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TURKMENISTAN

DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER STATISTICS IN TURKMENISTAN

Paper submitted by Turkmenistan¹

Introduction

The problem of equality and inequality of sex is one of the most urgent political, economic and social issues of a society.

In Turkmenistan the principle of equal rights and equal opportunities for women and men is fixed in item 2 of article 17 of the Constitutions of Turkmenistan: «Turkmenistan guarantees equality of the rights and freedom of the citizens, and also equality of the citizens before the law irrespective of nationality, origin, property and official rule, residence, language, relation to religion, political convictions, party belonging». Article 18 also states that: «men and women in Turkmenistan have equal civil rights. The infringement of equality in relation to sex attracts the responsibility under the law». According to these rules, the legislation should be based on the absence of discrimination in relation to gender.

Also, according to the 4th World Conference on Women Status (Peking, September 1995), Turkmenistan has joined the CEDAW and ILO Convention for Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers For Work of Equal Value, the ILO Convention on Discrimination based on Labor and Employment, International Deed on Economic, Social and Cultural RIGHTS (December 20, 1996) and many other international treaties and conventions on human rights.

The government of Turkmenistan pays close attention to gender issues. In March 1997 the Government, with the support of UNDP, opened the National WID/GID Bureau aimed at strengthening women's role at all levels of social life. The National Bureau works in the direction of improving the coordination and dissemination of information on gender issues among governmental agencies and institutions, international organizations, donors, non-governmental organizations (NGO) and society and also guarantees women's participation in the

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development of the country. The National Bureau assists the Government in designing the National Action Plan based on the recommendations of the 4th World Conference on Women's Status held in Beijing, 1995.

The Government of Turkmenistan has created a special department on social protection of women. A central role in the protection of the rights of women and promotion of their participation in economic and social spheres of the country is played the Union of the women of Turkmenistan by name of Gurbansoltan-edge`.

Women's NGOs

Over the last few years, NGOs have been actively developing in the country, including women's NGOs. At the Conference «Zenan Colby» held in August 1998, there were 13 NGOs - women's centers officially represented under the «Women's Union of Turkmenistan». They are:

- Women's Resource Center of Turkmen State University, named after Magtymguly. The activity of the center is aimed at raising the political, economical and legal awareness and culture of women;
- The center for parents of children with diabetes called « Children and Diabetes » is targeted at the implementation of medical, social, cultural - educational events on improving the life quality for children with diabetes;
- Business Women Centre – Works to create suitable conditions for women's business activity; support and development of small business; organization of training for women - entrepreneurs on the following subjects: obtainment of credits, technology, marketing, management consulting, business - plan design and foreign economical activity, etc.;
- Women's bar centre - Supports the development of professional women lawyer's potential, increase of their effectiveness; provision of obeying of the legislation's norms of Turkmenistan on advocacy of human rights, woman - mother, etc.;
- Poetic art centre - Support of women creative initiatives in the sphere of literature and art;
- Women journalists centre - Development of public interest towards women's issues;
- Centre of women's professional and aesthetic development - active involvement of young women into the active national cultural revival, etc.;
- Centre «Health School» - Strengthening of the population health, especially for women, by means of traditional and non-traditional medical activity;
- Education and health women's center (in Òurkmenabat) - Health promotion for women and children, raising awareness, etc.;
- Centre Wimsa - «Women and mass media in Central Asia » - The centre has been registered in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan) in September 1997 as national coordinator of the activities in Turkmenistan under the Woman's Union and National WID/GID Bureau, UNDP.

The NGO's in Turkmenistan have been involved in the development process not so long ago and they will play a major role in all spheres of the society: economy, policy, culture, etc. It is necessary to adopt the law on NGOs, which will define the status, rights and responsibilities of these NGOs. At the present time, in Turkmenistan the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations serves as normative-legal for the NGOs.

State securities and bonuses for employed women

At the present time, in Turkmenistan there is a wide range of securities and bonuses provided for women when they go on maternity leave. Paid maternity leave during pregnancy and after child birth, leave for child's care till he turns 3, limitations on work on night and extra hour's work, limitations on work on week ends and holidays, business trips, privileged work schedule, etc. Within the conditions of the developed market economy targeted at strengthening the competition capacity and income increase, such measures of protection and social welfare are considered as the factors that make women's work «expensive». In order to rationalise and increase the productivity, the policy has been reviewed. The concession of some bonuses has been reduced in consideration of the demographic situation of the country (new Law on state of bonuses has been adopted).

