

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICES OF THE MINISTRY OF FAMILY AND SOCIAL POLICIES IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

One of the social policy implementations in Turkey affected by the globalization process and neo-liberal politics is Social and Economic Support (SED) services. It is provided by the General Directorate of Child Services of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. SED services are provided for children who do not need institutional care as long as they are supported. SED services are directly linked to the poverty-based child protection services. The main objective of this study is to address the SED services, one of the social policy implementations for the prevention of child poverty, to present the current situation and deficiencies. In this study, data related to SED services will be discussed in terms of neo-liberal policies. In addition; the number of aid recipients within years and their share in GDP will be discussed. In conclusion, in addition to significant positive contributions, SED services appear to have significant shortcomings. In particular, the non-systematic and non-comprehensive implementations of follow-up and monitoring processes, lack of social and psychological support services are outstanding problems. These aspects are of great importance in terms of providing relief from the welfare dependency of the service. Moreover, with the influence of neo-liberalism, social welfare responsibilities of the state are transferred to other institutions (traditional charitable organizations, NGOs, voluntary organizations, etc.) to a certain extent. In addition, it is believed that the current practice centralizes the family while not considering the women's burden of care.

Keywords: Poverty, child poverty, social and economic support, neo-liberalism.

INTRODUCTION

The tradition of social assistance based mostly on religious-based philanthropy up to the twentieth century have taken on a totally different structure (Sahin, 2000: 23) after the emergence of the idea of the social state with the effect of the 1929 Economic Depression and the rise of welfare states after World War II (Esping-Andersen, 2015: 35). After 1950s, the income and expenditures of the welfare state increased. As these expenditures increased, social policy and social welfare services such as education, health, housing, social security, full employment and income distribution developed and institutionalized services started to be seen as "a right of welfare" by the citizens. As a result, citizens' expectations from the welfare state have also increased (Özdemir, 2007: 200).

The stagnation in the economy after the 1970s stagflation crisis, followed by pressures on expenditures and social policies, highlighted the idea that the welfare state failed to overcome the crisis. A new process has started with the rise of the new form of liberal policies and with the influence of globalization (Kleinman, 2015: 167-169). The effect of the conjuncture created by the dissolution of Soviet Socialist Republics and the globalized economy has led to a breakdown in welfare services in many parts of the world. This process has also affected social assistance programs that resulted serious transformations.

The impact of neo-liberal policies in Turkey have begun to appear in the 1980s. Towards the end of the 1980s, the negative effects of increased neo-liberal policy implementations were softened with the help of conservative policies. Over the past years, it has been observed that the neo-liberal and conservative modes of management have increased in effectiveness and are supported by municipalities and some NGOs.

One of the growing social policy practices in Turkey is Social and Economic Support (SED) services conducted by General Directorate of Child Services of the Ministry of Family and Social Policy. Poverty-based child protection services should be mentioned when it comes to SED services. In the scope of this study, existing child protection services in Turkey will be mentioned briefly. Later, neo-liberal policies will be addressed. Finally, the data on SED services will be discussed within the framework of neo-liberal policies and conservative theory.

Child Protection Services

Today, child protection services in Turkey can be divided as institutional care and services provided within family. In May 2014, there were a total of 11.465 children in public boarding institutions such as daily care centers children's houses and Sevgi Evleri¹ (Erdoğan, 2014: 70). There are also child care centers and day care centers, child support centers, child and youth centers as other institution-based services provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies.

¹ Sevgi Evleri, is a nursery concept developed by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies. Any Sevgi Evi is located in an apartment in the city center. The aim of Sevgi Evleri is preventing the children's social isolation by living within the society.

Historically, institutional care is very common for children who need protection. However, as a result of children's experiences of mental and psychological problems, social adjustment and personality development problems, failure to develop economic skills etc. family-focused approaches for children in need of protection have begun to emerge (Yazıcı, 2012: 503). The most emphasized approach taken by Ministry of Family and Social Policies in recent years is the approach of protecting the family union. This approach is aimed at supporting and maintaining the child in his / her family environment (Okur, Soylu, & Aslan, 2016: 7). The primary goal here is to raise the child alongside his / her own family. However, if this is not possible, the child is placed next to a relative or another family. In this context, adoption, foster family, protective and supportive measures taken under the Child Protection Law No. 5395 and SED assistance are important.

SED assistance, which is the focus of this study, is an economic aid given to families in poverty who cannot meet the basic needs of their children. With the aid it is expected that the children can be looked after within the family without taking them into institutional care. Moreover, it also includes the psycho-social support services to be provided to these families. One of the main objectives of SED services is the protection of family union. It is aimed to provide care to the child with his / her family or a close relative.

SED assistance comprises one-year or longer benefits. Families who receive SED assistance are visited on a six-month basis. This visit involves examining whether the assistance is used for the child and whether the family environment is appropriate for the child's psychosocial well-being.

The amount of SED assistance varies depending on the level of the school and whether or not he or she is attending school. When the monthly amounts of SED assistance in 2016 are examined; the amount of SED for the preschool child is 442,98 TL per month; 664,47 TL for the child attending primary school, 708,77 TL for the child attending secondary education and 797,36 TL for the child attending the higher education (ASPB, 2016: 75).

Neo-liberal policies (and the globalization process) are thought to be basic socio-political grounds, given the increasing number of SED services over the years and the prioritization of family-based services. In the next paragraphs, the concepts of neo-liberalism and conservatism will be examined in terms of the contradictions and unity they contain.

There are various perspectives on the classification of the welfare states. However, the model of Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen, 1990), which expands the triple classification of Titmuss (1965: 98-99) to include the state-market interaction, provides a basis for understanding the functioning of neoliberal and conservative policies.

When the triple model of Esping-Andersen is examined, the liberal model's attention to the market is remarkable. Despite the increasing social inequalities, the state has little responsibility except its security policies, and the state is the last to apply for social protection. The United States is the leading representative

of this model. On the other hand, conservative or continental Europe's welfare model is highly influenced by Christian Democratic doctrines, which reject the market's priority and, on the other hand, emphasize the principle of state aid and emphasize the priority of the family as the center of social welfare. There are conservative attitudes towards family and gender. The basic principles for the Scandinavian Social Welfare Model where welfare requirements are tried to be made as independent as possible from the market, are universality, social solidarity and equality between classes. There are very successful investments in preventive measures (Özdemir, 2007: 134-141).

