

PROFILES OF LEADING FEMALE FARMERS IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

Women have less access to resources than men, especially in rural areas. The participation of women in decision-making processes remains very limited at the community and national level, and even at the family level. Lack of education and social equality generally work against women in developing countries. The social and personal skills of those women living in rural areas and dealing with agricultural production cannot be developed. Women, who make up half of society, play a key role in agriculture and this began to be recognized in the 1980s. Increased training of women in agricultural publication services has been effective in increasing women's skills, as well as contributing to the spread of innovation. Leading women farmers have become part of the agenda with the application of "the farmer leadership project, but the pace of development has been slow compared to that of male leader-farmers regarding the adoption of agricultural innovations in Turkey. In this study, the general profiles of model women farmers in Turkey are determined and focused on how to increase the number of women farmers and their qualifications

Keywords: Rural, Leader, Female Farmers, Profile

INTRODUCTION

Leadership, in general is defined as an ability to influence others, such as the ability to show how to accomplish a goal or mission (Aslanalp, 2002). Leadership is mostly a personality characteristic and is not formal, meaning that leadership is defined as a function of the conditions (Tosun, 1978). A set of features is not available that all leaders must have. Such a requirement is not necessary, because there is a need of differentiation of leader qualifications according to the conditions in the current sector (Özçatalbaş, 1998).

There are four types of leadership based on the leader's effectiveness. In developing societies where democratic structures remain undeveloped (a latent feudal social structure), the leader is the person who decides what work is necessary (and who should perform it). Leaders who have proven expertise and have knowledge in adequacy of specific topics are defined as expert leaders. Opinion leaders are those who can affect other people's thoughts and behaviors. A leader through action or application is a talented person whose entrepreneurial characteristics are developed and has the ability to adapt easily to new ideas. Opinion leaders and action leaders are beneficial to agricultural extension. There are those „leaders” which sociologists mention in every society, which are called local leaders in agricultural extension (Giff, 2012). These people are accepted as the

authority in specific topics due to experiences and achievements in the past. Local leaders are more concerned with the outside world than other individuals living in the community. Local leaders are more willing to adopt new agricultural technologies than other farmers. For this reason, cooperation between local leaders, entrepreneurs and leading publishers can be widely influential in facilitating the acceptance of the use of technology with local farmers, because working together they have direct access to rural communities.

Although the agricultural sector is an important sector in the economy, its overall contribution to remain limited due to structural problems. Agricultural extension has a very important role in the solution of these problems, and in particular in the development of agricultural technology.

Agricultural publication plays an important role in the diffusion and adoption of innovation, as well as in implementation (Kumuk, 1996). As regards agricultural extension, it is quite rational to aim for the fastest production at the lowest cost by using beneficial ideas and action leaders to guide the broad masses of farmers.

Agriculture, environment, global pollution, soil contamination, potable water, limited resources and disadvantaged population groups directly affect both the individual and society (Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, 2004). In Turkey, as in other developing countries, it is of great importance to raise the social status of women and integrate them into the current of development. Due to the low incomes in the agricultural sector, poverty and social exclusion affect women to a greater extent than men. Women are less experienced in managing resources, have fewer employment opportunities and receive less social security benefit, are less involved in public life, especially in rural areas, compared to men (Gülçubuk, 2012). The participation of women in decision-making processes at the community and national level is very limited. According to the statistics, the proportion of women in decision-making is higher than that of employed in agriculture in Turkey (TUIK, 2011).

It is known that the women's (50.3% of the working population in rural areas in Turkey) leadership qualities are not developed according to the above-mentioned reasons. Women living in rural areas could not take place in the formal area, so the development of informal structuring should be provided as in the Halilbeyli Participatory Rural Appraisal Project (Özkeaya, 1999). There is a relationship between personal characteristics and leadership that can be developed by trainings. There is a direct correlation between the level of leadership qualifications, being a model to the community and getting in action. Success is extremely dependent on having the confidence of publishers in determining the leading farmers when it comes to adopting innovations in agricultural extension.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

40 women farmers constitute the main body of the study. These women were invited by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock to Diyarbakir on October 15, 2013 to participate in World Woman Farmers' Day. All identifying information obtained from our sources remains confidential. It is accessible to all

the elements of the universe so to use complete enumeration method makes sense in case of limited or narrow range of cases where the universe is concerned (Karasar, 2000). For this reason, the bulk of the material obtained in the study is derived from questionnaires personally administered to 40 women. The data obtained from the questionnaires was evaluated by SPSS package program by looking at the frequency and percentage values of the questions and also a correlation analysis was done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

37.5% of the leading female farmers surveyed are in the group of young farmers (aged between 20 and 30 years), while the rate of 31-40, 41-50 and 61-70 years age group was 25.0%, 22.5% and 5.0%, respectively. 42.5% of the participants live in villages, while 57.5% of the participants live in towns and cities. When the village centers thought as a settlement that has an intensive agricultural production, the obtained results are provoking. 35.0% of the participants are graduated from primary school, 10.0% are graduated from secondary school, 42.5% are graduated from high school and 12.5% are graduated from university.

