



**WOMEN EMPLOYMENT IN ASIA: A CROSS-COUNTRY
COMPARISON BETWEEN INDIA, SOUTH KOREA AND
TURKEY**

**ASYA'DA KADIN İSTİHDAMI: HİNDİSTAN, KUZEY
KORE VE TÜRKİYE ÖZELİNDE ÜLKELER ARASI BİR
KARŞILAŞTIRMA**

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ABSTRACT

In line with the recognition of the significance of women in the path to development, various countries have sought to increase female labor market participation over the past decades. While many European countries have been successful, numerous Asian countries have failed. The purpose of this study is to compare the patterns of female employment in three Asian countries since the 1990s including India, South Korea, and Turkey and to discover the main determinants of the issue. Female employment is a multidimensional concept that should be evaluated from cultural, economic and political perspectives. The study thus adopts a broad perspective containing cultural, economic and political factors in different nations.

Keywords: Women Employment, Asia, Unpaid Work, Informal Employment.

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ÖZ

Kalkınma yolunda kadının öneminin kavranmasıyla eşanlı olarak, son yıllarda pek çok ülke kadının işgücü piyasalarına katılımını artırma yönünde çaba sarf etmektedir. Birçok Avrupa ülkesi bu alanda başarı kaydederken, çok sayıda Asya ülkesi geride kalmıştır. Bu çalışmanın amacı 1990'lardan günümüze üç Asya ülkesinde; Hindistan, Güney Kore ve Türkiye'de kadın istihdam örüntülerini karşılaştırmak ve kadın istihdamının temel belirleyenlerini gün ışığına çıkarmaktır. Kadın istihdamı kültürel, ekonomik ve siyasal faktörleri içeren geniş bir çerçevede değerlendirilmesi gereken çok boyutlu bir kavram olduğundan, değerlendirme farklı ülkelerdeki kültürel, ekonomik ve siyasal faktörler çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın İstihdamı, Asya, Karşılıksız Çalışma, Enformel İstihdam.

INTRODUCTION

Female labor market participation has been globally considered one of the substantial driving forces for growth and development over the past decades. Therefore, a large number of countries make every effort to increase female labor force participation. However, certain regions and countries are more successful in achieving this goal compared to others. According to the International Labor Office (ILO) statistics, the average female employment rate in the world was 46 percent in 2016. Many European and American countries have achieved higher female employment rates than the world average, while various African, Asian and Middle East countries have failed to reach the world average in the last decades (KILM, 2017).

The purpose of this study is to compare the patterns of female employment in three emerging Asian countries and to discover the main determinants leading to success or failure with respect to female labor market participation. Cross-national comparative studies are scarce in the literature, so this study is one of the few studies revealing the determinants affecting female labor and female employment patterns through a cross-national comparison.

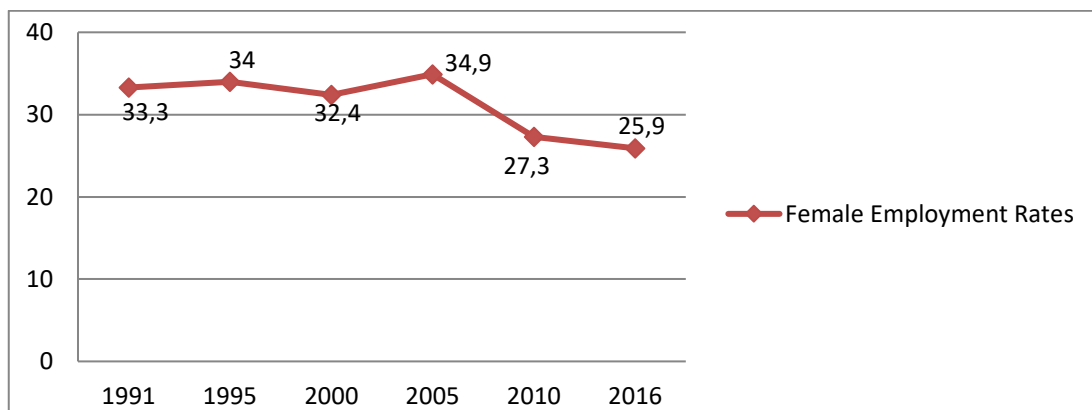
This study also addresses gender-based disparities in different labor markets. Female employment is a multidimensional concept that should be evaluated using a multi-perspective approach. The study thus adopts a broad

