

## **EDUCATION OF WOMEN AND WOMEN'S EXPECTATIONS FROM DISTANCE EDUCATION ON THE ISSUES CONCERNING THEM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The most important factor that enables women to become individuals in society is education. It is also a very crucial part of rectifying the circumstances they are in. Besides formal, mass and distance education institutions, there are some other mechanisms to support women's individuality, their personal development and improve gender equality. Basically, these social mechanisms can be governmental, academics and union based or they can be non-governmental organizations. All these organizations offer women significant contributions in many aspects including awareness, use and protection of women rights. They also have important roles in informing women of decisions that are made against or in favor of them, letting them have a say in these decisions, fighting against violence, becoming strong individuals that have equal rights with men and having no difficulty in using these rights and lastly in education of women on these subjects. However, women need to know these mechanisms well and be aware of the laws and regulations in order to benefit from these mechanisms and use the opportunities that are legally granted for them.

The aim of this study is first to detect whether women are aware of women's governmental and non-governmental organizations and laws, and if not, to determine the mode of delivery and educational media that they prefer and the amount of time they would allocate. To fulfill this aim, 600 women who are 18 or above and living in Eskişehir were randomly picked as the sample. They were given a 34-item questionnaire in face-to-face interviews. It was found that majority of the sample were not aware of the mechanisms and laws about women and they wish to receive education on these subjects. And they think that distance education is the best form to receive this education. At the end of the study, it was concluded that women should be informed about the future studies that will be carried out by related institutions and organizations, and furthermore, projects should be prepared and distance education programs should be designed.

**Keywords:** Woman, education, education of women, distance education, and mechanisms concerning women.

## INTRODUCTION

Women's human rights mean preventing all kinds of violence and discrimination against women, gender equality, equal participation of women in decision making processes and mechanisms, safety and freedom rights of women as individuals, equal protection of women by the law, right to pursue a healthy life, equal and proper work conditions, the right to not expose to inhumane demeaning acts, and as a base for all these rights, equal and non-discriminatory education right (KSSGM, 2000, p:V). Education is an equal right for all people, but when current literacy rates and the number of men and women in educational facilities are considered, there is a huge gap between the rates of men and women. Turkey is no different than the rest of the world. Although women gained equal education rights with the "Law of Unification of Education" made in 1924, the inequality in practice is still an issue. The rate of illiteracy among women aged 6 and above is 8% whereas it is 1.7% among men. 8 in every 10 illiterate citizens are female. The rate of illiterate women in adult women population (15+) is 9,8%. (KSGM, 2012, p: 12, (<http://www.kadininstatusu.gov.tr>). In almost all nations, it is a constitutional imperative for governments to reserve and deliver women's education rights. In current Turkish Constitution, Article 42 states, "No one shall be deprived of the right of learning and education." (Koc and Güclüer, 1999, p: 79).

Research reveals that women benefit from education at least as much as -and often more- than men and the investments in education of women have produced more efficient output than the ones in education of men. Education gives women chances to import their interests in their personal lives, to get out of stay-home relationships and to be in different environments from their traditional environments. It also enhances their freedom of action and initiative. As the education level of women increases, they have less number of children, the number of infant death decreases; their marriage age goes up, the possibility of having a well nourished and well educated children increases and education opportunity especially for girls climbs. (TUSIAD, 2000, p: 28-29)

In our society education is hypocritical when gender roles are taken into consideration. As the income level and social category increases, the difference in education between boys and girls decreases and the girls are also directed to the professions in which they can earn their lives. However, despite all these, the studies across the country have proved that the principal responsibility of women is limited to their house and children and the in-house service expectation of working women is not different. Women have to decrease their professional performance in order to deal with the responsibilities of both house and work. (Navaro, 1997, p: 2). In spite of the importance of girls' education, there are still some reasons for hindering equality of opportunity in our country, as it is the case in other developing countries. Despite all recent campaigns, the rate of enrollment in all stages of education starting from primary school has not reached the desired level. The main reasons for this situation could be summarized as follows; more exploitation of girls' work power in our country, early marriages, late enrollment, lack of motivation for girls' education, high cost of education, patriarchal culture and, correspondingly, the thought that education will not contribute to one's future life (KSSGM, 1998, p: 9).

