TARIMIN GELECEĞİ ve TARIMDA YENİ İSTİHDAM ALANLARI

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ÖZET
Dünya nüfusu hızla artarken, ülkeler beslenme, barınma ve yaşama düzeylerinin daha da iyileştirilmesi yönünde yeni atılımlar yapılmakta tüm bu girişimler sonucunda da tarımda ve endüstride çarpıcı değişme ve gelişmeler görülmektedir. Daha iyi beslenme ve barınma ile daha iyi yaşam koşullarına kavuşma tutkusu, tüm dünyada olduğu gibi ülkemiz insanını da etkisi altına almaktadır. Tarımda mekanizasyona dayalı işlemlerin yoğun bir biçimde benimsenmesi, klasik tarım işçiliği ihtiyacını da azaltmakta bu da sektörde yen istihdam alanları açılması zorunluluğunu doğurmaktadır. Aksi halde kırsal alanda işsizliğin artması ve kente göç kaçınılmaz olmaktadır. Diğer yandan, tarımın gençler tarafından cazip bir istihdam alanı olarak görülmemesi ve kırsal kesimde tarım dışı sektörlerdeki istihdam potansiyelinin düşük olması, kentlerde hizmet ve sanayi sektörlerinin düşük vasıflı işgücü talebi gençlerin kırsal alan dışında iş arayışına sevk etmektedir. Genç nüfusun kente göç etmesi, dinamik bir kırsal ekonomi için ihtiyaç duyulan üretken işgücünün kaybına neden olmaktadır. Ülke nüfusunun halen yaklaşık yüzde 25'inin köylerde ikamet ediyor olması, tarım dışı işlerle geçimi mümkün olmayan yörelerdeki yerleşik kırsal nüfusun tarımsal faaliyetlerini sürdüreceğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle tarım alanında geleneksel tarım işçiliği yerine modern iş olanakları olabilecek tarım turizmi, tarıma dayalı sağlık hizmetleri ve yerinde lezzetlerin korunduğu tarımsal gastronomi gibi yeni alanlarda çalışabilecek tarımsal kültürü olan gençlerimize iş alanları açılabilmelidir.
Anahtar kelimeler: tarımın geleceği, tarımsal işgücü, istihdam, yeni yaklaşımlar

THE FUTURE OF AGRICULTURE AND NEW EMPLOYMENT AREAS IN AGRICULTURE

ABSTRACT

While the world population is increasing rapidly, new steps are being taken to improve the nutrition, shelter and living standards of the countries. All these initiatives then result in striking changes and developments in agriculture and industry. The passion for better nutrition, shelter and life standards affects the people of all nations. Intense adoption of mechanization-based processes in agriculture reduces the need for conventional agricultural labor and such a case creates a necessity for development of new employment areas in the sector. Otherwise, increase in unemployment in rural areas and migration to the city will be inevitable. On the other hand, since agriculture is not seen as an attractive employment area by the youth and the employment potential in non-agricultural sectors in rural areas is low and the low-skilled labor demand of the service and industry sectors in the cities lead young people to seek employment outside the rural areas. Migration of young population to the city causes the loss of productive workforce needed for a dynamic rural economy. Approximately 25 percent of population still resides in the villages and such a case indicates that the settled rural population in the regions where it is not possible to make a living with non-agricultural works will continue their agricultural activities. Therefore, job opportunities should be opened for youth with agricultural culture who can work in new fields such as agricultural tourism, agriculture-based health services and agricultural gastronomy, where local tastes are preserved, instead of traditional agricultural labor in the field of agriculture.

Keywords: Future of agriculture, agricultural workforce, employment, new approaches

1. INTRODUCTION

Inter-regional imbalance and developmental differences mainly resulting from the distribution of economic resources between regions and sectors are significant issues that were emphasized in developing countries and European Union countries as well as in Turkey. Although it varies by region, between 30 – 50% of household income in rural areas of developing countries comes directly from agriculture (Fechter, 2012). Although agricultural employment is the main driving force of employment in Turkey, it has been observed that employment has shifted predominantly from agriculture to the service sector since 2000. However, the share of employment in the agricultural sector in Turkey's total employment (approximately one in 5) shows that agricultural employment still maintains its importance (TUIK, 2021). Although there is a developmental difference between the regions in terms of income and employment in European Union countries, this problem is largely overcome owing to the rural development and agricultural policies implemented. However, Turkey is not in a position to compete with the EU in terms of the policies it implements, especially the wrong practices in agricultural policy have led rural farmers to leave the land and migrate to the cities (Cengiz and Baydur, 2010).

