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Female Teachers Union Related Sense of Belonging for Education Unions in Turkey*

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Abstract

It is a fact that the rate of the female teachers is in 2014, 51% of the total number in Turkey education system. Nearly half of this female teachers are organized in the Teachers Union. However, it is observed that the ratio of representation and attendance of female teachers at the unions activities are low. This creates an impression that male dominant mind exists; that there are problems regarding the ratio of female related demands in the union and sense of belonging of the female teachers to the union. Thus, there is a need to elicit the participation reasons of the female teachers, in what rate the expectations are met and where the female teachers see themselves in the union. In Turkey, the teachers' organizations have a deep-rooted tradition. However, the participations of the female are insufficient in general. The rate of the female teachers form about 25% of the organized teachers. The rate of the female teachers in administrative positions is around 20%. Additionally, it is a well-accepted finding that the females are inactive in the teachers' union apart from enrollment. The aim of this study is to reveal the feelings and opinions of the female teachers regarding their senses of belonging for the union processes, to determine the inabilities of teacher union organizations related this subject and to develop suggestions in order to contribute to the coherent efforts made with the gender equality principle, to eliminate the gender discrimination in the education unions.

This study were administered as a qualitative and survey model research which, semi-structured interviews were conducted for data collection. The opinions of the female administrators and members of the most populated three education unions in Turkey (Eğitim Sen, Eğitim Bir Sen, Türk Eğitim Sen) were taken, and then collected data descriptively analyzed along with comments and the results were reported.

Keywords: *Education Unions, Female Teachers, Gender Mainstreaming, Union Life*

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Introduction

Unions are defined as labour organizations struggling to protect their members' economical, personal and democratic rights and enhancing the conditions in their organized field. However, considering union reality and roles in which unions should take part, the definition is open to discuss. It would be better to explain unions through general and specific discrepancies they need to solve and as a living organism with their all aspects. In this sense, as class organizations, unions should be discussed upon comprehensive transformation of the field in favor of labor. Besides, it would be more realistic to define unions depending on desire for democracy, equality and peace in national and international field, liberation of labor, and an imagination of life which will render unions' own organizational entity meaningless. It should not be ignored that union struggle possesses diversity which includes nearest gains, and it is increasingly a developing reconstruction of life. With this respect, "unions should struggle free from capital, state and political parties, be in solidarity with political parties in accordance with common goals, and look after their members' rights and benefits during this processes" (Aksoy & Günbayı, 2016, p. 11).

It is important that how a union defines itself and its struggle as an organizational manner and union's ways of perception by its members and future members because of the fact that these parameters set the framework of entrance to the unions and union processes. In addition to this, the form of relation between union and politics, the entity of union democracy and daily practices in union processes have an impact on organizational configuration of unions.

As consisted of both men and women members, unions have to be structures which are particularly sensitive to gender mainstream in addition to issues above mentioned and this sensitiveness are corresponded in union practices. In particular, when it is considered that present-day liberal and conservative tendencies regard women as secondary identities in society, union life must be built such inevitably that it could destroy all the tendencies. In fact, it is known that significant problems are

being experienced in union organization under the title of ‘women’ in Turkey. As Urhan (2014) indicates, unions carry a “woman blind” attitude while planning their primary activities such as collective bargaining, education, organization. In historic process, male dominant understanding has regarded women’s work as temporary and opposed to women’s playing a part in union life (Tokgöz, 1994). It is seen that women are oppressed under masculine understanding in society and this understanding becomes a burden for women under the name of social roles. It is observed that women who act in an internalized identity do not have sufficient interest for union activities, do not take part in unions adequately, do not join their own unions’ activities even, and they are not willing and persistent for participating in managing bodies of unions. In this sense, such determinations are made that a male dominant structure rules over unions in general, women are expected to be passive in union processes, and women are also kept away from union organization (Alican, 2007; Seçer, 2009; Tokgöz & Sayılan, 1998).