It has been identified that 35.0% of the participants came from East-Southeast Anatolia, 25.0% from the Mediterranean, 10.0% from Central Anatolia, 15.0%, from Marmara, 10.0% from the Aegean and 5% from the Black Sea region. By looking at the distribution by region due to the regulation of the meeting, in the province of Diyarbakir Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions seem to affect participation positively. Looking at the distribution of leading women farmers from the perspective of educational level and distribution by region, we find that there is no university graduate in the Aegean and the Black Sea region, while there is one from each region of the Mediterranean, Marmara and Central Anatolia and two of the participants from Southeastern Anatolia had university degrees.. In general, the leading women farmers in the Southeast Anatolia region were identified with high levels of education in comparison to the level of education in other regions (*Table 1*).

The literacy rate was 85.60% according to the statistics, whereas East and Southeast Region, with a ratio of 68.79% in Southeastern Anatolia male and female literacy rate was 81% and 55.60%, respectively. This is interpreted in two ways; leadership skills of educated women are developing in rural areas or the leader is chosen from educated women farmers 52.5% of the participants were single and 47.5% were married.

Leader farmers have declared that 45% of the respondents had 1-5 years of experience, while 22.5% of the respondents had 6-10 years, and 12.5% of the respondents had 16-20 years of experience. 27.5% of the respondents' allocated 5-6 hours per day to agricultural production, 17.5% of the respondents' allocated 1-2 hours. 30% of the participants spent 1 hour, 7.5% spent 4 hours, and 5.0% spent 5 hours to process agricultural products. This shows that women leaders allocate more time to agricultural production (*Table 2*).

Table 1

Comparison of level of education of leading women farmers by region (Crosstab)

District	Educational background				Total
	Primary school	Secondary school	High school	University	
East and South east Anatolia	4	2	6	2	14
Mediterranean	5	1	3	1	10
Central Anatolia	1	1	1	1	4
Marmara	1	0	4	1	6
Aegean	2	0	2	0	4
Black sea region	1	0	1	0	2
Total	14	4	17	5	40

Table 2

Allocated time of leader in experiencing and agricultural production-product processing in farming

Experience in farm leadership			Allocated time For agricultural production			Allocated time For agricultural product processing		
Year	Fre.	%	hour	Fre.	%	hour	Fre.	%
1-5	18	45.0	1-2	7	17.5			
6-10	9	22.5	3-4	5	12.5	1	12	30.0
11-15	2	5.0	5-6	11	27.5	2	11	27.5
16-20	5	12.5	7-8	5	12.5	3	12	30.0
21-25	3	7.5	9-10	7	17.5	4	3	7.5
25+	3	7.5	10+	5	12.5	5	2	5.0
Total	40	100	Total	40	100	Total	40	100

Participation of leading farmers in agricultural training courses is usually higher than others because they are concerned more with the outside world (Özçatalbaş, 1998). Participating in agricultural training can be perceived as an important criterion for farming leaders. 65% of the surveyed women participated in agricultural training.

When the reasons for non-participation were questioned, 58% of women claimed that training options were not given, 14% said it was not allowed by the husband 14% ranked very high the effective lack of topics of interest and 7% remarked that non-participation of friends was the reason (Table 3). Sources of agricultural information were rated by the participants. Results show that 37.5% of participants ranked agricultural engineers very high as a source of information;

television was ranked very high as a source of agricultural information with a 27.5% rate. Whereas 20% of the respondents listed the Internet as a source of information, a very high percentage, 10% of respondents, ranked wives high effectiveness as the source of agricultural information and 15% has ranked colleagues as a source of agricultural knowledge (Table 4).