In Turkmenistan women constitute approximately 1/5 of the employed population. The women who work in non-favorable conditions are provided with some additional bonuses. The securities and bonuses issued to women are indicated in the Code of Laws of Turkmenistan on Labor which has been adopted in November 1993. In particular:

Not to allow extra hours of work for pregnant women and women who have children younger than 3. Women who have children from 3 to 14 (or disabled children younger than 16) and disabled women can be involved in extra hour work only with their consent and with provision of medically approved working conditions (article 57).

Not to allow any reduction in the wage size on the basis of consideration of sex, age, race, nationality, religion, social belonging (article 78).

Not to allow the employment of women in hard jobs and jobs with harmful conditions, underground jobs (except those on sanitary and domestic service or non physical) (article 165).

Not to allow the employment of women into nighttime work with the only exception of those branches of industry where it is permitted to work at night as a temporary measure (article 166).

Not to allow to refusal of employment or to reduce wage on the basis of pregnancy or presence of children younger than 3 or disabled children younger than 16 or children younger than 14 for abandoned mothers (article 176).

Additional measures have been approved in the Law on « Labor protection measures » (November 1993).

The rights and responsibilities of working women on the working place relate to the protection from harmful or dangerous factors that can cause traumas, professional diseases or the reduction in the productivity, the provision of means of individual protection at the expense of

the administration (employer). On failure of personal protection (refusal from administration and employer) it is possible to refuse to complete the work within the existing conditions of real danger for the person's life and health (article 16). The employment of women and people before 18 on hard jobs with harmful and dangerous working conditions is forbidden (article 14)

Within the capacity of the new «Law on Pensions» (1998), the length of service and length of pension insurance includes: the duration of child's care before the age 3 for non-working mothers (totally no more than 6 years); women who are living with husbands serving military, working on a contract basis or for a diplomatic institutions of Turkmenistan are receiving bonuses if they are living in a region where the possibilities for women to get a job are very low (totally the duration should not be more than 10 years).

Women with three children younger than 8 have the right for a pension set by the Law. Women that have three children at the age mentioned above receive a pension one year earlier than women with less children (at 57 years) and those who have more than 3 children get a pension 2 years earlier. There are some types of employment like air steward and radio operator that provide women with bonuses according to the length of service in the given position after a 15 year period. The military servers working on contract basis receive pension at the age of 47 and flight-testing staff receives a pension at the age of 48.

The availability of comprehensive, timely and truthful statistical reports on women status and gender gaps play a significant role in elimination of the stereotypes and achievement of gender equality.

Gender statistics are statistical data on women and men, reflecting their situation in all spheres of society. They are fundamental tools which allow to assess the relative role of women and men in the society in social, demographic, development and political terms.

The availability of statistics is very important for the formulation, development and assessment of the national policy on women status issues and reduction of gender gaps.

Gender distinctions are distinctions between men and women in the various aspects of social and economic development. Gender analysis allows revealing differences in the rights between men and women.

The participation of Turkmenistan to a platform of actions accepted by the 4th World conference on the situation of women (Peking, September, 1995) assigns to the statistical service of Turkmenistan the task of the development of gender statistics in the country. Proceeding from the Platform of actions, the statistical service should provide figures, analysis and representations of statistical data concerning the population with breakdown by sex and age, so that they reflect problems and questions associated to the situation of women and men in a society.

For the implementation of this task, since 1998 was created in the country a database on gender statistics and specific activities were carried out in the direction.

The National institute of statistics and information of Turkmenistan processed 34 statistical forms in the field of gender development, which included 1600 items in such branches as:

Branch of statistics	Quantity of parameters
Demography	7
Employment	234
Health services	950
Social protection	5
Education	364
Science	30
Criminal sphere	2

In Turkmenistan, the gender balance with reference to the total population is approximately 1: 1 meaning that there is one female per male, which is a common feature in most countries. The percentage of woman in the total population is 50,4 % and this figure has remained stable since 1995. In the age group from 1 to 20 years, the proportion of men is higher, while from 20 years onwards there are more women than men. This is typical for countries with relatively high (traditional) fertility. The age structure is pyramid shaped.

The code of laws of Turkmenistan on marriage and family guarantees married women equal rights on decision-making, in relation to bringing up of children and family matters. Married women are free to choose occupation, profession and accommodation.

The family status is the most significant feature influencing the fertility. It influences all demographic and social variables like mortality, migration, education and economic activity.

According to the data of the 1995 census, 64.9% of men aged 15 years and more are married, as opposed to 61.4 % of women . The divorce rate was 1.9 % and 3.6 % respectively and the widowhood rate 3.1 % and 9.6% respectively. One main reason for the larger percentage of single, divorced, and widowed women is their higher life expectancy compared to men. The average age for getting married in Turkmenistan is 22.4 years.