In time, Esping-Andersen's classification has taken criticism that it does not take into account the differences between countries and is a very simple classification and new classifications have been formed. One of them is Southern Europe Welfare Regime that draws attention to the importance of conservative family institution in Spain, Greece, Italy and also Turkey (Tiyek and Yertüm, 2016: 34). Countries in the Southern European Welfare Regime are unable to provide adequate social assistance for their citizens. The social protection expenditures of these countries are lower than the countries in the Northern European Welfare Regime. In these countries, it is emphasized that social services are connected to a triple mechanism of market, state and family institutions and that these countries come up from behind the North European Welfare regime in the sense of welfare (Özdemir, 2005: 259). In these countries, social assistance is provided with a family-based approach. The state is putting the responsibility on the family institution in the areas that it cannot offer assistance; which is the main basis of conservative theory. The state which declares that it is a social state on its Constitution can neglect some of its responsibilities (Günel, 2008 :82; Tiyek and Yertüm, 2016: 36).

Defenders of neo-liberalism, which is a new form of liberalism, oppose the limitation of the market as its predecessors do. Still, they admit, unlike its predecessors, that the market may lead to some problems. However, they insist that other actors as NGOs, voluntary organizations and traditional charitable organizations, should take part in the solution of these problems and that the state should not intervene. The main purpose of restricting the role of the state is to strengthen the market against the state. Neo-liberals defend state's intervention in the system as a last resort in situations where all other structures fail; such as disasters, war, etc. The neo-liberals suggest that the market should spread to all spheres of social life as much as possible (Koçal, 2014: 239).

At this point an area emerges where neo-liberal discourse and conservative discourse are intertwined. Conservative discourse, that supports market economy, facilitates the alleviation of socio-economic problems created by neo-liberal policies through philanthropy institutions, especially family and religion-based structures.

Policies implemented in the 2000s in Turkey from an economic point of view gives priority to market economy and from a social point of view give priority to philanthropic policies. Moreover, this situation is complementary rather than contradictory (Çelik 2010: 65). At this point, the damage caused by the market

economy and neo-liberal policies is tried to be resolved with philanthropy institutions. This process leads society from a rights-based understanding to a clientelist (customer-based) understanding.

In Turkey's welfare system and social policies, it can be said that there are implementations based on conservative theory, the important part of the welfare state's requirements are shared by the family and philanthropy based religious institutions. The Conservative theory, which does not have a rights-based understanding of social assistance, promotes cooperation and solidarity among members of society and within the family. It decreases the importance attributed to the concept of social state and restricts the social rights of citizenship. In a way that coincides with the neo-liberalism approach, the individual works by thinking to get out of neediness, to shrink the state and to leave the social services field to other actors (Önür, 2009: 352-354). In an overlapping manner with the neo-liberalism, it involves thoughts that the individual must work out of 'neediness', diminish the state and leave the social services to other actors (Önür, 2009: 352-354).

Right based planning of social assistance programs, removal from arbitrariness and establishing a legal integrity is critical. In Turkey, social assistance of the NGOs and voluntary organizations are in the foreground. Meaning that, irregular, dispersed and politically active "benevolent" social policy instruments are preferred (Çelik, 2010: 75). At the same time, these practices limit collective rights, restrain organization, and show clientelist (customer-based) features.

In Turkey's population, with the influence of neo-liberal policies and the conservative theory, a serious income inequality emerged and through time it is divided into two as "philanthrope" rich and the "needy" poor. As a result of lack of welfare policies and state intervention, people in poverty may seek care from institutions such as neighbors, family and religious associations in cases of illness, unemployment and disability, in accordance with conservative theory (Buğra, 1999: 23). This relationship results in the hierarchy among the parties and the evolving the people in poverty as cheap labor for the so-called philanthropist wealthy people.

The Gini coefficient is one of several criteria developed to measure equality or inequality in income distribution (Kuştepe & Halaç, 2004). As the Gini coefficient, which is a value between zero and one, gets closer to one, it is regarded as a sign of increased income gap.

Table 1. Gini Coefficients of Countries Based on Esping-Andersen's Classification

	Country	Gini Coefficient
Liberal	United States of America	0.394
	United Kingdom	0.358
Conservative or Continental Europe	France	0.294
	Germany	0.292
Scandinavian	Norway	0.252
	Denmark	0.254
	Turkey	0.393

(OECD, 2016)

Legislative regulations and government programs that directly or indirectly involve the privatization and marketization of public services, the weakening of unions and the protection of the employer's against employees (precarious employment) in Turkey indicates the effect of neoliberalism. At this point, the income gap between the poor and the wealth, and the low share of low-income groups in economic growth, are other significant indicators of the effectiveness of neoliberal policies. In this context, Gini coefficients of some countries are given in Table 1 under the classification of Esping Andersen. In terms of the Gini coefficient, Turkey has similar values with countries in the liberal model. Moreover, Gini coefficient is seen to be quite high.

An analysis of the value of 2016 in Table 1 in Turkey, the income distribution equality is almost same with the United States, where the most brutal form of capitalism exists and in many areas the state is detached. It is thought that the reason is increasing impact of conservative theory and neo-liberalism thought on Turkey's social policies. The development of Turkey's Gini Coefficient in the process is 0,405 (Turkstat, 2018). The increase in income inequality shows that the neo-liberal influence on the social policies of Turkey continues to rise.

It should be noted that, the neo-liberal policies in developing countries such as Turkey entail serious socio-economic problems in the long term (Bauman, 2016; Chomsky, 2014). Already, the contraction in the financial market after 2008 has negatively affected the borrowing and export capacity of the country and the socio-economic problems arising from neo-liberal policies have begun to manifest themselves (Abacı, 2012: 199-200).

Before beginning a detailed review of the SED assistance, it will be helpful to examine a set of basic parameters such as child population and poverty rate in Turkey. The table is useful for illustrating the population receiving SED assistance and the ratio of this group in the general population.