There is a deep-rooted tradition of organization in education field in Turkey. Whereas the inception of union organization process that dates back to *Encümen-i Muallim*, which was founded in 1908, have been cut in several times (by military coup and fascist states), these organization structures have formed the present day. Yet as Işıklı (1990) states, September 12 (1980) military coup have been one of the most determinant elements in Turkey in terms of unionism’s evolution.

Because of September 12 coup, educators whose unions were banned were exposed to critical attacks; and these people had to resist to such problems as suspension from their work, were put under surveillance, were arrested for union activities and were forced to leave the country. Almost a year later passing disorganisedly, education unions have started to rebuild themselves, but they have just come across such problems: Either setting up opponent organizations and resisting mechanisms to contradictions and attacks or leading to integrated organizations to the system and organizations contributing to its legitimacy. In this sense, as democratic teacher movement has selected the first way, structures close to governments and benefiting from government’s power have been constructed and

these structures have increased the number of their members quickly under the shadow of dominant political determinants. Along with these structures form the numeric majority, such improper practices in union struggle have been experienced as the union debts are being afforded by the government itself. Liberal conservative government has revived these education unions which can be stated as ‘partizan’. The government has joined these unions’ general meetings and dictated its policy. Moreover, it has been experienced that placing their own ‘partizans’ into management positions and forcing education workers (especially junior teachers) to be the members of their own union. All of these developments have decreased the power of unions in education field. Besides, female problem which traditionally continues its existence in unions has taken a new form through political interaction and showed itself as a problem to be considered in the field.

Today in Turkey, although the rate of female teachers working in education field is more than male teachers, the rate of female teachers’ representation and taking part in managing bodies is unfortunately lower (Önder, 2013). For instance, when examined 2016 year’s union agreements in Turkey, it can be observed that the rate of female teachers in education unions is low (Table 1).

Table 1. Education Unions' Member Distribution by the Unions

Unions								
Eğitim Sen			Türk Eğitim Sen			Eğitim Bir-Sen		
Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
119.876	65.113	54.763	210.946	119.345	91.601	402.172	235.890	166.282
%	% 54	% 46		% 57	% 43		% 59	% 41

*This table was done according to 2016 Memorandum of Understanding.

In addition to this, the rate of female teachers' taking part in managing bodies of education unions presents us a lot more frightening scene. For example, there is no female member in Eğitim Bir-Sen (the most crowded education union in Turkey with its 402.000 members) and Türk Eğitim Sen (the second crowded education union in Turkey with its 210.000 members) Central Executive Committee do not have any female members in managing bodies. Eğitim Sen (the third crowded education union in Turkey) seems much better with three female members in its Central Executive Committee. Moreover there is not any chairwoman in Eğitim-Bir Sen's branch offices in Turkey (more than 120 branches), there are 20 female administrators among Branch Office Executive members all around Turkey (around 700 branches).¹ There are 32 female administrators in Türk Eğitim Sen's Branch Office Executives and 210 female administrators in Eğitim Sen's Branch Office Executives. It is remarkable that Eğitim Sen's female executive rates are higher as it is. However, the problem does not remain limited to the representation of females in unions. It has been observed that the rate of female participation in union activities is lower too.

It is clear that the relation among female teachers, unions and the scene observed nowadays are connected to social, political, and cultural processes that we are experience. However, concerning females' position in union life, such topics should be studied as the entity of male dominant understanding in unions, the level of carrying demands related to female issue, the criteria of shaping union belonging of female teachers. It is certain that problems affecting females' enrollment and acceptance to unions, their union expectations and level of meeting these expectations, and the location where females place themselves in union field must be

¹ These results have been obtained by scanning the branch offices' web addresses as no data has been given for this study despite requested.

discussed. The aim of this study is to find out female teachers' feelings and ideas about their senses of belonging to unions by taking the reasons into consideration. With its proposals, the study is expected to contribute such issues as revising union paradigms with women themselves and with susceptibility of women's entity in unions, readjusting the organizational processes appropriately for the sense of equity and practice of equity, and women's being in the forefront as determiners of union struggle.