Migration is another important issue in evaluating the country's social environment. Both internal and external migration may greatly impact households and families, especially when migrants are one or few members of households and not the whole family. When the migrant is a man, then the woman-spouse may become the head of the household carrying all the responsibilities for decision-making. Besides that, the gender balance of the population can be modified. This would influence the reproductive behavior.

The transitional period in Turkmenistan has strengthened the population mobility. The major factor that affected the mobility of the population of Turkmenistan is the reduction in the

army's strength caused by gaining the neutrality and the consequent return of a considerable number of servicemen back to Russian Federation and other CIS countries. The analysis of the migrant's nationality structure displayed the following figures: the biggest share is composed by Russians (21 %), then Ukrainian (7 %), Kazakhs (7 %), Tatars (6 %). The share of Turkmen among migrants is also very high (31%), Uzbeks (19%), Azerbaijanian (more than 3%). These are the nationalities that have similar geographic, cultural and religious conditions. The number of women is 49% among emigrants (1997) and 51% among immigrants. As for the age structure, the highest share of women is in working age (16-54): 41% among immigrants and 36% among emigrants.

The equal access to education is provided to every citizen of the country with no consideration of sex. Though, most of the higher education institutions are situated in Ashgabat. The problem of limited physical access to HEI is done through quoting of places with consideration of velayats' demands. As in many other countries in the world, the enrollments are regulated depending on the number of requests, which are particularly high for specific professions.

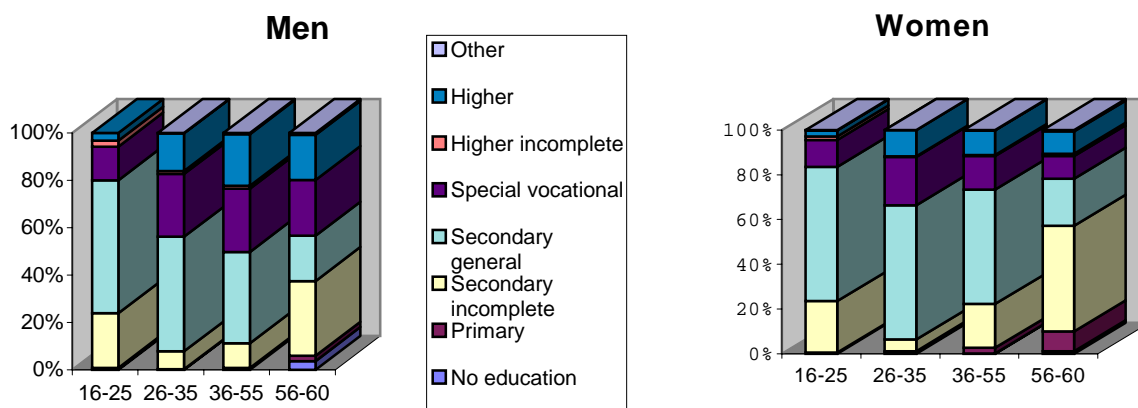
The literacy rate of women, according to the 1995 population census, is 99,9 % compared to the level of men. The level of education is higher for urban women than for rural women. This is basically caused by the inclination of rural women towards the household and family.

In spite of potential capabilities, over the past few years, a tendency to the decline has been noticed in the percentage of women in the total enrollment of students in higher and specialized educational institutions. This directly affects women's educational level. It is well known the relation between the level of education, healthcare problems and women's development. The decline in the number of female students in educational institutions beyond high school is not caused by discrimination against women, but results from elimination of non-traditional and evening school types of education. There also has been a reduction in the number of vacancies in those institutions.

Changes in the professional orientation of women have also been observed lately. There was an increase in the share of female students majoring in industry and construction, transportation, communication, agriculture, healthcare, physical education and sport, and a decrease in the share of female students majoring in economics, law, education, art and cinematography. In other words, the professional training of women in Turkmenistan changed towards a scientific and technical direction, which should help increase their income, as international experience shows.

When analyzing literacy indicators and educational level, the age and sex groups are of great importance, because the analysis by cohorts provide information on the historical development of the access of women and men to education.