Table 2. Population and Ratio of Children by Years in Turkey

Year	Population	0-17 Age	Percentage (%)
1990	56 473 035	23 577 783	41,8
2000	64 729 501	22 800 988	35,2
2007	70 586 256	22 298 628	31,6
2010	73 722 988	22 699 503	30,8
2015	78 741 053	22 870 683	29,0
2016	79 814 871	22 891 140	28,7
2017	80 810 525	22 883 288	28,3

(TURKSTAT, 2018)

Table 2 shows the distribution of the total population and the child population over the years in Turkey. This table shows that the children population to general population ratio has decreased over the years. Nevertheless, the ratio of the children population to the general population is still high at around 28% in 2017 (TURKSTAT, 2018). Despite the increase in the number of population, there is no upward in the children population. At this point, it is understood that the decline in birth rates, the extension of human life through

advances in medicine and technology, and the increase in the elderly population have reduced the ratio of the child population to general population.

Although Turkey's child population rate is in declining trend, it can be said that it has a higher rate when compared with Europe. Child population rate is around 28% in Turkey and clearly, it is nine points higher than in 28 EU countries' average, around 19% (Eurostat, 2018). Hence, it is necessary for Turkey to make more regulations in its' social policies which are directly related to children's education and health, and child poverty.

The seriousness of the situation can be understood clearly comparing the children under the risk of poverty rate in Europe is 26.4% in 2015 (Eurostat, 2016), and the rate of children in poverty in Turkey is 46%. The scope and quality of social policies towards children, who are more vulnerable than adults, should be expanded. It should not be forgotten that childhood poverty is likely to continue in later life. The lack of access to education and the lack of adequate access to health services in childhood lead to greater social service costs for the state in the future.

Table 3. Data of Population, Poverty and Child Poverty in 2017

	Number (Thousand Peo.)	% (Ratio)	% (Child Poverty Rate in Poor Population)
Total Population	79 814		
Individual in poverty	16 328	20,1	
Children in poverty	7 393	9,3	46,2

(TURKSTAT, 2017)

*Data of Table 3 is compiled from TURKSTAT 2018 Population Statistics and TURKSTAT 2016 Child Statistics Reports.

In Table 3 we see that 20.1% of the population is made up by poor individuals and 46.2% of the poor individuals are children. Considering the percentage of the number of poor children in total number of children, it can be seen the unpleasant fact that one out of every three children is poor in Turkey. Another data that draws attention from the data of Table 3 is the fact that 9.3% of the population is poor children. However, high rate of child poverty is not specific to the only Turkey. According to UNICEF (2014: 6), 47% of the world's poor individuals are under the age of 18. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in countries with an improved social welfare system, social policies are more successful in combating child poverty.

Table 4. Relative Child Poverty Rates in the World

	Countries	Relative Child Poverty Rates
Liberal	United States of America	23,1
	United Kingdom	12,1
Conservative or Continental Europe	France	8,8
	Germany	8,5
	Norway	6,1
Scandinavian	Denmark	6,5
	Turkey	32,5

(TURKSTAT, 2014; UNICEF, 2012 :3)

* Relative Child Poverty Rates of the countries belong to 2009. Turkey's rate belongs to 2013. The Relative Child Poverty Rate presents the share of the number of poor children in the total number of children.

In Table 4, relative child poverty rates of some countries are presented using the classification of Esping-Andersen. Accordingly, the relative child poverty rates in countries with liberal welfare model, seems to be quite high. Nevertheless, the child poverty rate in Turkey is even higher than it is in these countries. On the contrary, it is seen that this ratio is much lower in countries with Continental Europe and Scandinavian welfare model. In countries with a Scandinavian or Continental Europe welfare regime, the long duration of maternity leave, in cash assistance from birth for children, and free or low-cost nursery facilities are among the reasons for the reduction of child poverty.

Table 5. Number of Children in Poverty and Poverty Rates by Sex and Age Group

	2007		2009		2011		2013	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sex								
Woman	3 618	33,6	3 798	35,7	3 694	33,2	3 680	33,1
Man	3 635	32,0	3 648	32,9	3 653	31,4	3 713	32,0
Age								
0-5	2 290	32,8	2 179	33,4	2 272	30,6	2 300	30,1
6-13	3 448	33,6	3 534	35,1	3 428	33,4	3 391	33,9
14-17	1 515	31,1	1 732	33,8	1 648	32,4	1 703	33,6

N: The number of children in poverty (Thousand People)

#: Ratio of Poverty

(TURKSTAT, 2014 :102)

Table 5 examined the distribution of the child poverty rate in Turkey by age and sex. According to the table 5, it is seen that child poverty is spreading to all layers of the child population regardless of age and sex. Girls did not face the fact of women being in poverty more than men because of their age. However, in the six-year period, which started in 2007 and ended in 2013, there was no decrease in the rate of children in poverty. In addition, the rate of children in poverty in the 14-17 age range increased despite the decrease in the rate of children in poverty between 0-5. This data means that even if children are not born as poor; they are becoming poor in their life cycle. This clearly demonstrates that the social policies that combat poverty and especially child poverty, are not successful.

SED assistance, a tool developed by the state to combat child poverty, is a form of economic support for children who are unable to access education, health services and socio-cultural activities due to economic deprivation. With this assistance, it is also aimed to prevent children from leaving their families and to have their responsibilities of care transferred to the state (ÇHGM, 2017: 5).

Table 6. Distribution of Recipients of SED Assistance According to Years

	The Number of the Supported Children Who Returned to Families While Under Protection	Number of Children Supported within the Family Without Taking Under Protection	Other SED Assistance (Marriage Aid, etc.)	Total
2003	1347		11906	13253
2004	1886		19931	21817
2005	3617	5995	10123	19735
2006	4640	10225	12454	27319
2007	5174	14632	8875	28681
2008	5216	18081	7612	30909
2009	5133	22225	8398	35756
2010	5267	26667	3364	35298
2011	5361	34982	1435	41778
2012	4825	43482	1154	49461
2013	4861	55087	2308	62256
2014	4131	73164	3080	80375
2015	3474	93256	4831	101561
2016	2331	111880	23204	137415

(Okur et al., 2016,: 12-14, ASPB, 2017: 75)

Table 6 deals with the SED assistance provided to families who are in need of economic assistance. It is seen that the number of people that take SED assistance has increased year by year. While 13,253 children were provided with SED assistance in 2003, it is seen that 137,415 children were given assistance in 2016. At the same time, in 2003, a significant part of the assistance seems to include marriage aids and temporary benefits. It seems that, over the past few years, a considerable part of the SED assistance has been given to children who are supported within the family, without protection order. It is seen that 111,880 of the aids granted in 2016 are for children who are supported in the family without protection order. That is to say, children who will need protection are supported economically within their families in order not to take them under protection.

