlu (2018) states that Syrian women have to work outside of their specialty because their expertise is not recognized, and they encounter language barriers. At this point, the most crucial factor is the legal recognition of the training and expertise they received. In this way, Syrian women can get rid of jobs such as house cleaning and child care and become able to do a wide range of work with their own expertise. The non-recognition of the expertise of Syrian women has confined them to a very limited employment area. Moreover, the income of this limited employment decreases with the intersection brought about by being a refugee and a woman. For Syrian women who cannot work in their area of expertise, getting a job outside of their area of expertise requires great motivation. Moreover, low wages and long work hours further reduce low motivation for Syrian women. The reluctance of unemployed Syrian women may be attributed to these factors reducing motivation.

Bureaucratic Problems

In bureaucratic problems, firstly, considering the work permit issue, the main problems can be summed as not finding a registered job (which consists of almost one-third), unawareness of work permit, self-choice, bureaucratic obstacles, unawareness from bureaucratic processes, not providing requirements and choice of employers. Especially according to the Civil Society Development Center's report, the reasons for unawareness from bureaucratic processes and unawareness of work permits and self-choice are higher among women (Sunata, 2020). The especially self-choice issue is three times more for women than men, which can also be seen as proof in the previous chapter. According to the same study, obstacles mainly consist of the duration of the process was long (28%), acquiring necessary documents hard (17,2), could not take a work permit on their actual job (14,1%), and could not reach necessary information (%12,5), could not understand the process (%7,8). Only 7,8% claim that there was no problem with the process (Sunata, 2020). In education and technical vocations, also biggest problem became registration and documentation on bureaucratic progress. This issue becomes more problematic because when subjects become females, Syrian families tend to become less willing to continue the progress (Bircan and Sunata, 2015). For Türkiye, Smits and Hosgör (2006) claim that there is gender discrimination in families who have low-income levels that they choose to send their sons to send

to school if they feel they have to choose one instead of their daughter. These kinds of bureaucratic obstacles become a pretext for the continuation of patriarchal nodes.

Secondly, the issue of gender-blind institutions is a significant problem. Several points mentioned in the above paragraph tell us something about this. For instance, if men are more aware of bureaucratic processes and women tend to participate less than men, these show us that institutions are not watching over the gender intersection among Syrian refugees. To lessen this, there should be more gender awareness campaigns, and gender-specific approaches should be applied. However, if institutions are gender-blind, they will not even be aware that they should take this issue into consideration. Examples of this are the case of domestic violence victim women and the government's approach specifically to refugee women. For instance, Türkiye has Women's Shelters for victimized women in Türkiye. These institutions are responsible for providing employment for women and having them into economic integration, which is applied to these shelters according to Law No: 6284 (Official Gazete, 2013). Their effectiveness, especially in providing economic independence for women, is a controversial issue, but even on paper, there is a service of the state. However, when it comes to this service provision for migrants, there is only "one" Women's Shelter which focuses on migrant women's protection (Çiltaş and Var, 2019). This may be explained by how authorities and officials who are working on the Syrian asylum seekers issue have a gender-blind perspective.

Sustainability of Employment

The last issue which could be discussed is the unsustainability problem. There are a considerable number of projects for the employment of Syrians and projects directly focusing on Syrian women (Aras and Duman, 2019; Okyay, 2017; Özer et al., 2021). However, for projects to become successful, they have to become sustainable. The sustainability of the projects is also a question in the civil sector. There are two dimensions the literature discusses.

Firstly, Atar et al. (2022) claim that after the refugee crisis arose in Türkiye, there was a huge cash flow to Türkiye from the international community, mostly from the EU. This cash flow developed the civil sector in Türkiye. However, the issue becomes problematic because this sector also has a "professional" characteristic as well as other sectors. So, NGOs in Türkiye have also followed a growing policy and needed to sustain and watch over their cash flow. This may create a tendency to

"projects for budget" rather than "budget for the project". The same issue also may create a need for producing more projects, but not looking after quality (which is keeping sustainability in this case) becomes problematic.