The main reason for unemployment, which is seen intensely in urban areas of Turkey, is the migration of unskilled and low-educated people from the countryside to the city. Today, rural migration density is an ongoing process, although it is not as much as it used to be. Limited education, infrastructure, health and employment opportunities in rural areas, high fertility rate and poverty cause people living in rural areas to migrate to cities (Cengiz and Baydur, 2010). Inability of urban labor market to provide sufficient job opportunities to the growing population or the imbalance between labor demand and supply cause unemployment to increase. While the solution of this problem depends on creation of new business areas in the long-run, it is also closely related to the successful practices of Public Employment Agencies in the short-run (Çakır, 2014).

In addition to the problems of rural development and agricultural policies of Turkey, the main issue that needs to be resolved is the decrease in the employability of immigrants in urban areas. On the other hand, even the increasing number of refugees leads to a narrowing of the field of employment. In many studies investigating the characteristics of immigrants, it was seen that immigrant had low level of education, insufficient skills and qualifications in non-agricultural sectors and the majority of them was young. In that case, there is a need to find new employment areas in rural areas and show how rural life can be turned into an opportunity in global crises (increase in production in agricultural products), even in precise periods such as the COVID-

19 pandemic and to show that migration from rural to urban was not an opportunity, at least in terms of finding a job. Present rural population should be kept in place. This can be achieved by creating a new perspective and new business areas that will revitalize rural tourism, especially in rural areas with a higher quality of life and not far from social culture.

2. STATISTICAL DATA ON POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT IN TURKEY

Employment literally means to use or employ. In a country, the use of manpower or the degree of work that will participate in economic activities in a year indicates employment (Savaşir, 1999). Since the state is one of the reasons for intervention, constantly changing employment and unemployment data is one of the factors that should be followed most in the development of the country (Bekiroğlu, 2010; Aydemir, 2013). When the agricultural and non-agricultural distinction of the population employed in rural areas in Turkey is examined, it is seen that the rate of those employed in agriculture is gradually decreasing (Table 1).

While the number of employees in the agricultural sector of Turkey has decreased by 79 thousand people in the last ten years, the number of employees in non-agricultural sectors has increased by 542 thousand people. About 17.1% of those employed were in agriculture, 21.4% in industry, 6.2% in construction and 55.4% in services. As compared to the same period of the previous year, while the shares of agriculture and industrial sectors decreased; the shares of construction and service sectors have increased (TUIK, 2021) (Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 1. Population data of Turkey by years

Years	Population (000)	Rural Population (000)	Urban Population (000)	Rural Population (%)	Urban Population (%)
1970	35.605	21.914	13.691	61,5	38,5
1980	44,736	25.091	19.645	56,1	43,9
1990	56.473	23.146	33.326	41,0	59,0
2000	67.803	23.797	44.006	35,1	64,9
2010	73.722	17.500	56.222	23,7	76,2
2020	83.614	5.878	77.736	7,0	93,0
2021	84.680	5.771	78.908	6,8	93,2

TUİK, 2021

3. SHARE OF AGRICULTURE IN EMPLOYMENT AND IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE IN COUNTRY ECONOMY

Agricultural sector is the sector that creates the most employment opportunities in Turkey. As of 2020, the share of the agricultural sector in Turkey's Gross National Product (GNP) of 716,902 million dollars is 47,893 (6.7%) million dollars (Anonymous, 2020) (Table 4). Although its share in national income and in the total population is gradually decreasing, the share of those employed in the agricultural sector in total employment is 17.1% as of 2021

(TUIK, 2021) (Table 2). Considering the distinction between agricultural and non-agricultural employment, the ratio of those employed in agriculture decreased (56.8%) and increased (43.2%) until 2021 (Table 3). In recent years, the decreasing trend in employment with industrialization and mechanization in agriculture is also experienced in Turkey. In addition to the increase in the use of technology in agriculture, the shrinkage of the cultivated agricultural areas (Tan et al., 2015; Görmüş, 2019), the fragmentation of lands through inheritance and the shrinkage of agricultural enterprises have adversely affected agriculture. Thus, agriculture in Turkey has become a sector that pushes, not attracts, the workforce. However, in a country like Turkey where approximately 20% of employment is employed in agriculture, agriculture still maintains its importance in terms of inter-sectoral relations, food safety and security and employment (Gülçubuk et al., 2005). In other words, considering the important contributions of agriculture to population and employment, nutrition, domestic consumption, industry, national income and balance of payments, biological diversity and ecological balance in Turkey, it is a sector that cannot be ignored (Tan et al., 2015; Yıldız et al., 2017).

Table 2. Employment ratios by sectors

Years	Agriculture %	Industry %	Construction %	Service %
2001	29,10	20,00	4,90	46,00
2011	25,48	19,51	6,95	48,05
2021	18,60	21,10	5,80	54,50
2022	17,10	21,40	6,20	55,40

TUİK, 2021

Table 3. Agricultural and non-agricultural employment ratios in rural areas of Turkey

Years	Agricultural		Non-agricultural	
	Thousand	%	Thousand	%
1991	8.325	75,9	2.642	24,1
2001	7.350	70,2	3.127	29,8
2011	5.511	62,0	3.300	38,0
2021	5.432	56,8	3.842	43,2

Source: TUİK, 2021.