Although there is no significant change in the children population between 2000 and 2017 (see Table 2), Table 6 shows that the number of children supported by SED assistance is almost ten times higher in 2015. "The Number of the Supported Children Who Returned to Families While under Protection" has a significant share in this increase. It is observed that in 2005, there was a serious rise in the number of the supported children who returned to families while under protection. It is thought that the "Return to Families" campaign, which started in 2005, is effective on this issue. Okur et al. (2016: 11-12) are remarking that 11,114 children have just returned to the family by March 2016 under this program.

Table 7. The Relationship Between GDP, Total Social Protection Expenditures and Family / Child Social Protection Expenditures

	GDP (Million TL)	Total Social Protection Expenditures (Million TL)	Family / Child Social Protection Expenditures (Million TL)	Proportion of Social Protection Expenditures to GDP	Proportion of Fam. and Child. to Total Social Prot. Expend.
2003	454 781	48 449	1 056	0.107	0.0218
2004	559 033	61 068	1 343	0.109	0.0220
2005	648 932	71 271	1 790	0.110	0.0251
2006	758 391	85 039	1 956	0.112	0.0230
2007	843 178	98 156	2 803	0.116	0.0285
2008	950 534	113 511	2 946	0.119	0.0260
2009	952 559	134 564	3 418	0.141	0.0254
2010	1 098 799	148 679	3 681	0.135	0.0248
2011	1 297 713	171 882	4 599	0.133	0.0268
2012	1 416 798	195 419	5 669	0.138	0.0290
2013	1 567 289	220 531	7 000	0.141	0.0317
2014	1 748 168	249 358	7 580	0.142	0.0311
2015	1 953 561	279 734	8 901	0.143	0.0318
2016	2 205 570	334 751	10 559	0.151	0.0315

The data are organized by using TURKSTAT statistics and ASPB- GDCS statistics.

Table 7 shows the relationship between GDP, total social protection expenditures and social protection expenditures made for family and the children and the changes with respect to years. First, between the years 2003-2016 GDP has increased by about 4.8 times in Turkey. On the other side, total social protection expenditures have increased by about 6.9 times. Moreover, social protection expenditures towards the family/child seem to be increased by 10 times.

Regarding the ratio of total social protection expenditures to GDP, it is seen that there is a regular but small growth between 2003 and 2008. A jump of 0.022 point was realized in 2009 due to the impact of the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. The important point here is that GDP does not increase this year. Nevertheless, the relatively rapid rise in social protection expenditures in the same year is thought to be linked to measures to mitigate the effects of the crisis. Still, there is a steady increase in the share of social protection expenditures in GDP between 2003 and 2016. Moreover, it is seen that the share of social protection expenditures towards family/child in total social protection expenditures has increased steadily except for the period of 2008-2009.

Table 8. The Relationship between GDP and SED Assistance Source by Years

	GDP (000 000)	Spending for SED Services	Spending for SED Services / GDP
2003	454 781	8 403 428	0,000019
2004	559 033	10 348 186	0,000019
2005	648 932	15 236 957	0,000024
2006	758 391	36 739 093	0,000048
2007	843 178	47 756 686	0,000057
2008	950 534	59 269 506	0,000062
2009	952 559	78 421 542	0,000082
2010	1 098 799	94 804 977	0,000086
2011	1 297 713	140 736 482	0,000109
2012	1 416 798	199 161 500	0,000141
2013	1 567 289	263 381 284	0,000168
2014	1 748 168	351 000 000	0,000201
2015	1 953 561	476 561 757	0,000243
2016	2 205 570	623 714 806	0,000282

The data are organized by using TURKSTAT statistics and ASPB- GDCS statistics.

Finally, in Table 8, the relationship between GDP and the spending for SED services by years are examined. It is seen here that the spending for SED services has increased regularly. Between 2003 and 2016, the spending for SED services increased 74.2 times while the share of this spending in GDP increased 14.8 times which shows the importance given to SED assistance.

There are several reasons for the increase of SED assistance in the process. The positive one is that the state allocates more resources to this area in accordance with the obligation of being a welfare state. However, there are different realities on the other side of the coin. The first of these is the increasing number of children with the need for SED assistance year by year (see Table 6), indicates that the social policies that the state has implemented fail to combat poverty. In addition, it is seen that the state does not want to take the responsibility of care of more and more children and leave them with their families with limited support in line with conservative theory and neo-liberal policies. For the child in poverty, the state suffices to offer a limited support up to 700 Turkish Liras, which is much lower than the monthly sum for a child in social care, pushing the child's family into informal mechanisms based on charity to address their material poverty.

DISCUSSION

Today, it can be seen that the proportion of the child population in Turkey has decreased gradually. However, children still account for a significant portion (28%) of the population. On the other hand, in Turkey, one in the third of children lives in poverty. Relative child poverty rate in Turkey is even higher than the United States, which has the worst record among the welfare states. Therefore, it is substantial to have systematic and permanent precautions to prevent child poverty. In this regard, one of the ASPB's precautions is Social and Economic Support Services. The number of children benefiting from this service in the period of 2003-2016, has increased by about ten times. In addition, the share of social protection spending towards the family and the

child and the share of the resource allocated for SED in GDP also increases significantly over the years. Nevertheless, the functionality, adequacy and permanence of these applications are controversial.