perspective containing cultural, economic and political factors in different nations. Within the scope of the study, three emerging countries in different Asian regions including India from South Asia, South Korea from East Asia and Turkey from West Asia were selected as sample countries that represent employment patterns of the continent. All the selected countries are remarkable emerging economies as they are listed among the twenty largest economies in the world. However, among the sample countries, the female employment rate only in South Korea is above the world average. Despite being among the 20 largest economies in the world, India and Turkey failed to achieve high female employment rates. This study also investigates why only South Korea succeeded in reaching higher participation rates compared to the other two. The study is composed of four parts. The first part addresses Indian women who are vast in population but scarce in the labor market. The second part investigates “the engines” of the South Asian growth, namely, South Korean female labor. The third part analyzes Turkish women whose work is largely invisible. The final part includes the conclusion and discussion section which summarizes the comparison of the three countries and offers policy suggestions.

1. THE CASE OF INDIA: INDIAN WOMEN, VAST IN POPULATION BUT SCARCE IN THE LABOR MARKET

India has the world’s second-largest labor force and is seen as an impetus for the rapid Asian growth in the last decades. The country is the world’s largest democracy with a population of more than 1,2 billion people; women comprised nearly half (48 percent) of the population in 2016 (WB, 2017a). Despite its rapid growth, India has failed to increase women’s presence in the labor force in the last decades. Among 144 countries, India ranks 87th on the global gender gap index and 136th on the economic participation and opportunity sub index (WEF, 2016). Female employment rates in India have been low since the 1990s and on the decline since the mid-2000s, contrary to the world average (Graph 1).

Graph.1: Female Employment Rates in India (%) (KILM, 2017)



Indian women's absence from the labor force is associated with social, cultural and economic factors. India is a radically patriarchal society with strict cultural values. This societal feature of the country has also an impact on women's working lives and manners. Raj (2014: 94) noted that women are not considered equal to men with respect to certain facts such as having authority in the family, property rights, employment opportunities, and social and security aspects. Women thus face difficulties both in the Indian society and economy. The strong patriarchal society with deep-rooted sociocultural values hinders gender equity and women empowerment in India.

The patriarchal system puts Indian women at a disadvantage in many aspects such as human capital endowments. It goes without saying that human capital endowments have substantial effects on women's labor market participation. This situation also affects working manners even if women participate in the labor market. Most Indian women are illiterate or low-literate (up to primary education) and very few women can benefit from higher levels of education (NSS, 2014). Gender gaps in human capital are discernible, especially in rural India. Nearly 85 percent of rural women workers and 59 percent of urban women workers are illiterate or low-literate (NSS, 2004-05). Large groups of women are self-employed in rural and urban areas; however, the rate is higher in rural than in urban areas. Self-employment is common among both men and women in rural and urban India. Half of the self-employed women work as unpaid family workers in urban areas, while three-quarters of the self-employed women work as unpaid family workers in rural areas. On the other hand, three-quarters of the self-employed men work for their own account in rural and urban areas. In other words, while women work as unpaid family workers in both urban and rural India, men are mostly own-account workers. Indian women are largely incapable of moving away from agriculture. The underlying reasons include inadequate human capital endowments and domestic responsibilities that women have to undertake concurrently (Rustagi, 2010: 1-18). Agriculture is the main industry providing employment opportunity to more than half of Indian women. In 2012, 59.7 percent of Indian women were employed in agriculture, 20.9 percent were employed in industry, and 19.4 percent were employed in the service sector (KILM, 2017).