Methodology

This study has been carried out with a qualitative research approach and interview method has been used as data collection tool. The interviews were conducted with female executives and members of the three education unions in Turkey which are organized and including majority in terms of numerical (Eğitim Sen, Eğitim Bir Sen, Türk Eğitim Sen) and emerging results have been reported.

In interviews, a semi-structured technique has been used and questions have been arranged according to the situation of being a member or an executive in education unions. Interviewees in this study consist of teachers (primary, secondary, and high school) who are working in state schools in Ankara and head office executives in education unions. Interview questions have been documented in writing and can be seen in Appendix 1.

Data Analysis

In consequence of conceptual research about the study and interviews, gained data have been put in order on the basis of following themes. In semi-structured and face to face interviews which made with female members and executives of three education unions (top three ones in terms of member numbers), it has been tried to understand women's opinions, attitudes and how it affects them towards union organization. With this purpose, answers to the questions below have been tried to be found out:

From which socio-economic and cultural environments do female teachers come?

What are the aims of woman teachers as they are enrolling to education unions? How did their membership take place?

What is the level of female teachers' observing the union life and participating actively in it?

What are female teachers' opinions and level of willingness to take part in union administration?

What is the level of relation between female teachers and education unions?

Questions ordered above form the themes which all data are analyzed according to and collected findings have been analyzed within the scope of five themes. These are;

Socio-economic and socio-cultural level.

Woman teachers' acceptance to education unions.

The position of organized teachers in union process.

The attitude towards taking part in union administration.

Woman susceptibility in education unions' works.

In terms of the validity of the data obtained in the research many researchers check the validity of the data were collected with Semi-structured interview.

While analyzing the data, the records of the interviews were written in the computer environment in accordance with the qualitative research design; the data were coded and classified according to the research questions and analyzed descriptively.

In a semi-structured interview the researcher prepares questions beforehand, but you can also add some open-ended questions. In this study, semi-structured and open-ended questions were used.

When analyzing the research, the interviewer's own statements were respected in terms of the reliability of the research.

Findings

Collected data which aim to understand female teachers' ideas and attitudes related to education unions have been analyzed under five titles below.

From which socio-cultural and socio-economic environments do female teachers come?

In this study, it has been observed that women teachers mainly come from lower-middle and middle economic classes. These teachers describe their family as traditional (male-dominant) (I2, I4, I6, I7, I8, I9, I10, I11, I14), conservative (I1, I12, I13) and modern (I3, I5, I15). However, it has been understood that the determinants in these teachers' comments are being built on "male" roles. Female teachers have stated these sentences:

I15: *"I have a modern and reformer family... My mother does all duties at home."*

I6: *"We had a traditional (male-dominant) family. My father didn't let us go outside alone and stay at our friends."*

I14: *"My family was conservative as much as traditional. In the family males only were the decreers. Housework rules were the responsibility of females."*

I2: *"My family's understanding about woman is traditional. The leader of the house is the father. Father works and mother does the housework."*

In the same title, female teachers have stated that their family approve of educating their girls with a "modern" idea and have supporting attitudes about this subject. Some expressions about these points are:

I11: *"My father said that he wanted to let me go to university, but living in a foreign city as a lonely girl was not regarded something normal. However, I knew that he trusted me in time."*

I2: *"In our house, there was such an understanding that woman should study. Women's level of education and their place in work life should be improved."*

How did the memberships of female teachers take place in education unions?

It is seen that political and ideological reasons, and legal and professional rights come into the forefront while organized female teachers become members of unions and remain as members as well.. Only an interviewer (I1) uttered some request concerning female identity and such finding seems significant in terms of female identity and requests.

