

# Chapter 1

## A Micro Financial Female Entrepreneurship Case From Turkey: Kadama Women's Cooperative

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### ABSTRACT

*In this study, the role of women's cooperatives in women's employment was examined. In this context, Kadama Women's Cooperative, which continues its activities in Erzurum province of Turkey, was determined as the sample group of the research. The research was prepared with a qualitative method and semi-structured interviews with Kadama officials. The data were written down and analyzed by content analysis. Kadama officials were asked questions about the activity areas of the cooperative, its role in women's employment, its studies and projects for training women for employment. Afterwards, the responses received from the participants were divided into specific themes. As a result of the research, it was concluded that Kadama Women's Cooperative conducted many studies on women's employment, nearly 1000 women took courses in the cooperative, the products produced by women at their homes or in the cooperative were sold and marketed via cooperative, and social and psychological support was provided to women within the cooperative.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Economic growth, where human influence is high, is very important for countries (Arslan, 2020). The increase in women's participation in the workforce is one of the successes that caused social and economic changes by the 20th century (Schein, 2020). Although the participation of women in socio-economic life for Turkey dates back to the first years of the republic before many European countries, it is possible to say that there was a pause and a regression over time. Active participation of women in life and equal citizenship rights, which started with the right to vote and be elected, continued with women's active participation in education, employment and social life as a result of long discussions. Although there were important steps taken at that time, the fact that social perception transformations could not be achieved in the last 100 years caused women's employment in Turkey, women's economic independence, and their participation in social life to be kept in focus as a topic of discussion. The idea of sustainable development and the transformation of minds around sustainability have forced us to focus more on holistic planning, active participation in processes and equality. This paved the way for all regulations that could ensure the participation of all disadvantaged groups, especially women, in the economy and social life with equal rights in countries that adopt the idea of sustainability. Women's employment is an important factor for the sustainability of the economy and the continuity of growth (Şahin, 2022). While the female labor force increases in the developed countries depending on the level of education, this increase is slow in developing or less developed countries, but the rates are decreasing (Fallah et al., 2021).

The roles women had to obtain rarely in the early examples of socialization; and dominantly in developing and masculinizing social orders have caused their existence to be limited to household roles. These roles, which previously emerged as a division of labor within the household, spread over time to the social sphere; and it has not been possible for women to avoid taking on the maternal and recuperative household roles on their own. The placement of gender-based roles in social perceptions within the framework of the norms developed by the dominant systems has put women under the dominance of men, separating them from employment, education, art, philosophy, in other words, from all areas of social life. On the other hand, gender equality is among the main goals of sustainable development today. In addition to that, achieving economic growth is possible by ensuring gender equality in business life as well as in all areas of society (Korkmaz and Budak, 2022). The discriminatory behavior towards women in the workforce and the lack of adequate educational opportunities prevented women from turning to certain sectors and hindered growth in these sectors (Göcen, 2020).

Labor force participation in a region plays an important role for economic growth (Verdugo and Al-lègre, 2020). Particularly, the desire of developing countries to use the labor factor, which is the most important element of production, has made it necessary for women to participate in the workforce (Aksoy et al., 2019). In Türkiye, where nearly half of the population is women, women's participation in the workforce is important for development and growth (Türlüoğlu, 2018). The employment rate of women in Türkiye is lower than that of men. This situation stands as an obstacle to economic growth (Göcen, 2020). The existence of women in social life and in the economic system is not seen in the active area.

Associating all responsibilities of household duties with women, especially in traditional societies, is the most important internal obstacle to women's participation in employment by allocating additional time and energy. Similarly, the social perceptions associating women with the household and their interpretation as unpaid family workers, especially in the field of agriculture, are among the biggest external obstacles to women's participation in employment in developing and underdeveloped countries. With

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