Some South Asian countries show puzzling trends in female participation rates and India is the most prominent for its falling rates in recent years. There has been a rapid decline in fertility in India (Bhalla and Kalur, 2011) and a considerable improvement in educational attainment in recent decades. Additionally, the female labor force participation rate has been falling due to the declining number of women working in rural areas (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014: 2). The number of women workers dropped by 19.6 million from 2004-05 to 2011-12; the female labor force participation rate dropped by 11.4 percent

from 42.6 to 31.2 percent from 1993-94 to 2011-12. This fall occurred mainly in rural India (approximately 53 percent) among 15-24 years old women. In other words, the fall was primarily caused by the withdrawal of rural women from the labor force. Major factors behind the fall include educational attainment, socioeconomic status, and household composition and are prevailing especially in rural areas. Andres et al. (2017: 32-35) underlined that the stability in family income is “indicated by the increasing share of regular wage earners and declining share of casual labor in the composition of family labor supply”, thereby leading women to prefer not to participate in but to withdraw from the labor force. The authors also noted that conventional approaches such as education, skills and legal provisions are insufficient for increasing female labor force participation. Therefore, social norms that hinder female labor force participation is of crucial importance in Indian women’s absence from the labor force. Similarly, Sarkar et al. (2017: 21-22) found that the increased income of other household members results in lower entry and higher exit probabilities of women with respect to labor force participation. The authors also argued that women in families with highly educated members are less likely to join the labor force, while they are more likely to withdraw from the labor force. Accordingly, household income and wealth have significant effects on female labor force participation. These two factors account for the decline in female employment despite the increasing economic growth in India. A new-born child, the caste system and religion are the other determinants of low female labor force participation in India (Sarkar et al., 2017: 21-22).

Marital status is also a significant determinant of female labor force participation. Panda (1999) discussed that among Kerala-based women, those without children are more likely to participate in the labor market compared to married women with young children and the employment rate is higher among single women compared to married women. Research on women workers in India reported that married women, women with little children, and women in households with higher per capita spending are less likely to be in employment. More flexible labor markets facilitate higher female participation. The chance of being employed in the formal sector increases in more flexible state labor markets. Additionally, state infrastructure spending increases female labor force participation; women living in states with better access to roads, for example, are more likely to be in the labor force (Das et al., 2015: 18-19). Sudarshan and Bhattacharya (2009) studied female labor in urban Delhi and suggested that the decision to work outside the home is usually a household decision and women’s household workload, asymmetric information, and safety concerns are key factors that influence their labor market participation. They further noted that family and kinship structures play an important role in determining women’s work-life choices. To put it briefly, caste, religion, and marital status are the

other parameters that restrict women's mobility and access to wage employment in the formal labor market in India. These factors along with less human capital endowment give rise to non-wage employment of women or women's exclusion from the labor market in India (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014; Thomas, 2012; Das, 2006; Sethuraman, 1998; Ghosh, 2009; Desai and Jain, 1994).

In keeping with the dominant patriarchal structure, household chores and reproduction are considered to be female responsibilities in India. Female labor is generally invisible in national statistics due to the unpaid nature of women's work. Additionally, the type of job that women can undertake depends on the decision of male family members. Women cannot decide to work by herself (Chaudhary and Verick, 2014: 16). An analysis of National Sample Survey (NSS) data indicated that supply and demand factors cause important constraints on female labor force participation in India. Accordingly, many Indian women want not simply to work but to have a regular job. Moreover, women do not look for jobs due to the great discrimination in the labor market. Indian women tend to leave the labor market when they marry. Lastly, many women lack the skills for the work they want to have (Fletcher et al., 2017: 19).