I12: *"I had no expectation from the union. Thank God, I haven't needed any..."*

I9: *"I became a member of this union because of political reasons. "*

I3: *"There was a lawsuit about me. I knew that union lawyers could help me. I became member of the union because of it. After the case, I have seen that my union doesn't represent me; so I have changed my union."*

Significant part of female teachers (excluding I1, I3, I14) have become member to unions after an experience of ten years working. Regarding this, female teachers' memberships have turned out to be true by means of friend effect, union trips and workplace representatives. However recently, administrative staffs who are mostly close to a union in Turkey have had an impact on newly appointed teachers while they become members of education unions. There is such an example in this sense:

I14: *"I am now a trainee teacher. I don't have a union commitment, but I became a member thanks to the school principal."*

Becoming a member to education unions can happen in different ways. Some of female teachers become members with their own wishes (I1, I5, I6, I9), some of them become members due to works of union agents (I3, I4, I10, I11, I14), and some are affected by ideological reasons (I2, I7, I15). There are such examples as:

I15: *"I have become a member because of the environmental effect. It is the union which has the state support."*

I10: *"I wanted that unionization should be more common. Union representatives helped me. If another union dropped by, I would be a member of them."*

I1: *"I went myself and found the union. There was a huge reaction to the union where I lived, so I wanted to be a support for the union.*

I12: *"A mosque official made me a member 12 years ago."*

I7: *"My husband was a union member. I was ideologically close to the union, too. However, I had no desire for a membership. I became a member just because my husband wanted."*

What is the level of female teachers' observing the union life and participating actively in it?

This title has been analyzed over female teachers' observing union life closely, following the union publications, participating meetings, trainings and public demonstrations actively. In conclusion, it has been reached such data; Any of the interviewers who are female teachers (excluding representatives and executives) doesn't read union publications regularly. Some of them told that they do not need to read, they have no interest, and they just look through them. Some statements about this question are:

I3: *"Union publications do not come to us sufficiently. I don't have time to go to the union in order to get publications. "*

I4: *" They do not attract my interest. I just take a glance when I see."*

I8: *"I don't need to follow and read union publications. "*

I14: *" I follow on Facebook and twitter. The union do not send us printed versions."*

I15: *"No, I do not read. They always make governmental propaganda."*

Moreover, expressions of some executives and agents of the education unions show a general result that they attend union life more actively. These interviewers (I1, I5, I6, I9, I1, I12) have stated in general that they read union publications regularly. However, it is the fact that there is a lack of reading union publications even among the female executives and agents. Some statement are like:

I6: *"We have to follow union publications as executives. Unfortunately, I cannot read often educational matters after I retired."*

I11: *"... In recent times, I have followed publications on social media..."*

I12: *"I myself take the publications to school. I already know what they cover. "*

Female teachers show unwillingness to participate in activities such as meetings. In addition to the teachers who do not participate in any (I2, I3, I4, I7, I8, I10, I13, I14, I15), there are also some female teachers who want to attend union activities, but they have difficulty because of family responsibilities and limited information (I5, I9, I12). Female teachers clarify their unwillingness through such subheadings; they see union activities as waste of time, these activities don't seem interesting, they have no need to attend union activities and gender mainstreaming roles prevent them to attend.

I2: *"Once, I used to attend, but now it seems to me as waste of time."*

I8: *"I don' want to allocate some special time. It doesn't attract my interest. "*

I10: *"I do not attend any. If I was not married and didn't have my kids, I could attend sometime."*

I14: *"I do not attend. A woman surely has limited time for such things. (because of work, housework, and kids etc.) "*

I9: *"I attend activities so as to improve myself. My children are old enough to look after themselves. So I don't have difficulty much".*

I12: *"I attend usually, but I can't go far places because of my family"*

There are some who want to attend union activities, but sometimes have obstacles while attending. They told such things:

I5: *"I especially attend female issues. Working with females makes me more powerful. However, being a mother and its responsibilities are tiring. Besides, male dominant language in unions disturbs me."*

I12: *"I attend mostly. However, I can't go far places because of my children and my family."*