The concept of education has long been limited to school years. However, in the last quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century where the fastest improvements in all aspects were experienced when compared to the past eras, the findings about the fact that human learning process continues life long put an end to the limitation of education in a definite age span and enable education to become a life long process. Besides, distance education processes, carried out with the new facilities technology put into service, provide people with the opportunity to be heading for a field they are interested and to get education at any place and time they want. (Oktay, 2001, p: 23). Correspondence education, which is also called studying at home, started for the first time in 1880s when schools and universities provide service for those who wants to study independently from their work or home. Correspondence education first applied in the United States (in Chautauqua Correspondence College) spread fast in other countries starting from England. In 1883, Anna Eliot Ticknor established first home study school for women who lived away from cities and who could not receive education, which created an education opportunity (<http://bote.hacettepe.edu.tr/wiki/index.php>) for a great number of women.

The social perception of women, their productivity and fertility, affect their participation in education negatively. Society sees women as housewives and baby sitters and it never welcomes any activity that interrupts women's normal schedule. As a result of this, especially women who started their own families have difficulty in participating in works outside house. A great number of studies have proven that. Distance education is, for these reasons, very convenient for them because while class participation hinders flexible time management for women who are also housewives and mothers, distance education does not. Limited time, place and resources of women and their socio-economic deficiencies increase their inclination to distance education. (Kwapong, 2007, p: 69) Distance education is regarded as a way of educating more women as it overcomes the limitations of distance and time and enables multiple decisions. Nevertheless, the problem is not only women's equal education opportunity, but also their equality in the system. A patriarchal social system that ignores women's need will naturally not provide this equality. (Hipp, 1997, p: 41)

As a result, distance education is an option for adults who cannot find opportunity to receive formal education, who live in countryside and have a low-income level. And for women who benefit from education opportunities less than men in every part of the world, distance education is a significant chance to complete their education. However, it poses a problem for especially working women to benefit from the opportunities of distance education due to their responsibilities at home because they cannot allocate enough time for their educational activities and they do not get any help from the rest of the family on this matter. Another criticism, which comes as a result of the studies on women's benefiting from distance education, states that distance education locks women in house, keeps them away from social environments and pushes them into loneliness. While students can communicate with the people around in formal education, in distance education, they cannot do this. Despite all these drawbacks, distance education is an important opportunity for women to improve themselves, have a job, get a carrier- statue and complete their education.

In societies, apart from formal, mass and distance educational institutions, which were established in order for men and women to improve themselves as individuals, there are other mechanisms for women's improvement as an individual, supporting their development and providing gender equality. These are institutional mechanisms at formal level (such as Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women), institutional mechanisms at academic level (such as Women's Studies Centers in universities), and institutional mechanisms at union level and nongovernmental organizations. These mechanisms, established in order for women to become individuals in society and to improve them as individuals, to support their development and to provide gender equality, offer women significant contributions in many aspects including awareness, use and protection of women rights.

They also have important roles in informing women about decisions that are made against or in favor of them, letting them have a say in these decisions, fighting against violence, becoming strong individuals that have equal rights with men and having no difficulty using these rights and lastly in education of women on these subjects.

#### **PURPOSE and METHOD**

In this study, it was aimed to detect whether women are aware of women's governmental and non-governmental organizations and laws, and if not and for those who would like to receive education on this, to determine the mode of delivery and educational media they prefer and the amount of time they would allocate, and to detect their expectations from distance education.

To fulfill this aim, 600 women who are 18 or above and living in Eskisehir were randomly picked as the sample. They were given a 34-item questionnaire in face-to-face interviews. After the questionnaire the data was uploaded by using SPSS program and analyzed by using frequency and cross tables.