Informal employment is the other significant characteristic of female employment in India. It is asserted that a majority (94 percent) of women are engaged in the informal sector; among them, 20 percent work in urban centers. In other words, employment opportunities for Indian women are often low-paid and informal. Women generally have to work 5-8 hours unpaid to help other family members apart from 7-8 hours of domestic work including child care. Most women workers are deprived of training. Women workers in India do not have an option to work or not to work due to their financial challenges. Therefore, women workers in the informal sector can be considered the poorest among the poor as they are uneducated and weak (Geetika et al., 2011: 534-537). Gender discrimination is also common in the informal sector in India while it is almost absent in the formal sector. Dominant female work patterns such as unpaid work and self-employment boost informal employment in India (Sharma, 2012: 35).

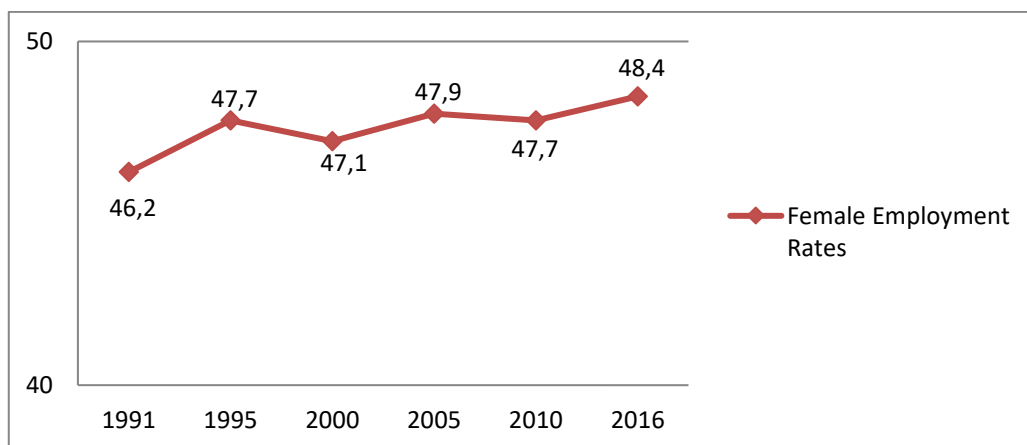
Despite the various measures of the Indian government, there is still a gender pay gap. However, it should be noted that the government measures were formerly announced; thus, they are old-dated and inadequate to keep up with the altered status of women (Varkkey et al., 2017: 3). The gender pay gap in India is more than 40 percent, which is two times higher than in G20 countries (ILO et al, 2016). The gender pay gap has narrowed from 1983 to 2000 but still high for illiterates and people with secondary education; the gap is higher for white-collar workers compared to blue-collar workers (Bhattacharjee et al., 2015). Sengupta and Das (2014) argued that caste and religion affect the gender pay gap in India.

They further noted that the gap declined from 1993 to 2000, it is more common among Muslim women compared to Hindu women, and the gap varies among certain castes. There are also significant wage differentials between rural and urban women in India. According to the NSS data, the wage differentials have not narrowed but widened since the 1990s. However, wage differentials are less dramatic for men compared to women. Rural women are the most disadvantaged worker group in India. This situation points to the urgent need for government policies to improve rural women's earnings and reduce gender inequality (Sharma and Saha, 2015).

2. THE CASE OF SOUTH KOREA: SOUTH KOREAN WOMEN, “THE ENGINES” OF THE SOUTH ASIAN GROWTH

South Korea has achieved an incredible economic growth in the last decades. Despite the spectacular growth, the female employment rate in South Korea was below the OECD average (59.4 percent) in 2016 (OECD, 2017). Among 144 countries, South Korea ranks 116th on the global gender gap index and 123rd on the economic participation and opportunity sub index (WEF, 2016). However, there has been a limited upward trend in the female employment rate since the 1990s as it is seen in Graph 2.