Female teachers' ideas and attitudes for public demonstrations as interviewers have displayed the paradigm in the understanding of 'street'. Primarily, it is observed that minority of interviewer female teachers have attended the demonstrations. The ones who regard public demonstrations effective and participate regularly are executives of unions. Very few of the members have told that they attend the public demonstrations (I2, I3, I5, I9, I12). Their views are centered on; they -do not approve or even react to public demonstrations, they think no result would be got and no resistance against state should happen. (I7, I10, I13, I14, I15). Moreover, unbelief and distrust to the unions (I2, I4, I8, I10, I13, I14, I15) fearing from demonstrations (I3, I7, I13) are some of the reasons. As a result, the main question is what the female teachers understand when 'public demonstration' are told. Some interesting points about this are:

I3: *"I want to attend demonstrations which affect society."*

I5: *"I want to, but my son sometimes doesn't. I don't want him to be bored."*

I9: *"I attend the ones after school time. I attend strike actions."*

I12: *"I attended almost all of them. Solidarity for Palestine , February 28 resistance, remembrance of Mehmet Akif ..."*

I2: *"I attend the massive ones. At the beginning I had wish and belief, but now I see myself as a pawn."*

I8: *"I don't think public demonstrations as beneficial. I do not attend."*

I10: *"I do not attend absolutely. Different flags made me unhappy. I felt like a pawn of other ideologies."*

I13: *"After Gezi demonstrations, I think such activities affect the society negative."*

I14: *"I do not find public demonstrations right. Because they include violence."*

Executive member interviewers express their own participations and other members' participations through such sentences:

I1: *"I certainly attend my union's public demonstrations. To me, participations in demonstrations are too low. Moreover, women have questions in their mind like 'Who will take care of my children' if anything happens to me?"*

I6: *"If I were not ill, I would attend public demonstrations again..."*

I11: *" I attend my union's public demonstrations. We have made press conference for many time. It was about Palestine and woman's scarf."*

What are female opinions and the level of to take part in union administration?

It has been observed that interviewer female teachers are unwilling to attend managing bodies of their own unions. Besides being reluctant for managing bodies, female teachers have specified that gender mainstreaming roles such as taking care of children, doing the housework, responsibilities for husbands can pose obstacles, even if they have a wish to attend (I3, I4, I5, I7, I8, I9, I13, I14, I15). Besides, some of these female teachers seem to be disturbed by this situation and some of them seem to have internalized these roles.

Despite some obstacles to take part in managing bodies of education unions, there are some female teachers who don't want to take any role with their own wishes (I3, I4, I5, I7, I8, I9, I13, I14, I15). Some female teachers also consider themselves inadequate to take role in managing bodies of education unions (I2, I4, I5, I10). In addition such problematic issues, there are also ideological discrepancies in the unions (I2, I4, I10, I15) and female teachers believe that education unions have an inadequate democratic running inside (I5, I14).

In terms of social gender roles interviewees mentioned their views such as following:

I9: *"Our husbands and children are obstacles for us. I didn't want to take role in management especially when my kids were little. Going far places is also difficult."*

I3: *"I do not have time because I am responsible for housework, my children and my family. I spend my time with my friends and cultural activities, too."*

I5: *"I have no time because I am a mother. My duties are too tiring, I can't suffice. You know; work, kids, housework.etc."*

In terms of considering themselves inadequate, interviewees mentioned their views such as following:

I2: *"We couldn't write an article for the union journal. At last, one of our male friends helped us. Women remain incapable."*

I10: *"...but I have to improve myself. I cannot be an executive as, they do not allow this."*

I4: *"Women don't want themselves. They do not trust in their minds."*

I5: *"...I feel inadequate. I don't spend my time reading adequately. Moreover, there is such understanding in the union that women can't do this work. Even female teachers themselves think like this."*

In terms of ideological discrepancies in the education unions, interviewees mentioned their views such as following:

I2: *"There is sharing the works among certain political groups in the union. This situation disturbs me and decreases my belief in union life."*