Secondly, the exploitation of projects by beneficiaries can be seen as a problem. There are also two sub-dimensions of this issue. First, direct beneficiaries may exploit by means of taking incentives but not completing the requirements, such as leaving the training before the end. This creates wastage. It also does not benefit the beneficiary because they cannot get the technical skills they should earn. However, there is no data or information related to the continuation of beneficiaries and whether they have the privilege to participate in projects. Thus, accurate evaluation of projects requires studies aiming at the investigation of profiles of beneficiaries. Nonetheless, according to the literature, some cases demonstrate employers' exploitation (Aras and Duman, 2019; Kaşka, 2020; Rohwerder, 2018). This is usually faced "against" women. In many cases, employers exploit these incentives and subsidies, such as benefiting from them until the legal duration for employment which is valid. Then, they are not continuing with women whom they were hired, for example. This creates an unsustainable condition for women (Kelebek, 2017).

Conclusion

Disadvantaged groups are crucial in terms of social work discipline, but today, some disadvantaged groups have come to the fore. Syrian women refugees constitute one of these groups. In this sense, ensuring their economic integration has become a critical issue in the countries where they have settled. Most of the Syrian refugees in Türkiye are women and children (Reyhanioglu, 2015), so supporting the women in the family is crucial. Syrian women refugees, who play a role in the family's economic income, can play an important role not only in the care of children but also in maintaining the healthy care of disadvantaged groups such as the elderly and disabled in the family. When children, disabled, and elderly are included in institutional care, the state may need a huge budget. Instead, spending the budget allocated directly to support the economic integration of Syrian women refugees can create both a less economic burden and individuals who maintain a healthy development within the family.

The refugee crisis has affected all societies, but it has brought about more significant changes in host countries, like Türkiye, due to its sudden occurrence. This unexpected refugee crisis has not only influenced the refugees but also caused difficulties for the host countries

because these countries are not well prepared to handle the crisis situation. More importantly, the majority of refugees who migrated to Türkiye are women and children (Reyhanoğlu, 2015), so they require a considerable amount of support. Although humanitarian aid was initially a priority for Syrian women because their return is not on the agenda, the extended period of time that Syrian women have been living in Türkiye has necessitated focusing on their economic integration. In this regard, the challenges in the economic integration of Syrian women living in Türkiye are accumulated in specific areas; working conditions, cultural, social, policy, bureaucratic, and sustainability problems.

The economic integration of Syrian women living in Türkiye is a complex issue that cannot be solved solely through direct employment and its maintenance. Syrian women experience obstacles in finding employment owing to bureaucratic, social, cultural, and policy challenges. Even when they are employed, Syrian women may face indecent working conditions and abusive employers. The combination of these problems contributes to a lack of sustainability in the economic integration of Syrian women. At this point, poor working conditions and abusive employers may be attributed to inadequate policies. Additionally, societal and cultural issues can worsen the already vulnerable situation of Syrian women. These interconnected problems require comprehensive solutions. In this regard, government support and NGO efforts should be complemented by the attitudes of society. Thus, there is a need to raise awareness of the necessity of the economic integration of Syrian women in society and the diversity of their problems.

Genişletilmiş Özet

Suriye'deki iç savaş nedeniyle, Türkiye'nin açık kapı politikası kapsamında 2011'den bu yana 3 milyondan fazla Suriyeli mülteci Türkiye'ye göç etmiştir (Atar vd., 2022). Bu noktada Türkiye'nin gerekli politikaları uygulayarak Suriyeli mültecileri destekleme sorumluluğunu üstlenmesi beklenmektedir. Ancak, Türkiye de dahil olmak üzere ev sahibi ülkelerin çoğu, bu mülteciler için ekonomik öz yeterlilik sağlamada birçok zorluk yaşamıştır (Krafft vd., 2022). Suriyeli mültecilerin Türkiye'deki ekonomik ve sosyal entegrasyonunu artırmak için yasal değişiklikler yapılmasına rağmen bazı sorunlar devam etmiştir (Demir, 2018). Bu nedenle, Suriyeli mülteciler savunmasız bir grup olmaları yönüyle dikkat çekmekte ve kapsamlı bir desteğe ihtiyaç duymaktadırlar.