Graph.2: Female Employment Rates in South Korea (KILM, 2017)



Women contribute a lot to the nation's success as they are considered “the engines” of South Korean economic development. The main reason for this consideration is the “cheap” feature of female labor. The abundance of cheap labor is a comparative advantage of South Korea in the world trade system. Large quantities of low-wage and unskilled labor that mainly belong to women have facilitated the South Korean success in export since the 1960s. The development strategy of the country significantly increased female participation in the national economy between 1963 and 1990; thus, the number of women workers increased fourteen times. In other words, the labor-intensive

characteristics of the export sector boosted female employment through the employment of “cheap” labor. In line with the rapid increase in the number of female laborers, female manufacturing industries have emerged in South Korea, where women constitute more than half of the workers. The primary female manufacturing industries in South Korea include textile and cloth manufacturing, rubber and plastics, electronic goods, shoe manufacturing, and pottery (Park, 1993: 131-132).

Low wages and poor working conditions of women workers are the distinguishing features of the South Korean labor market, especially after the 1997 economic crisis. Cho and Lee (2015: 12428-12429) asserted that the South Korean labor market has a dual structure; thus, it can be stratified into two distinct markets. The first is the primary (core) labor market that consists of “jobs and workplaces characterized by high wages, good working conditions, stable employment, good opportunities for human capital accumulation, promotion and promotion opportunities, reasonable compensations for the strength of the commitment to work, etc.” The second is the secondary (peripheral) labor market that includes “jobs and workplaces characterized by low wages, poor working conditions, the risk of dismissal and unemployment, lack of on-site training opportunities, the lack of promotion opportunities, arbitrary compensation schemes, etc.” The authors reported that the number and rate of women are higher in the peripheral labor market, unlike in the core labor market. Additionally, the rate of irregular workers among female workers was approximately 1.5 times higher than the rate of those among male workers. Park (2016: 25-33) highlighted that occupational sex segregation and less human capital cause gender differences in earnings in South Korea. Historically, women are less educated than men despite the recent progress in the education levels of women. Women are employed in low-paid and low-qualified jobs; on the contrary, men have monopolized high paid jobs such as professionals and managerial occupations. To put it briefly, the occupations of Korean men and women are in different fields. While women mostly have jobs like teachers, nurses, secretaries, and retail sales representatives, men have jobs like doctors, lawyers, engineers, and scientists. The cultural climate in South Korea has remained deeply conservative and traditional despite the modernized appearance of social institutions. Thus, the patriarchal structure of the South Korean society leads to the marginalization and exploitation of women (Park, 2016).

It is worth noting that that the patriarchal structure of the South Korean society is based on Confucianism that has historically been a significant and influential philosophy mainly in southeastern Asia. In Confucianism, women are accorded an inferior status. In the South Korean society, patriarchy is equated with Confucianism that has adverse effects on women (Hoboush, 2003: 279). The patriarchal system has been established in South Korea for more than two

millennia. The rigid gender roles accord men a public status while women are deemed worthy of domestic responsibilities. Married women's obedience to their husband's parents is deemed necessary within the Confucian patriarchal family (Park and Cho, 1995: 118-125). Kong (2017) highlighted that the increase in women's education and labor participation outside home transformed the traditional extended family into the nuclear family; thus, women secured more control over family decisions as they became aware of such concepts as equal rights between genders, educational opportunity, social participation, and family values. The author further noted, however, that each individual woman did not necessarily obtain the actual power over her partner at home. In short, Korean women are today not as suppressed by Confucian thought as in the past; however, traditions still influence working women's experiences of reconciling paid and unpaid work. Despite the efforts of new governments, state policies are still gendered (Sung, 2003: 356).

The female labor participation rate forms an atypical M-shaped curve in South Korea. The labor participation rate of South Korean women is higher in their early 20s; however, due to marriage or childbirth, the rate drops remarkably in their late 20s and early 30s. Child-rearing is a serious obstacle for highly educated women and prevents female workers from continuing in the labor market (Kim et al., 2016: 1). Marriage and having children lead to a decrease in female labor market participation. Lee et al. (2008: 138-154) found that married women show a lesser tendency to participate in the labor market compared to single women. They suggested that husband's occupation and women's age are influential in women's labor force participation. The lower labor force participation of young married women can be explained by demand factors, while the relatively higher labor force participation rates among the middle-aged married women can be explained by supply factors. Chun and Oh (2002: 631) asserted that Korean families prefer sons to daughters and having children leads to a decline of 27.5 percent in married Korean women's labor force participation.