Table 4. Agricultural Gross National Product of Turkey by years

Years	Agriculture* (Million TL)	Turkey (Million TL)	Share of agriculture (%)	Agriculture * (Million $)	Turkey (Million $)
2011	114.838	1.404.928	8,2	68.492	837.924
2012	121.693	1.581.479	7,7	67.536	877.676
2013	121.734	1.823.427	6,7	63.965	958.125
2014	134.744	2.054.898	6,6	61.633	939.923
2015	161.471	2.350.941	6,9	59.554	867.071
2016	161.331	2.626.560	6,1	53.391	869.241
2017	189.233	3.133.704	6,0	51.875	859.055
2018	217.107	3.758.774	5,8	46.048	797.221
2019	276.372	4.317.787	6,4	48.669	760.355
2020	337.160	5.046.883	6,7	47.893	716.902

Source: TÜİK, 2020 * Forestry and Aquaculture

As can be inferred from Table 2 and Table 3, the share of agricultural employment has decreased since 2001 and decreased from 29.10% to 17.10%. Although there is no significant change in the employment rate in the industrial sector, an increase was observed in the employment rate in the services sector. In times of crisis, agricultural employment follows a relatively different structure than when the economy is in a normal course. Namely; with the decrease in current job opportunities in urban areas, people return to their villages, that is, agricultural activities, in order to earn their livelihood and those who make a living in rural areas avoid migrating in times of crisis. This situation, as observed in the increase in agricultural employment between 2007-2011 after the economic crisis in 2003 in Turkey, is likely to be reflected in the data in 2020 and beyond after the COVID-19 pandemic and the global crisis that followed.

The fact that agriculture is not seen as an attractive employment area by young people and the employment potential in non-agricultural sectors is low in rural areas causes young people to look for jobs outside of rural areas. The young population in rural areas seems to be more fortunate in terms of employment as compared to the young population of the country. Although the situation is exactly the opposite, the main reason for this is that unemployment rate is lower and labor force participation rate is high due to the disguised unemployment in rural areas. The low-skilled labor demand of the service and industrial sectors in the cities also increases the tendency of the young population in rural areas to migrate to the cities (Bekiroğlu, 2010).

4. REASONS FOR DECREASING AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

The agricultural employment rates of Turkey in the last 10 years revealed that the share of agricultural employment has decreased since 2001 and decreased from 29.10% to 17.10% (Table 2). Despite the development of agricultural methods and equipment, the failure to reduce rural poverty over the years is due to many reasons. These;

1. Insufficient public support, insufficient supports provided to farmers,

2. Inadequacy of education and awareness-raising activities in agriculture,

3. Limited access to consumers directly from producers,

4. Not revealing regional differences by prioritizing climate, soil and plant characteristics,

5. Lack of realistic planning and implementation about which products should be produced when, where and how much

6. About 85 out of every 100 women working in rural areas work in agriculture. It reveals that although the proportion of women employed in agriculture is higher than men, employed women are much more affected by precarious forms of employment, including unpaid family

work, part-time, temporary or limited-time work and informal employment as compared to men.

7. Technological developments reduce agricultural workers. In recent years, the decreasing trend in employment with industrialization and mechanization in agriculture is also experienced in Turkey. In addition to the increase in the use of technology in agriculture, the shrinkage of the cultivated agricultural areas (Tan et al., 2015; Görmüş, 2019), the fragmentation of lands through inheritance and the shrinkage of agricultural enterprises have adversely affected agriculture.

As a result of the use of machinery in agriculture and the fragmentation of lands, the decrease in the need for manpower in agricultural activities is closely related to pushing women out of the workforce in rural areas (Çakır, 2014). With globalization, women's better education compared to the past and the change in the traditional family structure has increased the labor force participation rate in urban areas.

5. WAYS TO INCREASE AGRICULTURAL EMPLOYMENT

5.1. Improving competitive power of agricultural sector

The ability of country's agriculture to achieve international competitiveness depends on increasing the level of organization, which is one of the most important structural problems of the sector. In case of establishment of strong producer organizations; productivity and quality increase in agricultural production will be ensured by providing input, financing and education-extension services to its partners under favorable conditions (Bekiroğlu, 2010). Presence of strong organizations; it will enable the farmer family to increase their quality of life by ensuring that agricultural products are marketed under suitable conditions and that their partners have a stable income. These factors largely depend on;

Increasing the organization and knowledge level of producers

Development of irrigation infrastructure

Ensuring effective use of agricultural lands

Development of agro-industry infrastructure

Enabling food safety services.