#### **FINDINGS and COMMENTS**

In this part, the data was analyzed under the subtitles of "the profile of the participants", "women's awareness of women's governmental organizations", "women's awareness of women's nongovernmental organizations", "women's awareness of international conventions and decrees and laws concerning them", "women and violence", "subjects women feel insufficient about".

##### **The Profile of the Participants**

In order to evaluate women's awareness of women's governmental and nongovernmental organizations and laws concerning women a 34-item questionnaire was given to 600 women in face-to-face interviews. As a result of the questionnaire, when the demographic features of the participants are taken into consideration, it was detected that 8.33% were in 18-24 age group (young), 73.33% were in 25-49 age group (middle aged), and 18.33% were in 50 and above age group.

**Table: 1 Demographic Features**

<b>AGE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
18-24	50	8.33
25-34	140	23.33
35-49	300	50.00
50 and above	110	18.34
<b>Topple</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>EDUCATION BACKGROUND</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Literate	-	-
Primary school	150	25.00
Elementary school	80	13.34
Primary education	-	-
High school and equivalent	110	18.33
Collage and university	260	43.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>MARITUAL STATUS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Married	450	75.00
Single	150	25.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>NUMBER OF CHILDREN</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
None	126	21.00
One	164	27.33
Two	249	41.50
Three and more	61	10.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>JOB STATUS</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Works	420	70.00
Does not work	180	30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>INCOME OF ONE'S OWN</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Yes	457	76.17
No	143	23.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>INCOME OF THE FAMILY</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Minimum wage	100	16.70
550-1000	135	22.50
1001-1500	116	19.33
1501-2000	79	13.17
2001-3000	98	16.30
3001-4000	42	7.00
4001 and above	30	5.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>

When their educational backgrounds were taken into consideration, it was seen that 38.33% were primary school graduates, 18.33% were high school graduates, 43.33% were university graduates, and 75% were married, 25% were single, 70% have a job and working and 76.17% have an independent income of their own. When the newspaper, magazine and book reading and TV watching habits of the participants were asked, 13.30% said that they read newspaper and magazines, 23.33% said they do not read books, 31.16% said they read newspaper and magazines every day, and only 4.67% said that they read a book every day. However, none of the participants said they do not watch TV and the total rate of the participants who watch TV 1-2 and 3-4 hours a day is 77.34%.

This shows that participants prefer TV to printed materials such as newspapers, magazines and books.

**Table: 2**  
**The Rates for Reading Newspaper, Magazine, Book and Watching TV**

<b>READING NEWSPAPER, MAGAZINE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Do not read	80	13.30
Read every day	187	31.16
Read at the weekend	146	24.33
Read on holiday	34	5.66
Read when I find	153	25.55
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>READING A BOOK</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Do not read	140	23.33
Read every day	28	4.67
Read at the weekend	32	5.33
Read on holiday	34	5.67
Read when I find a book	117	19.50
Read when I have time	249	41.50
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>WATCHING TV</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Do not watch	-	-
Less than an hour a day	48	8.00
One- two hours a day	292	48.67
Three- four hours a day	172	28.67
More than four hours a day	88	14.66
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>

When the participants' rates of using computer and the Internet were taken into consideration, it was seen that while 76.18% have a computer, only 58.30% are connected to the Internet. While 41.70% said they do not use computer or the Internet, 35.00% said they use computer more than four hours a day.

The period of 1-2 hours Internet use a day has been the most preferred period with a rate of 18%. When participants' purposes of computer use were asked, 41.70% said they use it to connect to the Internet, 38.30% said they use it to reach information, 36.70% said they use it for business and for communication.