The service sector is the primary sector in which South Korean women are employed. 80 percent of women were employed in the service sector in 2013. The industry is the secondary sector with a female share of nearly 14 percent, while the agricultural sector plays a very limited role in female employment with a female share of 6 percent in 2013 (KILM, 2017). The temporary employment of women is common in South Korea as women account for 52 percent of the temporary employment (ILO, 2016).

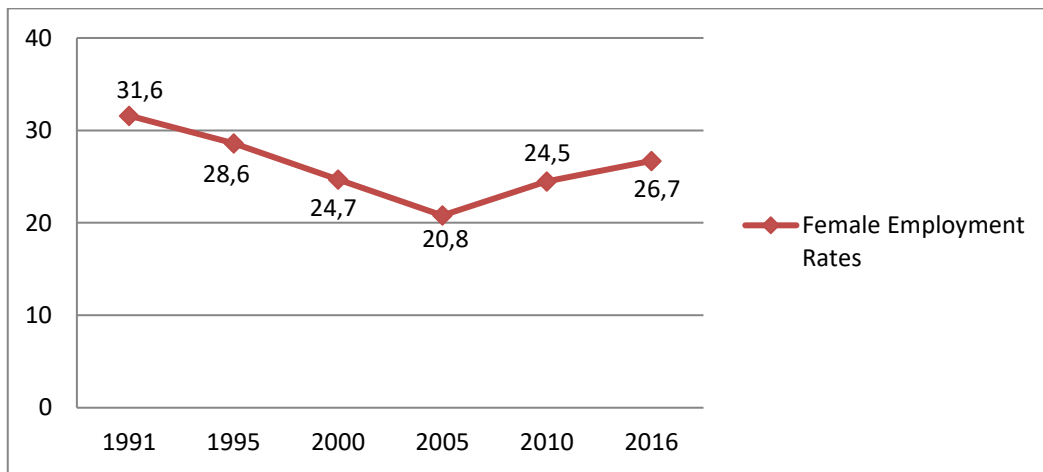
Gender pay gaps in South Korea are remarkable at over 30 percent at the median (ILO et al, 2016). Seguino (1997: 103) pointed out that the strong demand for female labor did not narrow the female-male wage gap. Employment discrimination leads to the segregation of women into specific industries such as

export manufacturing (Seguino, 1997). Park (2016) noted that the gender pay gap in South Korea is quite higher compared to developed nations and the gender pay gap in 2013 (36.6 percent) is almost as high as the gender pay gap in the United States forty years ago. Tromp (2016) also points to a “glass ceiling” effect in South Korea, where the gender wage gap widens at the upper end of the wage distribution.

3. THE CASE OF TURKEY: TURKISH WOMEN, INVISIBLE WORKERS

Turkey is the 17th biggest economy in the world but has failed to integrate its large female population into the labor market (WB, 2017b). Among 144 countries, Turkey ranks 130th on the global gender gap index and 129th on the economic participation and opportunity sub index (WEF, 2016). Considering the total female employment to population ratio, only one-quarter of Turkish women is employed (Graph 3). Although there has been an upward trend in female labor market participation almost all over the world, Turkey has failed to achieve a similar progress and the ratio decreased as against that in 1991.