5.2. Diversification of rural economy

With the increasing urbanization in Turkey, the attractiveness of rural areas as recreation areas is increasing and the activities that the urban population can perform in the countryside are diversified. Considering Turkey's agricultural potential and developing natural life-healthy nutrition awareness, agro-tourism activities offer rich opportunities for both businesses and

consumers. The economic benefits of agro-tourism, which develops as a non-agricultural field of activity in the world, in terms of rural development will be better understood if the necessary infrastructure support is provided for these activities, starting from the regions close to metropolitan cities and from willing entrepreneurs. Priority approaches in this sense are as follows;

Development of agricultural economic activities

Development of non-agricultural income generating activities

Opening breakfast hall, restaurant, etc. where local products are used

Opening new workplaces for the development of local crafts and handicrafts

Increasing the number of enterprises of rural tourism activities and their accommodation capacity

Creating mobile sales places on highways for the sale of local products.

5.3. Approaches for rural development and migration prevention

Migration is an important phenomenon that closely concerns all economic as well as social and environmental factors of a country. Insufficient employment opportunities in rural areas, inadequacy of investments and services such as education and health, negative developments in the agricultural sector cause rural people to migrate to the cities, the people who come to urban areas cannot find a job and either fall into unemployment or withdraw from the labor market. For this reason, migration is an issue that should be emphasized. Although there are differences over the years, rural migration still continues in Turkey. Before moving on to employment policies that can be applied to prevent unemployment in the city after migration, it is extremely important to examine agriculture and rural development policies to prevent migration.

The main aim of the agricultural policy is to increase the living standard of the society in general. The main source of interregional imbalances observed in many developing countries such as Turkey is the different degrees of development of the regions. Developmental differences arising from the distribution of economic resources between the regions and sectors bring along many problems. Preventing migration in rural areas and underdeveloped regions is possible with policies to increase development in these areas. In order to eliminate regional developmental differences, the following investments in rural areas should be supported;

1. Production projects aimed at establishing and developing infrastructure in agricultural matters,
2. Providing low-interest loan or grant support for building and equipment needs,

3. Projects promoting rural life at the country level, aiming to eliminate regional disparities,

4. Various projects and investments to create new employment areas.

5.4. Development of new employment policies in agricultural sector

Tourism sector is in a process of increasing diversification in the world and in Turkey. Taking into account the changing consumer preferences, it carries out studies on researching the existing natural and cultural values in all regions of Turkey and bringing them into tourism in order to diversify tourism, expand it throughout the country and add a function to the unexploited tourism potential. Health, thermal, winter, mountain and underwater sports, plateau, farm, local art, belief, historical city, archeology, etc., which are scattered all over the country. By associating natural and culturally important places and settlements with each other locally/regionally, more attractive and stronger alternative destinations can be created (Aytuğ, 2016). Thus, new employment areas will be opened by providing opportunities such as exhibiting cultural characteristics, promoting handicrafts and local products, benefiting from the food and beverage and accommodation capacities in the region, to rural settlements with limited resources. It should be kept in mind that employment policies are not a stand-alone intervention tool in preventing migration and that successful results could be achieved when applied together with all the other policies (rural development, agriculture, infrastructure, education, health), depending on the following points;

1. Increasing entrepreneurship training (especially for women entrepreneurs) (Soysal, 2013),

2. Eliminating the inadequacy of the infrastructure system and transportation,

3. Reproduction of socio-cultural activities and youth centers (cinema, theatre, sports halls, museum, shopping mall, etc.),

4. Increasing state supports,

5. Encouraging women in rural areas to participate in working life with equal rights with men and to take initiatives,

6. With the development of rural tourism, the domestic roles of women in rural areas change and women's participation in working life more effectively,

7. Supporting livestock operations,

8. Development of organic farming,

9. Giving more place to rural areas in employment mobilization.

6. CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

As of 2020, the share of the agricultural sector in Turkey's Gross National Product (GNP) of 716,902 million dollars is 47,893 (6.7%) million dollars (Table 4). About 17.1% of total civilian employment is employed in the agricultural sector. Although it is not possible to completely prevent migration from rural to urban areas, it seems possible to reduce it with well-planned rural development and agricultural policies. In addition, employment policies targeting rural areas can be effective in creating jobs and preventing migration in these areas. As a matter of fact, instead of considering all these policies separately, rural migration can be reduced in an environment where they were applied together.

As a result, prevention of poverty, which is an important problem in rural areas, depends on well-applied agriculture and rural development policies, as well as increasing employment by creating new job opportunities in non-agricultural sectors in these regions. As a matter of fact, the monthly income of those engaged in agriculture in rural areas is low as compared to the country average and the employment of the workforce who left agriculture for various reasons in the same regions is closely related to the development of employment opportunities in these regions.

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