Women and men's educational level by age



According to the data of the survey «Living Standard Measurement Survey in Turkmenistan» conducted by the World Bank and NISFT (1998), in all age groups women and men's educational level is high, 46.7 % and 55.2 %, respectively, except for the age group 56-60 which has the highest share of people with incomplete secondary education. This can be explained by the fact that schools previously had a compulsory 8 years education. The professional level among men is higher than among women: 22 % of men and 15,4 % of women have technical vocational education, higher education 13,4% and 8,2 % respectively. The share of men with higher education increases from the young to the old age groups (before 56-60). The share of women with higher and incomplete higher education is 11 % for all age groups (26-35).

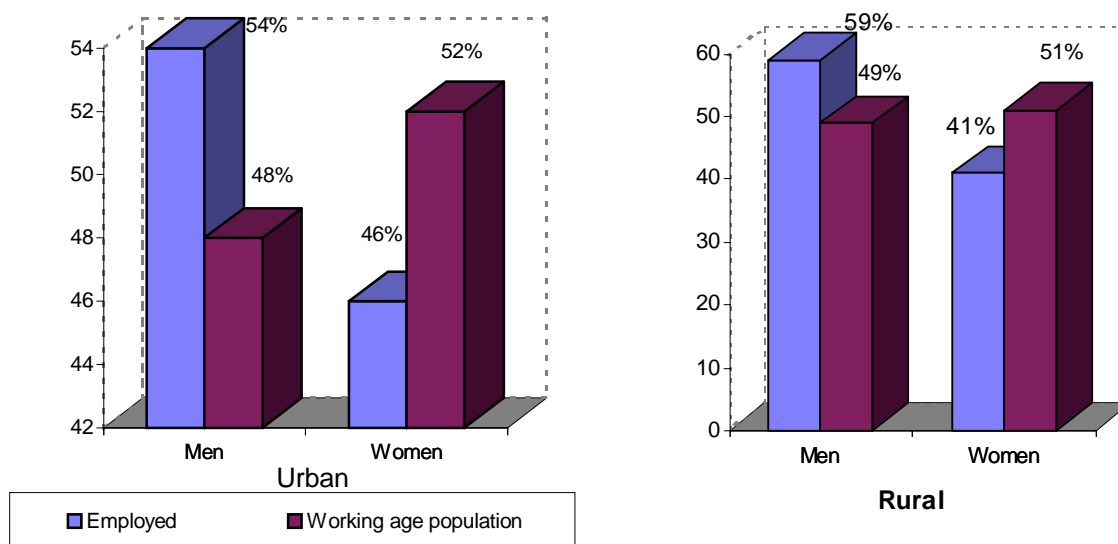
The female life expectancy is higher than the male one, which is typical for most countries in the world. In urban areas, the female life expectancy is 7.3 years higher than male life expectancy, and in rural areas it is higher by 3.8 years. The increase in the life expectancy, in perspective, depends on the mortality rate among one and two year-old babies and their mothers.

In Turkmenistan, women take active part in economic activities. Being able to work gives a woman financial independence and help her stabilize her social and political status.

The survey also shows the proportion of economically active population is 85.5 % among women and 91.9% among men. This result partly depends on the smaller duration of labour activity for women associated to an earlier exit on pension. As a consequence, the proportion of women among employed (43,2 %) is lower than the proportion of men (56,8%). This tendency is observed both in urban settlements and in village districts.

Among men of working age, 44 % live in urban areas and 56 % in rural. The proportions of employed men living in urban areas and in rural areas are the same. Among women living in urban areas the employment rate is higher than the share of working population (49 % and 45 %) and in rural areas the share of employed women is lower than the rate of women in working age (51 and 55 % respectively accordingly).

Distribution of men and women of working age and employed by area of residence (%)



The current economic reform process in Turkmenistan also has an effect on female involvement in the economy. The reduction of the public sector mostly affects women, due to the fact that the state is the largest employer of working women. In the public sector, the work conditions and social protection are in general better, and the salary differences between men and women are lower than in the private sector. There are no legal limitations in Turkmenistan, which would keep women from accessing opportunities in the newly developed private sector. Nevertheless, women tend to remain in typically «traditional» female occupations, which generate lower income and prestige.

Turkmenistan is presently facing a challenge to promote a larger involvement of women into the more dynamic branches of the economy. Higher educational levels and improved professional training encourage women to become economically active. According to data, only 18 % of the men involved in the economy possess a higher education, as opposed to 21 % of women. More than 2/3 of men have a high school level education, as opposed to 46 % of women.

As already mentioned, there are no official statistics showing the proportion between the average salary of women and the average salary of men. In such case, the ratio of 75 % is used. This is an average ratio salary indexes for all countries with available data (Human Development Report for 1998? UNDP, New York).