Graph.3: Female Employment Rates in Turkey (%) (KILM, 2017)



The failure in female employment in Turkey is substantially based on certain economic, social and cultural factors. First, export-oriented growth policies failed to make a positive change in Turkey’s capacity for employment creation, thereby leading to a decline in the employment rate after the 1980s. Especially, after 1989, there was a dramatic drop in the employment rate (Onaran, 2003). The small scale of foreign investments restricted the demand for female labor. Additionally, neoliberal policies caused agricultural dissolution, thereby leading to a decline in the total population employed in agriculture. To put it differently, product supports and subsidies for farmers were cut off; price support policies were abandoned. Additionally, the cultivation area of various agricultural products was limited. These practices gave rise to a drop in the agricultural employment and in the employment of women mainly employed in

agriculture until the mid-2000s in Turkey. Thus, with the decline in agricultural employment, many women were pushed out of the labor market. Due to inadequate employment opportunities in other sectors, female labor mainly involved in agriculture (and with low human capital endowments) could not be absorbed in the labor market, thereby unavoidably excluding women from the labor market. The patriarchal structure of the society imposed the household burden largely on women and restricted women to household chores, thereby depriving women of educational opportunities and hindering women's entry into working life (Toksöz, 2007: 2-28).

The modernization process generally contributes to a U-shaped trend in female employment in the world. To further clarify, as the economy shifts away from agriculture, female employment declines at first. On the other hand, with the increase in female education level and employment opportunities during the economic progress, female labor force participation increases. However, unlike many countries, Turkey failed to achieve this trend. Female employment has been on a constant downward trend and unable to show an upward trend for decades. Therefore, a vast majority of women in the continuously growing country have been excluded from the labor market and full-time housewifery has become the most common female occupation (İlkkaracan-Ajas, 2012: 203).

A sector-based analysis of female employment in Turkey shows that more than half of the women are employed in the service sector with a share of 55 percent in 2016. Agriculture ranks second with a share of 29 percent while industry ranks third with a share of 16 percent. Women are generally employed in the wholesale and retail trade sector, the education sector, and social services sector (TURKSTAT, 2017a). There are three types of female employment in Turkey. First, women work as unpaid family workers in the agriculture sector in rural areas. Second, low-educated women work in low paid and labor-intensive jobs in informal ways. Third, highly-educated women work in formal ways (Özkaplan, 2010). Regrettably, employed women are majorly included in the first two groups. Accordingly, education level is a significant determinant of female employment in Turkey. Low employment rates are common among low-educated women. The employment rate is 15 percent for illiterate women, 27 percent for women with primary education, and 71 percent for women with higher education (TURKSTAT, 2017a).

In addition to education level, the dominant patriarchal society is another chief determinant of female labor force participation in Turkey. Due to the patriarchal structure, the responsibility for childcare and household chores are mainly attributed to women; thus, women face challenges with labor market participation. According to the research of Turkish Statistics Statistical Institute, 55 percent of women not engaged in the labor force reported household chores

as the main reason for their absence from the labor force (TURKSTAT, 2017b). The patriarchal mindset limits women's employment opportunities in certain sectors. For example, industrial regions in Anatolia are largely considered to be male-specific workplaces and women employment is unwarrantable there. Women themselves even do not prefer to work in these regions. In short, working in these regions is regarded as a last resort to finding a job (Toksöz, 2012).

There are varied determinants of female labor force participation in Turkey. Schooling, age, marital status, and the number of children were reported to be the main determinants of female labor force participation in Turkey (Dayıoğlu and Kırdar, 2010). Sociocultural factors such as the influence of patriarchal society and traditional responsibilities of women, lack of child care services, urbanization, and inadequate job opportunities are other important determinants affecting labor force participation of Turkish women (DPT-WB, 2009). The lack of affordable care and social services, informality, unpaid female work, violence against women, early marriage, early school leaving, the negative portrayal of women, and gender stereotyping give rise to low female labor participation in Turkey (Kağnıcıoğlu, 2017)

Another specific feature of female employment in Turkey is informal employment. The informal employment rate is remarkably higher among women compared to men. In 2016, 44 percent of women were employed informally, while the rate was 29 percent for men (TURKSTAT, 2017a). Informal female employment is more frequent in rural areas; 85 percent of women in rural areas and 29 percent of women in urban areas are employed informally (TURKSTAT, 2017a). The employment status of women in rural areas is often an unpaid family laborer in agriculture; thus, informal employment is more common in rural areas.