Mülteci krizinin geldiği son noktada 2023 genel seçimlerinden iş verenlerin değişiklik gösteren

tutumlarına kadar toplumun dinamikleri büyük oranda etkilenmiş ve Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin ekonomik entegrasyonunda yaşanan güçlükler artarak devam etmiştir. Yalnızca Türkiye'nin değil aynı zamanda dünyanın da gündemini oluşturan mülteci krizinde Suriyeli kadın mülteciler konunun önemli bir dinamini oluşturmaktadır. Sosyal entegrasyonun ekonomik entegrasyon ile bütünlüğü göz önüne alındığında ve bu konuda öne sürülecek çözüm önerilerinin sorun durumlarının tespit edilmesine bağlı olduğu düşünüldüğünde Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin yaşadıkları sorunların araştırılması ihtiyacı doğmuştur. Bu sebeple, bu çalışma Türkiye'de yaşayan Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin ekonomik entegrasyonunda yaşanan güçlüklerin incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Yaşanan sorun durumlarının çalışma koşulları, kültürel, sosyal ve bürokratik problemler olarak belli alanlarda toplandığı tespit edilmiştir.

Türkiye'de kamunun yanı sıra sivil toplum kuruluşları da Suriyeli kadın mültecilere destek sağlamaktadır ancak giderek artan Suriyeli kadın mülteci nüfusunun insan onuruna yakışır koşullarda yaşayabilmesi için daha fazla desteğe ihtiyacı bulunmaktadır (Özgür Keysan ve Şentürk, 2021). Cinsiyet rolleri ve kültürel hassasiyetler Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin kırılabilirliğini arttırmakta, dolayısıyla istihdamla sağlanan ekonomik istikrar onların sosyalleşmesini, onur duygusunu ve kendi kendine yeterliliğini desteklemektedir (Şahin ve Nashwan, 2021). Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin herhangi bir gelir kaynağı olmadan çok çeşitli zorluklarla karşılaşabilmektedir. Bu nedenle işgücüne katılımları çok büyük bir öneme sahiptir.

Türkiye'de yaşayan Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin ekonomik entegrasyonu yalnızca istihdamlarının sağlanmasıyla çözülemeyecek karmaşık bir konudur. Çünkü Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin bürokratik, sosyal, kültürel ve politik zorluklar olmak üzere birbiriyle ilişkili ve zorlayıcı sorun alanları bulunmaktadır. Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin iş yaşamında uygunsuz çalışma koşullarıyla ve istismarcı işverenlerle karşı karşıya kalabilmektedir. Bu gibi sorunlar sonucunda Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin ekonomik entegrasyonunun sürdürülebilir olması güçleşmektedir. Bu noktada kötü çalışma koşulları ve istismarcı işverenler yetersiz politikalara bağlanabilir. Ayrıca toplumsal ve kültürel sorunlar Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin zaten hassas olan durumunu daha da kötüleştirme riskini barındırmaktadır. Birbiriyle bağlantılı bu sorunlar kapsamlı çözümler gerektirmektedir. Bu bakımdan devlet desteği ve STK'ların çabaları toplumun tutumlarıyla tamamlanmalıdır. Dolayısıyla Suriyeli kadın mültecilerin ekonomik entegrasyonunun gerekliliği ve

istihdam içerisinde kabul edilmesi konusunda farkındalık yaratılmasına ihtiyaç vardır.

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