Data from the selective inspection of the Living Standard Measurement Survey in Turkmenistan (World bank (RTI) and NISFT 1998), a monthly random study on family budgets,

showed that the ratio of the average female salary to the average male salary in non-agricultural sectors is 65 %, and in agricultural sectors is 71,4%. Therefore, having equal possibilities as men in the labor market, and even some advantage (labor conditions etc.), women basically have a smaller average salary in the public sector.

In most countries, the statistical data on women's participation in social decision making are insufficient. In Turkmenistan, women have the right to get involved in decision making in governmental bodies. In 1998, 39 % of the total number of people involved in administrative or governmental bodies were women. 18 % of the representatives in the Turkmen Majlis (Parliament) are women, which is a relatively high percentage compared to the average.

More than 60 women occupy posts as Head of Office within the Parliament, government, juridical bodies, diplomatic service, commercial enterprises, healthcare, social security and media.

Gender- related Development Index in Turkmenistan

Indexes	1998
Equally distributed life expectancy index	0.665
Equally distributed educational attainment index	0.874
Equally distributed income index	0.444
Gender- related Development index -GDI	0.661
Human Development index - HDI	0.678
GDI % of HDI	97.5

Source: Turkmenistan -National Human Development Report ,1999ã. (UNDP,NISFT Ashgabat,1999)

In order to calculate the development index considering the gender factor (Gender-related Development Index -GDI), the same indicators and components are used as for calculating the Human Development index (HDI). However, the components are based on the disparity in achievement between women and men. The stronger the gender inequality from the essential perspective of human development, the lower is the GDI compared to the HDI.

Gender Empowerment Measure

Indexes	1998
Index of female parliamentary representation	0.588
Index of female parliamentary representation in administrative, managerial, professional and technical positions	0.9035
Index of equally distributed income	0.069
Gender empowerment measure - GEM	0.520

Source: Turkmenistan - National Human Development Report ,1999ã. (UNDP,NISFT Ashgabat,1999)

The Gender Empowerment Measure in Turkmenistan reflects the degree to which women take active part in the economic and political life. It focuses on women's economic participation and decision making power, measuring the gender disparities in political economic spheres of activity. The GEM measures the female percentage share of parliamentary seats, of administrative and managerial positions, of professional and technical jobs as well as their percentage share of earned income in comparison with men. Unlike HDI, it measures the gender disparities from the point of view of possibilities in various fields.

The Gender Empowerment Measure in Turkmenistan is rather high in comparison with many countries of the world, falling behind only a few countries with highly developed free market economies. For example, GEM in Japan is 0.472, in China 0.483, in Estonia 0.458, in Georgia 0.350, in Turkey 0,281 (Human Development Report 1998, UNDP, New York).

The analysis of the basic indicators of the situation of women and gender differences in Turkmenistan has shown that in the country a certain progress was achieved in various areas. At the same time, for Turkmenistan is still necessary to ratify various other conventions, in particular, the conventions «About the political rights of women» (December 20, 1952), «About citizenship of the married woman» (January 29, 1957), «Declarations about eradication of violence against women» (December 20, 1993) etc., and also to introduce in the state statistical reporting a number of items on gender development.

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Appendix

Women's Status

	Life expectancy at birth (years)	Average age at the first marriage (years)	Literacy rate (for 15 to24 years of ages) %	Science and technology (% of women in this branch of industry)	Administration and management (% total)	Women employed in harmful working conditions (% total)	Parliament (% of seats occupied by women)
1989	68.4	...	99.4	...	...	...	...
1995	67.5	22.4	99.8	42.3	39.6	16.2	18.0
1996	67.7	...	...	44.7	38.4	22.2	18.0
1997	67.5	...	...	43.9	37.6	21.6	18.0
1998	67.7	22.4	...	45.0	37.0	15.8	18.0

Male/ Female Disparities (female as % of males)

	Life expectancy at birth	Population	Literacy rate (ages 9 to 49)	Average years of schooling	Manual labor *	Salary **
1989	110.7	...	99.9	81.8	...	...
1995	109.1	101.6	99.9	100.0	19.4	...
1996	109.3	101.7	...	...	28.5	...
1997	108.7	101.6	...	100.0	27.5	...
1998	108.7	101.6	...	100.0	22.0	65

* In industries, construction, transport and communication (connection)

** Non-agricultural branches (given inspections of a standard of living of the World Bank and $\text{\textcircled{O}}\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{\textcircled{e}}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{\textcircled{n}}\text{\textcircled{o}}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{\textcircled{o}}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{\textcircled{d}}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{\textcircled{a}}\text{\textcircled{i}}\text{\textcircled{n}}\text{\textcircled{c}}$)