I4: *"I can't do with these people. There are grouping. We can't solve any problem with such discrepancies."*

In terms of anti-democratic running in the union management, interviewees mentioned their views such as following:

I5: *"Any critical role is not given to women. We can just take secretarial works and educational duties. This shows us democratic understanding is low."*

I14: *"There is too much superior-subordinate relationship in the union management. Union does not defend everyone equally."*

There are also some interesting statements about taking part in union management:

I7: *"Being a member is enough. I don't want to take critical roles."*

I10: *"... They don't let me become an executive because I have no important connection."*

I12: *"I myself don't want such a thing. If the union leaders want, I can take responsibility. They know who can do these duties."*

K1: *"It is difficult for the ones who have no political identities. I became an executive thanks to female limits in the unions. Unfortunately, we couldn't transform our thoughts about female issues into practice. There should be a cultural spring."*

In addition to these issues, female teachers have such basic problems while participating in managing bodies in education unions. They face with difficulties when they want to become executive candidates in male-dominant practice of the unions, and because of the conception of the unions as a career step. All these arguments lead us to the conclusion that "solely women who have tough and fighter personality can take place in the managing body of unions" (Tokgöz, 1994).

For instance;

I6: *"When I was a candidate, some calls were made to my husband for my withdrawal. But I did not stop like women always do. Duty is important and there is no sex of it. In unions, we do not seem as women, I think this is right."*

I11: *"...Now women are more demanding compared to the past. Unions are seen as a career step. Besides, male leaders don't want powerful women. They do not allow chaos situations. I think they are right because there is a chaos when women are inside the situation."*

What is the level of relation between female teachers and education unions?

To understand the level of relation between woman teachers and their unions, these questions were asked: "Do you think you have a strong relationship with your union?", "Do you think your union meets your expectations?" and "Which activities should your union do?". It is seen that the relationship between the female teachers and their organized unions is weak. (I2, I3, I4, I8, I10, I15). One of the main reasons is "the unions' not meeting the needs of their members" (I2, I3, I4, I10, I13, I15).

It is clear that teachers who have told they have a strong relationship consider this relation as religion and political, based on legal and social rights if necessary (I1, I5, I6, I7, I9, I11, I12, I13, I14). Female teachers as interviewees have uttered their expectations from education unions under these titles; unions should give information about legal rights of teachers and about social and cultural activities; union fields should be formed as places where children can visit too; and essential information should be presented about gender mainstreaming by the unions. The case of female teachers who have told that they have no expectation from their own unions seems very significant in this field (I6, I12, I14).

The answers about the relation between female teachers and their union are below:

I2: *"I can say that I am offended. It does not help its members. There are political discussions inside the union."*

I3: *"My union does not meet my expectations. I don't believe in their sincerity, so I have no huge expectations. They get unearned income, so it is disappointment for me."*

I4: *"...They don't show any interest except for political fields. There is a serious loss of trust in unions."*

I9: *"My union is with its teachers and defends their rights well. I am ideologically close to my union."*

I10: *"I have no close relationship with my union because I don't have any union conscious. I don't want it at all. They cannot represent me in such a system. I don't have any interest about female identity and works in the union about this point."*

I12: *"I have a powerful relationship with my union. I do what they want from me. I like their struggle on foreign pressure to our state, refugee problems and terrorism in the Southeast region of our country."*

I14: *"I have a good feeling because my union also thinks like me, too. I don't get any information about union activities, they do not reach us. I think there will be no problem, if I obey the rules."*

Some interviewed teachers have ordered their expectations with such sentences:

I2: *"I want cultural, educational and art activities to be done..."*

I5: *"Especially for men, it can be given instructions about gender mainstreaming, roles in family and woman history. Social and cultural activities will power the union identity. LGBTI educations can be given too; because there are some problems in practice inside union process."*

I8: *"They can give information about legal struggle more."*

I4: *"There can be more activities in order to raise awareness about union life."*

I12: *"We already do everything. I don't have any special expectation."*

I13: *"There is deterioration in terms of social relations. At this point, mothers play an important role. Female teachers can get trainings about this problem as mothers."*

Conclusions

Unions take the power from their members' active participation and form their union life depending on the members' decisiveness as a subject. Therefore, unions are one of the important means of class struggle. Unions play a role for transforming the life on behalf of workers through the equality of all members and their joint effort. While there are trials to solve the problems of union life, it is known that the voice of union members involves some solutions to those problems as well.