Flexible work is another factor contributing to women's informal employment. Flexible work is widespread among women due to inadequate employment opportunities, unemployment, and caregiving and household responsibilities. Therefore, part-time work, on-call work and home-based work has become proper employment opportunities for women as these kinds of work help women to reconcile their household responsibilities with working life (KEIG, 2013: 27-28). Home-based work is common in Turkey due to low costs. Industries choose this type of work to find cheap labor force. Especially the garment industry tends to use home-based work. The garment industry has been reported to be the export champion of Turkish industry since the early 1980s and is heavily based on home-based work with precarious and subcontracted working conditions. Formal jobs with social security, annual bonus payments and pension rights for women are less common as opposed to more common

informal jobs in factories. Atelier work and home-based piecework jobs of vulnerable nature are widely demanded (Dedeoğlu, 2008: 2-25).

Gender-based wage discrimination is another characteristic of Turkish labor market. Women's earnings are considerably lower than men's earnings. Wage discrimination is common in all sectors excluding the public sector. Kara (2006) reported that the rate of wage discrimination is 30 percent for all workers. İlkaracan and Selim (2007) asserted that the women workers' wages are equal to nearly 70 percent of men's wages in the manufacturing sector. The average gender wage gap was reported to be about 25.2 percent in favor of men for the salaried population in Turkey (Cudeville and Gurbuzer, 2007).

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Female labor force participation is a multidimensional phenomenon varying across regions and countries. The present study showed that the three Asian countries are under the influence of strong patriarchy and the abovementioned sociocultural determinants reduce female employment to a great extent. While the degree of patriarchy varies across nations, patriarchy seems to be a common and powerful determinant of female employment in the analyzed countries. Patriarchy restricts female education opportunities, thereby reducing their human capital endowment that is necessary for labor market participation. It also limits female employment opportunities by dividing jobs into two categories, namely jobs available for women and jobs available for men. Patriarchy regards women as the family members primarily responsible for household chores and caregiving, thereby increasing their burden and hindering their entry into the labor force. It also increases informal employment, especially for women. The macroeconomic structure of Turkey is the other important determinant of female labor force participation, like in all countries. In this regard, India and Turkey are more disadvantageous than South Korea. Due to the export-oriented development strategy that has been followed since the 1960s, labor-intensive jobs appropriate for women have increased in South Korea, thereby boosting the demand for women's "cheap" labor. On the other hand, the same development strategy that has also been followed in different ways in the other two countries has not been that successful in increasing employment opportunities for women. The other common factors reducing female employment in the three countries include marriage, low human capital, and gender-based discrimination. However, caste and religion are the determinants peculiar to India.

Women are doomed to low-paid and irregular jobs; informal employment is a reality for female employment in all countries. India is the most prominent of the three countries in terms of informal female employment. A number of

measures that help to increase invulnerable female employment in the three countries are briefly as follows: Raising public awareness of gender equity and female employment, increasing women's human capital endowment (through investment in upskilling and training), offering economic incentives for women entrepreneurs such as available credit, adopting the system of female employment quotas both in the public and private sectors, eliminating discriminatory practices in working life, increasing the number of institutions providing care services, and adopting women's quotas in politics. Additionally, due to the redundant rural population in India, policies targeting the acceptability of female employment in rural areas should be promoted. In other words, employment opportunities desirable both for women and their families should be opened up. The large share of women in informal employment should be reduced. Governments should be the strict followers of women's informal employment which is common in all three countries. Job opportunities for women should be increased. These steps can help to raise the visibility of women in the economy. Otherwise, it would be impossible to maintain gender equity in the economic field for Asian women who constitute a large part of global women population.

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