Given the significant increase in the number of children receiving SED services, it is unrealistic to think that this increase is a coincidence. It is worth mentioning two points at this aspect. First, although there is a clear increase in the number of children benefiting from the service, it can be seen that the service actually reaches very few when the number of poor children is taken into consideration. For example; until the end of 2013, a total of 80.845 children taken under the institutional care; receive SED assistance; adopted; taken under foster care, get service in private or public day care centers. However, in the same year, the number of children in poverty in Turkey is 7.393.000. In a sense, only about one out of every 92 poor children can be reached out. A second issue is the reduction of public spending in relation to SED services in connection with the "Return to Families" project. By this way, the number of children under institutional care is decreasing. Thus, the costs arising from the SED payments are shifting to a lower amount than the costs of institutional care.

At this point it is important not to avoid the positive effects of the SED assistance. With the help of SED, the children are supported within the family or the children who are in institutional care return to their families. First of all, it should be noted that: "The right to grow and develop within the family" is clearly stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and is supported by other international legislation. Moreover, many researches also emphasize the importance of the completion of the developmental stages of the child within the family (Şimşek, Erol, Öztop & Özer Özcan, 2008: 245, Vorria et al., 2006: 1252) For example; the results of a decrease in dropouts, an increase in the desire to continue in higher education, making a positive effect on benefiting the health services and the continuation of the treatment process. And, the main effect here is "the support provided to primary and secondary school students who cannot continue their education due to financial problems". Furthermore, 97.2% of children who receive SED assistance do not want to return to institutional care (Erdogan, 2014: 170-171). In other words, it is obvious that the SED assistance has a significant benefit in terms of health and education. It may be argued that the SED assistance is generally a supportive aspect on education, and that they are important for benefiting from health services. Nevertheless, it is thought that the assistance cannot be treated as a comprehensive welfare service for various reasons.

When considered critically, two fundamental contexts are remarkable in relation to SED assistance: (1) policies based on conservative theory and prioritizing the family and (2) neo-liberal policies advocating the reduction of the responsibility of the state. Within the framework of neo-liberal theory, it is foreseen that state's responsibility will be transferred to a considerably traditional charitable organizations, NGOs and other voluntary organizations. In this context, the state is not expected to make connections with people in need, until the last point. The marks of such policies can also be seen in the environment of SED assistance and the Return to Families project. At this point, there is a risk that individuals who live under the poverty line, but who do not or cannot make direct connections with institutions, can be ignored in the child protection system. However, public responsibility is operating despite the support of the traditional charitable organization, that is

family and close encounters, children under the starvation limit. Thus, the responsibility of child welfare of the state becomes economically less costly (!), reaching minimum number of individuals, in case of the welfare policies. The gap created by the reduction of the responsibility of the state is covered by policies that prioritize family responsibility. Undoubtedly, SED assistance, approximately 700 Turkish Liras per month for the education of children without regular income is not spent solely for the school of the child, but also to be used for the basic needs of other individuals and the household. Through this assistance, the family has a better quality of life.

The dysfunction of the follow-up and monitoring processes of the children in economic deprivation and the state's transferring the responsibility of care to the family, brings out this question: "Is it prior that 'reducing costs' rather than the needs of the child?" The SED assistance for the child is very low compared to the cost of the institutional care. At this stage where liberal policies and conservative policies feed each other, there is a cost advantage arising from the transfer of care responsibility, and by doing that, prioritizing the family. It is understood that the falling costs have not been used for this purpose, although it may allow more social workers to be employed and enable follow-up of the service users. In this sense, it also appears in the reports of the Ministry (Erdoğan, 2014: 171) admitting that there is not enough personnel for follow-up and monitoring processes and that the follow-up has not been done sufficiently.

Finally, it should be noted that in the patriarchal structure, the burden of caring for the family, especially the child, is attributed to the woman (Şaşman Kaylı, 2016: 35; Şeker and Uçan, 2016: 206-208). The burden of care placed on the female in the context of gender roles is supported by conservative theory. According to the conservative theory, the family must be together; the man is the bread-winner, while the woman works as an unpaid family worker and leave the labor market to men. SED assistance seems as one of the policy implementations that bring this burden on the forefront, without considering the burden of care of the woman. This is because there are problems in terms of access to the additional services needed (e.g. kindergarten, etc.) when the child is given to the family. In this environment, it is also difficult for women, especially women in poverty, to participate in employment when there is an individual who needs care in the household. The lack of additional services that would facilitate women's participation in employment can make women dependent on working men. This may create an occasion that can lead to the forms of exploitation of women and children for economic concerns. In the report of Erdogan (2014: 169), it was determined that in 2/3 of the children who received SED assistance, 1/4 of them live with their parents and followed by the grandmothers. Taking these ratios into consideration, the risk of increasing dependence on the assistance in single-parent families, which there is no working partner must be considered. Also, the risk of emotional or economic abuse of the child should be considered. As stated in Article 1 of the Regulation on Social and Economic Support Services, published in the Official Gazette of Turkey on March 3, 2015, the assistance is supplied to families in order to provide care of children and younglings who have difficulty in meeting their own basic needs. However, it should not be surprising that the assistance is spent on the basic needs of the family rather than on care and education.

CONCLUSION

While the share of the child population in general population decreases by the day in Turkey, children still constitute a significant portion of the population. On the other hand, in Turkey, where one out of every three children is living in poverty and in this case, in terms of age and gender, appears to be spreading to all levels of the child population. It appears that existing child protection services cover only a very small proportion of the poor children in the country.

When the data on SED assistance, one of the precautions for child poverty, are examined, it is seen that the number of children who receive this assistance in the 2000s has increased considerably. In addition to that, the share of this assistance in GDP has also increased about 10 times. It is clear that these benefits are particularly important for children's access to education and health services. However, it appears that some of them have important deficiencies. Especially the follow-up and monitoring processes and the social and psychological support services are not implemented systematically and comprehensively.

The impact of neo-liberal policies and conservative approaches to SED assistance is evident. In the context of these policies, there are serious risks in delegating state's responsibility to the families of NGOs and philanthropists. In this context, failure to support family-oriented policies with additional services such as day care, creates a pressure especially on women on the burden of care and is an obstacle to the participation to the employment of individuals. Such policies brings the risk of benefit dependence unless supported with measures as counseling, education and etc. It is important to plan the follow-up and monitoring processes in a systematic manner to increase the effectiveness of the SED assistance, also supporting with additional services such as day care and prioritizing economic independence of the individuals.