In this study, female members' and executives' relations with their own unions (the most crowded 3 education union in Turkey) have been examined through their views. This research has found out some problems in education unions such as; gender mainstreaming roles are determiners about female members' representation and struggle in the union life, there is a male dominant understanding in these unions, operations in these unions are not democratic. Moreover, some clues have also been offered in order to enable female teachers' active participation in union process.

When taking into consideration this study's scope and reached data, organized female teachers in education unions in Turkey come from lower and middle socio-

economic classes. These teachers have described their families as conservative, patriarchal and modern socio-culturally. Therefore, it has been determined that woman teachers have been grown up mainly in traditional family forms. However, all these statements have been formed on the basis of “male” understanding. The settings female teachers have grown up and social roles burdened on them effect their opinions and attitudes about the union process.

The shape and aim of female teachers’ enrollment in unions reveal their attitudes to follow union struggle and include in this field. It is seen that political and ideological reasons become priority while organized female teachers become a member to unions and remain as a member, indeed. Additionally, legal and professional rights, and the need of a social environment are some of the main motivations for female teachers. In this sense, none of the female teachers have told that they have read the standing rules and programs of their own unions and they have joined that union based on those justified ideas. It has been understood that the majority of female teachers become a union member in later years of their professional life. Such a table shows that there are some inadequacies in the matter of unions’ role in creating union awareness in education faculties and contacting with teacher candidates. Regarding to this, female teachers’ membership have come true by means of friend effect, union trips and workplace representatives. It has been observed that group culture, working and living conditions, and social environment have influenced member preference (Seçer, 2009). It is significant that some female teachers have become a member without any union awareness, but just under the thumb of their husbands, director’s force or irrelevant people’s guidance. This situation results in the limitedness of relations with the unions. As reasons for enrollment in unions, current issues and arguments about education field and subjects about educational contents have not been stated. Accordingly, it creates such an impression that teachers who should be the active subject in the education field do not have any initiative in order to tackle educational issues and transform the field by being organized. Furthermore, female teachers do not have any requests regarding woman identity and even they discuss social gender issues with the unequal,

acceptances. Consequently, all these attitudes of female teachers' clearly show that it is necessary to plough on these issues.

The level of female teachers' observing and participating in union life seems very painful and contradictory. Excluding executives and representatives, it is seen that none of female teachers in education unions read the union publications regularly. Female teachers have told that they just look through the publications briefly, follow the social media accounts, but don't do detailed readings. At the same time, they do not seem willing to attend the meetings and similar activities. Female teachers clarify their unwillingness through such subheadings; they consider union activities as waste of time, these activities don't seem interesting, they have no need to attend union activities and gender mainstreaming roles prevent them to attend. There are also some female teachers who want to attend union activities, but have difficulty because of family responsibilities and limited information.