**Table: 3**  
**The Rates of Computer and the Internet Use**

<b>OWNING A COMPUTER</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>Have</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>76.17</b>
<b>Do not have</b>	<b>143</b>	<b>23.83</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>USING COMPUTER</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>Do not use</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>41.70</b>
<b>Less than an hour a day</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>11.00</b>
<b>One-two hours a day</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>10.50</b>
<b>Three-four hours a day</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.80</b>
<b>More than four hours a day</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>35.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>INTERNET CONNECTION</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>I connect</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>41.70</b>
<b>I do not connect</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>58.30</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>
<b>INTERNET USE</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
<b>I do not connect</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>41.70</b>
<b>Less than an hour a day</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>17.00</b>
<b>One-two hours a day</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>18.00</b>
<b>Three-four hours a day</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>9.30</b>
<b>More than four hours a day</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>14.00</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>100.00</b>

### **Women's Awareness of Women's Governmental Organizations**

In this part of the study where women's awareness of women's governmental organizations was analyzed, the participants were asked whether they are informed about the existence of Minister of State for Women and Family (T. R. Minister for Family and Social Affairs), Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women and Women's Library and their answers were evaluated. When the participants were asked whether they know about the existence of Minister of State for Women and Family (T. R. Minister for Family and Social Affairs), they said "Yes" with a rate of 86.67%. It could be said that the fact that the participants answered "Yes" is because of the minister of state in question participates in media especially on TV news.

And this result is very significant in terms of displaying the effects of mass media. Prime Ministry Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (Minister for Family and Social Affairs Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women) was founded in 1990 to come up with policies, develop strategies, cooperate and coordinate

with all other women's organizations in order to foster women-men equality, to strengthen the place of women in every part of life, to prevent any type of discrimination against women. It is a very successful institution with its policies and strategies for providing gender equality and sustainability of it. (<http://www.ksgm.gov.tr>)

When the answers of the participants about the awareness of the existence of this institution were analyzed, it was noted that 23.33% said "Yes". The rate of participants' awareness of Directorate General, which has been providing great services on the subjects of uprising women's status, preventing gender discrimination, violence and facilitating laws for women etc. since 1990, is very low and it shows that women do not benefit enough from the services of this institution and it could not completely reach its objectives. This also clearly shows that the works, publicity and the functions of Directorate General, which works on every women platform including national and international laws, prepares visual and printed materials, do not take enough place in the media and these services cannot reach people.

The purpose of the archive in Women's Library, which was founded in 1990, is to know the history of women, to hand in this information about the history of women to today's researchers in a well- organized way, and to keep today's printed documents for the posterity.

The policy of Women's Library and Information Center Foundation is based on providing nontraditional sources and searching traditional sources to produce women related catalogs and bibliographies. Women's Library makes a special effort to obtain daily and private materials. (<http://www.kadineserleri.org>) When the awareness of the participants of Women's Library is evaluated, it was detected that the answer "Yes" came from only collage- university graduates in 25-49 age group with a very low rate of 3.33%.



This unawareness of Women's Library by the participants with a very high rate of 96.67% shows that the importance of this institution in examining and filing women's history is not known by people and they do not benefit from the services of this institution as in the case of T.R. Prime Ministry Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women (T. R. Minister for Family and Social Affairs Directorate General on the Status and Problems of Women) reminding that this institution does not also take place in mass media.

### **Women's Awareness of Women's Nongovernmental Organizations**

In this part of the study, the answers of the participants who were asked whether they are informed about the existence of The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA.DER) and other women's NGOs were evaluated. The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA.DER) was founded in 1997 in order to defend effective and gradually equal representation of women in all elected and appointed decision-making mechanisms and politics.

It prepares women for politics and politics and parties for women, therefore, deals with politics and political parties. It gives utmost importance to the cooperation with women in order for them to be effectively organized and to strengthening of women in political parties because it knows that political parties are main channels for women to be involved in politics. It keeps equal distance to all legally recognized political parties. It does not support any political parties but it supports gaining power of women and adopting women politics in all political parties. It works together with all the women branches and women parliamentarians of political parties in line with its targets. (<http://www.ka-der.org.tr>)

When the participants were asked whether they are aware of the existence of The Association for the Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA.DER), it was seen that the rate of the participants who said, "Yes" is 43.33%. Even though it seems that the rate of awareness of KA.DER, which emphasizes the importance of women's taking part in national and local governments and tries to spread this idea through the whole nation, is very high, the fact that women still do not take enough place in political life is a negative condition for women. In fact, more women's having a say in national and local governments in our country is crucial in establishing gender equality and women's becoming an individual in society. Therefore, the publicity of NGOs like KA.DER, generalizing their successes and efforts are necessary for more women to get involved in political life.