AİLE VE SOSYAL POLİTİKALAR BAKANLIĞI SOSYAL VE EKONOMİK DESTEK HİZMETLERİNİN ANALİZİ

TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

GİRİŞ

Yirminci yüzyıla kadar daha çok dini temelli hayırseverlik duygularından temellenen sosyal yardım düşüncesi (Şahin, 2000), 1929 Ekonomik Buhranı sonrası sosyal devlet fikrinin ortaya çıkması ve II. Dünya Savaşı sonrasında refah devletlerinin güçlenmesiyle bambaşka bir düzleme yerleşmiştir (Esping-Andersen, 2015: 35). Bu dönemde refah devletinin gelir ve harcamaları artmış, bu harcamalar arttıkça eğitim, sağlık, konut, sosyal güvenlik, tam istihdam, gelir dağılımı gibi sosyal politika ve sosyal refah hizmetleri gelişmiş, kurumsallaşan bu hizmetler vatandaşlar tarafından “bir refah hakkı” olarak görülmeye başlanmış ve vatandaşların devletten beklentileri de artmıştır (Özdemir, 2007: 200).

1970’lerin stagflasyon krizi sonrasında ekonomide yaşanan durgunluk ve bunu takiben harcamalar ve sosyal politikalar ile ilgili baskılar, refah devletinin krizi atlatma konusunda başarısız olduğu fikrini ön plana çıkarmıştır. Liberal politikaların yeni biçimiyle ön plana çıkması ve küreselleşmenin de etkisiyle yeni bir sürece girilmiştir (Kleinman, 2015: 167-169). Bu ortam sosyal yardımları da etkilemiş ve bu alanda da ciddi dönüşümler gerçekleşmiştir.

Türkiye’de çocuk alanında gelişen sosyal politika uygulamalarından biri de Aile ve Sosyal Politikalar Bakanlığı Çocuk Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü tarafından verilen Sosyal ve Ekonomik Destek (SED) hizmetleridir. Bu çalışma kapsamında da 2000’li yıllarda yapılan SED yardımları; yıllara göre yardım alan kişi sayıları, yardım miktarları ve GSYİH içindeki payları açısından ele alınacaktır.

Çocuklara Yönelik Hizmetler

Bu çalışmanın odağını oluşturan SED hizmetleri; esasında çocuklarının temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayamayacak düzeyde yoksulluk içerisinde olan ailelere, çocuklarının kurum bakımına alınmadan aile içerisinde bakılabilmesi amacıyla verilen ekonomik yardımlardır. Bununla birlikte, bu ailelere yapılacak olan psiko-sosyal destek hizmetlerini de içermektedir. SED hizmetlerinde temel hedeflerden bir tanesi de aile birliğinin korunmasıdır. Yapılan destek ile çocuğun, ailesinin ya da bir yakınının yanında bakımının sağlanması amaçlanmaktadır.

SED hizmetlerinin 2000’li yıllarda artış göstermesi ve aile temelli hizmetlere öncelik verilmesi dikkate alındığında muhafazakâr teori ve neo-liberal politikaların (ve bu politikaların ön plana çıkması sürecinde küreselleşme) iki temel sosyo-politik gerekçe olduğu düşünülmektedir. Bir sonraki bölümde neo-liberalizm ve muhafazakârlık kavramları, içerdikleri çelişkiler ve birliktelikleri açısından ele alınacaktır.

Liberalizmin yeni biçimi olan neo-liberalizmin savunucuları her ne kadar öncülleri gibi piyasanın sınırlanmasına karşı çıksalar da, öncüllerinden farklı olarak piyasanın bazı sorunlara yol açabileceğini kabul ederler. Ancak bu sorunların çözümü adına STK'lar, gönüllü kuruluşlar ve geleneksel hayırseverlik kurumu gibi diğer aktörlerin rol alması gerektiği ve devletin müdahale etmemesi konusunda ısrarcıdır. Neo-liberaller açısından devletin rolünün sınırlanmasındaki temel amaç, devlet karşısında piyasanın güçlendirilmesidir. Neo-liberaller, devletin afet, savaş vb. durumlarda, yani diğer bütün yapıların başarısız olduğu süreçlerde son çare olarak sisteme müdahalesini savunurlar.

Türkiye'de kamu hizmetlerinin özelleştirilmesi ve piyasalaştırılması, sendikaların zayıflatılması ve işverenin çalışanlarına karşı korunmasını (bireysel iş ilişkilerinin güvencesizleştirilmesi) doğrudan ya da dolaylı olarak içeren yasal düzenlemeler ve hükümet programları geçmişten günümüze dikkat çekmektedir. Sonuç olarak, neo-liberal politikaların Türkiye gibi gelişmekte olan ülkelerde uzun vadede ciddi sosyo-ekonomik sorunları beraberinde getirdiğini belirtmek gerekir (Bauman, 2016; Chomsky, 2014). Zaten, 2008 sonrasında yaşanan finans piyasasında daralma ülkede borçlanma ve ihracat kapasitesini olumsuz etkilemiş ve neo-liberal politikaların ortaya çıkardığı sosyo-ekonomik sorunlar kendini göstermeye başlamıştır (Abacı, 2012: 199-200).

TÜİK (2014) Çocuk İstatistiklerine göre nüfusunun %20,1'ini yoksul bireylerin oluşturduğunu ve yoksul bireylerin ise %46,2'sinin çocuklardan oluştuğunu söylenebilir. Söz konusu istatistikler incelendiğinde Türkiye'de her üç çocuktan birinin yoksul olduğu gerçeği yüzümüze çarpmaktadır. Ayrıca yine aynı istatistiklere göre toplumun %9,3'ünü yoksul çocuklar oluşturmaktadır. Türkiye'de çocuk yoksulluğu oranları liberal refah modelindeki ülkelere bile çok daha yüksektir (TÜİK, 2014; UNICEF, 2012).

