

# WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

Arzu ÖZYOL  
BPW-TURKEY



Women make essential contributions to agriculture and rural economic activities in all developing countries.



Women have different opportunities and challenges due to the different gender roles and responsibilities of women in their daily lives.

---

Their activities typically include producing agricultural crops, tending animals, processing and preparing food, collecting fuel and water, caring for family members and maintaining their homes.



Time-use surveys across a wide range of countries estimate that women provide 85–90 percent of the time spent on household food preparation and that they are also usually responsible for child care and other household chores because of poor infrastructure and limited provision of public services.



Besides domestic activities, women are working or looking for work in formal or informal jobs and in paid or unpaid employment in agriculture. That includes self-employed women as well as women working on family.



Evidence shows, however, that female farmers are largely excluded from modern contract-farming arrangements because they lack secure control over land, family labour and other resources required to guarantee delivery of a reliable flow of produce.



Women comprise 43 percent of the agricultural labour force, on average, in developing countries; this figure ranges from around 20 percent in Latin America to 50 percent in parts of Africa and Asia, but it exceeds 60 percent in only a few countries (FAO, 2010a).



## In Turkey;



	1980	2000	2005
Agriculture	87%	75%	58.5%
Industry	5%	7%	12.9%
Services	8%	18%	28.6%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%



Critics argue that labour force statistics underestimate the contribution of women to agricultural work because women are less likely to declare themselves as employed in agriculture.



Women are more likely than men to hold low-wage, part-time, seasonal employment and they tend to be paid less even when their qualifications are higher than men's.



An estimated two thirds of poor livestock keepers, totalling approximately 400 million people, are women (Thornton *et al.*, 2002).



The influence of women is strong in the use of eggs, milk and poultry meat for home consumption and they often have control over marketing these products.



In 2008, nearly 45 million people worldwide were directly engaged, full time or part time, in the fishery primary sector and 5.4 million of them are women. This represents 12 percent of the total.



While comprehensive data are not available on a sex-disaggregated basis, case studies suggest that women may comprise up to 30 percent of the total employment in fisheries, including primary and secondary activities.



Women contribute to both the formal and informal forestry sectors in many significant ways such as agroforestry, watershed management, tree improvement, and forest protection and conservation



Although women contribute substantially to the forestry sector, their roles are not fully recognized and documented, their wages are not equal to those of men and their working conditions tend to be poor (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2009).







**Although women are as good at farming as men; They are always behind men...**

---

Women control less land than men.



Women own fewer of the working animals needed in farming.

They also frequently do not control the income from the typically small animals they manage.

---

Women farmers are less likely than men to use modern inputs such as improved seeds, fertilizers, pest control measures and mechanical tools.



They also use less credit and often do not control the credit they obtain.

---

Women have less education and less access to extension services, which make it more difficult to gain access to and use some of the other resources, such as land, credit and fertilizer.



These factors also prevent women from adopting new technologies as readily as men do.

---

Solid empirical evidence shows that the yield gap between men and women averages around 20–30 percent.



If women farmers used the same level of resources as men on the land they farm, they would achieve the same yield levels.

---

Bringing yields on the land farmed by women up to the levels achieved by men would increase agricultural output in developing countries between 2.5 and 4 percent.



Increasing production by this amount could reduce the number of undernourished people in the world in the order of 12–17 percent.

---

According to FAO's latest estimates, 925 million people are currently undernourished.



**Closing the gender gap in agricultural yields** could bring that number down by as much as 100–150 million people.

---

We –as an biggest women advocacy organisation- must promote gender equality and empower women in agriculture to reduce hunger and extreme poverty.



**Because;**



Millennium Development Goals on gender equality (MDG 3) and poverty and food security (MDG 1) are mutually reinforcing.

---



**THE PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE  
OF BPWI and UNESCO  
CENTER FOR PEACE AND  
WOMEN IN SOUTHEASTERN  
EUROPE ENCOURAGE  
WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN  
AGRICULTURAL SECTOR FOR  
TO CREATE NEW JOBS IN  
HIGH-VALUE and EXPORT-  
ORIENTED AGRO-  
INDUSTRIES...**

---



LET US COME TOGETHER  
IN ORDER TO OFFER MUCH  
BETTER OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR WOMEN THAN  
TRADITIONAL  
AGRICULTURAL WORK.