Table 3

Reasons for non-participation in education

Reasons	Very high		High		Low		Very Low	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
There is no need	1	7.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
Training option is not given	8	58.0	1	7.0	-	-	2	14.0
Not allowed by husband	2	14.0	-	-	-	-	-	-
non-participation of friends	1	7.0	1	7.0				
Lack of effective topics	2	14.0	-	-	-	-	-	-

Table 4

Sources of agricultural knowledge

Agricultural knowledge sources	Very high		High		Low		Very low	
	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%	Fre.	%
Wives	4	10.0	-	-	4	10.0	8	20.0
Colleagues	6	15.0	9	22.5	6	15.0	6	15.0
Television	11	27.5	14	35.0	7	17.5	1	2.5
Agricultural engineers	15	37.5	11	27.5	2	5.0	5	12.5
Internet	8	20.0	10	25.0	7	17.5	2	5.0

Agricultural education and extension are carried out by the government through the provincial and district directorates' agriculture in Turkey. Frequency and reasons for going to these directorates are considered as an indication of interest in the outside world leadership in farming, which is often sought as a benchmark (Table 5).

Farmers' membership in local organizations is a fairly important criterion among the general characteristics (Albrecht, 1969). Membership in co-operatives is queried and the participants have a high ratio of 62.5%; cooperative education has been revealed in a ratio of 30%. Participants were asked about the factors that affect the cooperative membership. Results show that 35% of participants have an insecurity

to co-chairman, 25% are not allowed by the husband; the ratio of 17.5% for female membership is connected with the cooperative that is not common in environs; the absence of a well-functioning co-operative has a 10% ratio.

Table 5

Frequency and reasons of visiting agricultural directorates and that of cooperative membership

Visit to agricultural directorates			The reason of visiting agricultural directorates			Membership to cooperative		
Frequency of visit	Fre	%	Reason	Fre	%	Situatio	Fre	%
No comment	2	5.0	No comment	17	42.5	Yes	15	37.5
Once in a month	8	20.0	Acknowledgement	3	7.5	No	25	62.5
Once in 2-3 months	5	12.5	Supporting	9	22.5			
Once in a year	13	32.5	Official procedure	10	25.0			
Never	12	30.0	Visiting friend	1	2.5			
Having cooperative training			The reason of membership to cooperative			The reason of elected leader farmer		
Situation	Fre	%	Reason	Fre	%	Reason	Fre	%
Yes	12	30.0	Distrust to officer	14	35.0	Knowledgeable	8	20.0
No	28	70.0	Not having time	3	7.5	Experience	3	7.5
			Disallow of wives	10	25.0	Sociability	5	12.5
			Constant of responsibility	2	5.0	Innovation	4	10.0
			Being a worse example	4	10.0	Family	10	25.0
			Lack of women membership	7	17.5	Participation Leader farmer competition	9	22.5

The „Women Farmers are Competing,, program is an activity that has been organized and supported by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock since 2004. The impact of social, economic and the working life on women farmers has been identified in an „Impact Assessment Study of Women Farmers Competing,, organized by the Application and Research Center of Ankara University for Development (AKÇAM) in 2012. When the most effective cause is asked in the leader farmer election, family comes first with a 25% ratio, while the effect of being a female farmer participating in the competition had a ratio of 22.5%. Leading farmers’ election has an impact such as changes in social status with a ratio of 22.5%, whereas the third important factor is knowledge (20%) in Leader farmers election. This quality must have existed between the farmers for quality leadership.

CONCLUSIONS

Although women are at the center of agricultural production, they are deprived of social rights such as property acquisition, and therefore cannot have the economic power to make decisions regarding effective production and this seems to maintain

the continuity of the male-dominated social structure. The success of women may be involved with the acquisition of feature in the sector which can only be accomplished with an effective agricultural extension. Although women have an informal relation in rural areas, in Turkey this is usually quite effective. Even in agricultural extension activities for women, men have become dominant in the formal structuring in rural areas. This is a common condition as in participatory rural development activities such as the Halilbeyli example.

Taking into account the existing structure in Turkey, the creation of a women's group to ensure the ability of women's self-expression in agriculture extension activities would affect women's leadership skills positively and may attract women to agricultural extension. Participation in a Women Farmers Contest has created innovation and the possibility of women's election as leaders has an effect on a woman's life, so this must be addressed more than men in agricultural extension.

As it is understood from the results of the research,, there is a parallel between the increase in educational level and leadership. The formal education of women farmers cannot be carried out,, so agricultural extension training should be formed in accordance with the principles of adult education, particularly to increase the participation of women producers and women's education in agricultural areas for increased women farmer development. As it can be seen in the research results, there are relatively few women farmers as leading members in the cooperative. Establishment of cooperatives -which provide an environment where women can express themselves and can ask questions more easily - would support women to be able to contribute to effective ownership and farming leadership.

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