Okur ve diğerlerine (2016: 12-14) göre SED yardımı alan kişi sayısının yıldan yıla artmaktadır. 2003 yılında 13 bin 253 çocuk için SED yardımı verilmekte iken, 2015 yılına gelindiğinde bu sayı yaklaşık sekiz kat artarak 101 bin 561'e ulaşmıştır. 2015 yılında koruma kararı alınmadan aile yanında desteklenen 93 bin 256 çocuğa SED yardımı verilmiştir.

Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu ve ASPB'ye bağlı Çocuk Hizmetleri Genel Müdürlüğü'nün verileri incelendiğinde ilk olarak, 2003-2016 yılları arasında Türkiye'de GSYH'nin yaklaşık 4,8 kat, toplam sosyal koruma harcamalarının yaklaşık 6,9 kat, aile-çocuğa yönelik sosyal koruma harcamalarının ise 10 kat arttığı ve SED Hizmetlerine ayrılan kaynağın düzenli bir biçimde yükseldiği görülmektedir. 2003 yılı ile 2014 yılı arasında SED hizmetlerine ayrılan kaynak 74,2 kat artmış, bu kaynağın GSYH içindeki payı ise 14,8 kat artmıştır. Yine de bu uygulamaların işlevselliği, yeterliliği ve kalıcılığı tartışmalı durumdadır.

TARTIŞMA

Günümüzde, Türkiye'de çocuk nüfusu oranının günden güne azaldığı görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, halen nüfusun %29'u gibi önemli bir bölümünü çocuklar oluşturmaktadır. Öbür taraftan, Türkiye'de yaşayan çocukların üçte birinin ise yoksulluk içinde yaşadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Türkiye'de göreceli çocuk yoksulluğu oranı,

refah devletleri arasında en kötü sicile sahip olan ABD'nin bile çok üzerindedir. Dolayısıyla, çocuk yoksulluğuna yönelik sistematik ve kalıcı önlemlerin alınması büyük önem taşımaktadır.

SED hizmeti alan çocuk sayısındaki belirgin artış dikkate alındığında bu artışın bir rastlantı olduğunu düşünmek gerçekçi olmayacaktır. Bu noktada iki hususa değinmekte fayda görülmektedir. Birincisi, söz konusu hizmetten faydalanan çocuk sayısında belirgin bir artış yaşansa da, yoksul çocuk sayısı dikkate alındığında hizmetin aslında çok az kişiye ulaşabildiği görülmektedir. Örneğin; 2013 yılı sonuna kadar toplam kurum bakımı altında olan, SED yardımı alan, evlat edindirilen, koruyucu aile yanında bakımı sağlanan, özel kreş ve bakım evlerinde ücretsiz bakılan çocukların toplamı 80 bin 845'tir. Bununla birlikte aynı yılda Türkiye'de yoksul çocuk sayısı 7 milyon 393 bindir. Yani, yaklaşık her 92 yoksul çocuktan sadece birine ulaşmaktadır. İkinci bir konu ise, "Aileye Dönüş" projesi ile de bağlantılı olarak SED hizmetleri ile bir açıdan kamu harcamalarının azalması söz konusudur. Çünkü bu yolla kurum bakımı altındaki çocuk sayısı azalmakta, dolayısıyla maliyetler de yerini daha düşük miktardaki SED ödemelerine bırakmaktadır.

Bu noktada SED yardımlarının önemli görülen olumlu etkilerinin dikkatten kaçmaması önemlidir. SED yardımları ile çocukların aile yanında desteklenmesi veya korunma altındaki çocukların aileye dönüşü sağlanmaktadır. Öncelikle şunu belirtmek gerekir ki; "aile yanında büyüme ve gelişme hakkı" Çocuk Hakları Sözleşmesi'nde açıkça ifade edilmekte ve diğer uluslararası mevzuat ile de desteklenmektedir. Dahası, birçok araştırma da çocuğun gelişim evrelerinin aile yanında tamamlanmasının önemine değinmektedir (Şimşek, Erol, Öztıp & Özer Özcan, 2008: 245; Vorria ve diğ., 2006: 1252). Örneğin; SED sonrasında okul terki davranışının azaldığı, bir üst öğrenime devam etme isteğinin artış gösterdiği, çocukların sağlık hizmetinden faydalanması ve tedavi sürecine devamı üzerinde olumlu etki yarattığı, en büyük etkinin ise "maddi sorunlar yüzünden eğitimi devam edemeyen ilköğretim ve orta öğretimdeki öğrencilere sağlanan destekler" konusunda olduğu görülmektedir. Dahası, SED alan çocukların %97,2'sinin yeniden kuruluş bakımına dönmeği istemediği de görülmektedir (Erdoğan, 2014: 170-171). Yani iki temel konu olan sağlık ve eğitim açısından SED yardımlarının önemli bir fayda sağladığı açıktır. Bu yardımların genel anlamda eğitimi destekleyici bir yönü olduğu, sağlık hizmetlerinden faydalanma konusunda önemli olduğu söylenebilmektedir. Yine de yardımların çeşitli sebeplerle kapsamlı bir refah hizmeti olarak ele alınamayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Eleştirel bir gözle ele alındığında iki temel bağlam SED yardımları ile bağlantılı olarak dikkat çekicidir: (1) muhafazakar kuramı temel alan, aileyi önceleyen politikalar ve (2) devletin sorumluluğunun azaltılmasını öngören, piyasayı önceleyen neo-liberal politikalar. Neo-Liberal teori çerçevesinde devlet sorumluluğunun önemli ölçüde geleneksel hayırseverlik kurumuna, STK'lara ve diğer gönüllü kuruluşlara devredilmesi öngörülür. Bu bağlamda devletin son ana kadar ihtiyaç sahipleriyle bağ kurması beklenmez. SED yardımları ve Aileye Dönüş projesi bağlamında da böylesi politikaların izlerine rastlanabilir. Bu noktada, yoksulluk sınırının altında yaşamasına rağmen kurumlarla doğrudan bağ kurmayan ya da kuramayan bireylerin çocuk koruma sistemi içinde görmezden gelinebilmesi riski söz konusudur. Ancak geleneksel hayırseverlik kurumunun yani temelde ailenin ve yakın çevrenin desteğine rağmen açlık sınırının altında kalan çocuklar için kamu sorumluluğu

işlemektedir. Böylece devletin çocuk refahı sorumluluğu iktisadi açıdan daha az maliyetli (!) hale gelmekte, asgari düzeyde ve asgari sayıda bireye refah politikaları çerçevesinde ulaşmaktadır. Devletin sorumluluğunun azaltılmasının yarattığı boşluk ise aile sorumluluğunu önceleyen politikalar aracılığıyla kapatılmaktadır.