Public demonstrations are one of the main courses for unions' gains. It is clear that there is an inseparable relationship between the 'street' and 'democracy'. Besides, it is necessary that public demonstrations should be discussed as an inevitable piece of union life in terms of expressing union requests and getting substantial results ultimately. However, interviewer female teachers' ideas and attitudes towards public demonstrations have displayed the paradigm in the understanding of 'street'. Primarily, it is observed that the minority of interviewer female teachers has attended the demonstrations. Female teachers who are members of Eğitim Sen and Türk Eğitim Sen seem more positive about public demonstrations. Nevertheless, these teachers have stated such issues as not trusting in their own unions, not being able to get substantial results, and refraining from possible physical attacks. One of the most remarkable determinations in this study is female teachers' (members of Türk Eğitim Sen and Eğitim Bir-Sen education unions in Turkey) emphasis on disapproval of public demonstrations. Within the scope of the same question, it has been understood that some of the female teachers read public demonstrations as political and religion based activities contrary to expressing union requests. Additionally, some statements of those who are not attending public

demonstrations are valuable. For instance; education unions' taking part in politics, prevention of gender mainstreaming roles and female members' perception about themselves as being abused by unions are main questions in female teachers' mind.

It has been observed that interviewer female teachers are unwilling to attend managing bodies of their own unions. Besides being reluctant for managing bodies, female teachers have specified that gender mainstreaming roles such as taking care of children, doing the housework, responsibilities for husbands can pose obstacles, even if they have a wish to attend. After all, it is clearly seen that female teachers have internalized gender mainstreaming roles in their life. In addition to these issues, female teachers have such basic problems while participating in managing bodies in education unions; feeling incompetent for such responsibilities, facing with difficulties when they become executive candidates, male-dominant practice of the unions, ideological discrepancies in the unions, and the conception about the unions as career steps. All these arguments lead us to the conclusion that "solely women who have a tough and fighter personality can take place in the managing body of unions" (Tokgöz, 1994).

It is seen that the relationship between the female teachers and their organized unions is weak. One of the main reasons is the problems in union process and practice. Likewise, social realities women are included in determine their interests, feelings and ideas (Spring, 1975). The situation of not being an active subject in union process make female teachers skeptical, having no interest for union activities and not attending the executive branches. Even though there are some female teachers stating that they have a close relationship with their unions, it is essential to express that these relations haven't been set up on trust and equality criteria. When studying the statements of female teachers, expectations from education unions are limited to legal support, social relations and professional requests. A majority of female teachers has suggested that their expectations have not been fulfilled by teachers' own unions.

Female teachers as interviewer have uttered their expectations from education unions under these titles; unions should give information about legal rights of teachers, social and cultural activities; union fields should be formed as places where children can visit too; and essential information should be presented about gender mainstreaming by the unions. Finally, the case of female teachers who have said that they have no expectation from their own unions constitutes another study subject.

While gender-based inequality is a structural problem in the society, capitalist functioning is an important basis for the continuation of this inequality.

The current problem cannot be considered separate from the class struggle in this sense. The current problem cannot be considered separate from the class struggle in this sense. Therefore, in today's capitalist society it is necessary to widen the field of struggle with existing inequality since the laboring women are not only suffered from their class identity but also because of the identity of women.

Some of the women who are exposed to similar inequalities in women's unions due to the identity of women are not even aware of this oppression. Awareness can only be achieved through awareness of individuals.

Suggestions

Depending on the research, researchers' suggestions were shared following:

Education unions should review organization models, understandings, aims, and struggles with participation of members and conscience created by unions' own historical responsibility. In addition to this, unions should make an effort to internalize these issues.

Education unions should be in contact with prospective teachers and concentrate on informative activities about unions.

Education unions should fight so as to get rid of personal, social, and union obstacles which prevent female members' active participation in union life. Unions should primarily start this fight in itself.

Organizational arrangements should be made for female members' taking part in union management; this perception should be elaborated to break down male dominant understanding in unions.

Unions should establish closer relationships with their members and information flow belonging to union publications, activities, and protests should be run properly.

Union branch offices and union activities should be arranged in the manner that it will enable participation of female members.

Education unions should take responsibility in the direction of creating their inner democracy and building their struggle through members' demands.

Unions should care about education and practice directed to destroy male dominant understanding; likewise, unions should strengthen the sensitiveness in the matter of gender mainstreaming.

Union struggle should discuss issues in the union field and meet the demands of education workers. While doing this, basic awareness of fighting against political power in union life should not be lost.

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