Ekonomik yoksunluk içerisindeki çocuğun takip ve izleme süreçlerinin işlememesi ve devletin bakım sorumluluğunu aileye devretmesi; “çocuğun gereksinimlerinden ziyade “maliyetlerin azaltılmasının” mı öncelikli” olduğu sorusunu gündeme getirmektedir. Çocuk için verilen SED yardımı kurum bakım maliyetine göre oldukça düşüktür. Liberal politikalarla muhafazakâr politikaların birbirini beslediği bu aşamada bir yandan aile ön plana çıkarılarak bakım sorumluluğu devredilirken, öbür taraftan bakım sorumluluğunun devrinden kaynaklanan bir maliyet avantajı ortaya çıkmaktadır. Düşen maliyetler daha çok uzman istihdam edilmesine ve bu sayede müracaatçıların yerinden takibinin mümkün kılınmasına olanak sağlayabilecekken, söz konusu kaynağın bu amaçla kullanılmadığı anlaşılmaktadır. Bu anlamda takip ve izleme süreçleri için yeterli personelin bulunmadığı, takibin yeterince yapılamadığını itiraf eden bakanlık raporlarında (Erdoğan, 2014: 171) da kendini göstermektedir.

Son olarak şunu belirtmek gerekir ki ataerkil yapıda başta çocuk olmak üzere ailenin bakım sorumluluğu kadına yüklenmiştir (Şaşman Kaylı, 2016: 35). Toplumsal cinsiyet rolleri çerçevesinde kadına yüklenen bakım sorumluluğu muhafazakâr kuram tarafından desteklenmektedir. SED yardımları da kadının bakım yükünü dikkate almaksızın, bu yükü ön plana çıkaran politika uygulamalarından biridir. Çünkü çocuğun aileye verilmesi ile birlikte ihtiyaç duyulan ek hizmetlere (ör: kreş vb.) erişim açısından sorunlar yaşanmaktadır. Bu ortamda, kadının, özellikle de yoksul kadınların, hanede bakıma gereksinim duyan bir birey varken istihdama katılımı da zorlaşmaktadır. Kadının istihdama katılımını kolaylaştıracak ek hizmetlere yer verilmemesi ise bu bireyleri çalışan erkeğe bağımlı hale getirebilmektedir. Bu durum ise ekonomik kaygılar dolayısıyla kadının ve çocuğun çeşitli biçimlerdeki istismara boyun eğmesine sebep olabilecek bir zemin oluşturabilmektedir. Erdoğan (2014: 169)’ın raporunda SED yardımı alan çocukların 2/3’ünün annesi, 1/4’ünün anne ve babasıyla yaşadığı, bunun dışında en çok birlikte yaşanan aile yakınının anneanne olduğu tespit edilmiştir. Bu oranlar dikkate alındığında özellikle çalışan bir eşin olmadığı tek ebeveynli ailelerde yardıma olan bağımlılığı artırma riski dikkate alınmalıdır. Ayrıca, çocuğun duygusal veya ekonomik olarak istismarı riski de dikkate alınmalıdır. 3 Mart 2015 tarihli Resmi Gazete’de yayınlanan Sosyal ve Ekonomik Destek Hizmetleri Hakkında Yönetmelik’in 1. Maddesi’nde de belirtildiği üzere yoksulluk içinde olup, temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamakta güçlük geçen çocuk ve gençlerin bakımı amacıyla verilen ve aslında bunun için bile yetersiz olan yardım miktarının, çocuğun bakımı ve eğitimden ziyade evin temel ihtiyaçları için harcanması şaşırtıcı olmamalıdır.

SONUÇ

Mevcut çocuk koruma hizmetlerinin ise ülkedeki yoksul çocuk nüfusunun yalnızca çok küçük bir bölümünü kapsadığı görülmektedir. Çocuk yoksulluğuna yönelik önlemlerden biri olan SED yardımlarına ilişkin veriler incelendiğinde 2000’li yıllar içinde yardımın ulaştığı çocuk sayısının ciddi artış gösterdiği görülmektedir. Bununla birlikte, bu yardımların GSYH içindeki payı da yaklaşık 10 kat artmış durumdadır. Söz konusu yardımların başta

çocukların eğitim ve sağlık hizmetlerine erişimi olmak üzere önemli katkıları olduğu açıktır. Bununla birlikte, kimi yönleriyle önemli eksiklikler içerdiği görülmektedir. Özellikle takip ve izleme süreçleri ile sosyal ve psikolojik destek hizmetlerinin sistemli ve kapsamlı bir biçimde uygulanmaması önemli riskleri beraberinde getirmektedir.

SED yardımlarıyla bağlantılı olarak neo-liberal politikaların ve muhafazakâr yaklaşımların etkisi de açıkça görülmektedir. Bu politikalar bağlamında devlet sorumluluğunun ailelere, STK'lara ve hayırseverlere devri ciddi riskler taşımaktadır. Bu bağlamda aileyi önceleyen politikaların kreş gibi ek hizmetlerle desteklenmemesi özellikle kadınlar üzerinde bakım yükü konusunda bir baskı oluşturmakta, bireylerin istihdam katılımının önünde de engel oluşturmaktadır. Böylesi politikalar; danışmanlık, eğitim gibi diğer önlemlerle desteklenmediği takdirde yardım bağımlılığı riskini de beraberinde getirmektedir. Takip ve izleme süreçlerinin sistemli bir şekilde yürütülmesi yoluyla yardımların etkililiğinin artırılması, kreş gibi ek hizmetlerle desteklenmesi ve bireylerin ekonomik bağımsızlığını önceleyecek şekilde planlanması önemli görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yoksulluk, çocuk yoksulluğu, sosyal ve ekonomik destek, neo-liberalizm.

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