It is a positive result that the participants said "Yes" with a rate of 55% when their general awareness of women's NGOs was asked because it shows that they are interested in NGOs which campaigns about women's becoming an individual in society.

### **Women's Awareness of International Conventions and Decrees and Laws Concerning Them**

In this part of the study, the participants' awareness of international conventions and decrees and laws was analyzed.

**They were asked about whether they are informed about the amendments in favor of women in Civil Code, amendments in Division of Property Law made in 2002, The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the fact that Turkey adopted this without reservation, women related international conventions and decrees and the benefit of these decrees and the amendments in laws concerning women in work life, and their answers were evaluated.**

**When the participants were asked whether they are informed about the amendments in favor of women in Civil Code, they said "Yes" with a rate of 48.33%. The fact that only about 50% of the participants are aware of them although these amendments in favor of women in Civil Code appeared widely in mass media is a negative condition for women in terms of protecting their rights. This result is in line with the fact that the subject women feel most insufficient about is laws. Women said that they have insufficient information about laws and they would like to receive education about this. To meet the changing social needs and demands some amendments have been done in the Turkish Civil Code, which was accepted in 1926 and has very visionary provisions in terms of the conditions of that time. The new Turkish Civil Code, came into force in 01.01.2002, is a regulation which regards the equality of men and women, eliminates gender discrimination, makes women equal with men in family and in society, and respects labor of women. Radical changes in the subjects of legal age of marriage, legal settlement, heads of family, divorce suit, family house, marital property regime, custody, household goods, ownership, heritage, respecting labor and children rights have been made in order to provide equality of women and men. With these amendments not only men but also women can apply for marriage to the marriage office in their settlement. The right to choose family house is given to husband and wife together not husband only. Women's right to have a job is no longer under the consent of their husband. The provisions about husband's becoming head of the family, husband's place of settlement also being the wife's place of settlement and the provisions degrading the equality in custody have been abolished. (KSSGM, 2003, p: 4-28)**

**When the participants were asked whether they are aware of the amendments in Division of Property Law, they said "Yes" with a rate of 81.67%. This result could be explained by wide appearance of the law in mass media, victimization of a lot of women due to division of property, and the hot debate appeared on media on the fact that the marriages before 2001 are not within the scope of the law and the objections against this situation in Constitutional Court. This result also shows how important mass media is for matters to become a current issue. Legal property regime is "Acquired Property Participation regime" in New Civil Law which came into force in 01.01.2002. Spouses can adopt any of the property regimes such as separation of property, shared separation of property and property partnership. However, if there is a contract between the couples, participation in acquired property regime is applied. This property regime was accepted thanks to the efforts of women, as it would provide an equal property division between couples. Acquired property is the property that spouses gain in return for their labor and work during marriage. This includes properties acquired in return for labor and payments delivered by institutions like social security, charity and staff provident fund.**

**Compensatory payments for loss of capability to work and profits from personal property including all the property owned can be also described as acquired property. Personal property, by definition, is the property that is not gained through labor or work of the spouses. This includes goods of personal use, goods by inheritance, donation and non-pecuniary damage and other assets that can replace. (Sarihan, 2002, p: 24-26), (KSSGM, 2003, p: 90)**

**In 1979, "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW), was adopted by the UN General Assembly and opened for the signature of member countries in 1980. This convention is one of the 6 main human rights conventions of United Nations. Its aim is to eliminate discrimination against women and protect women's human rights. Binding all parties, this convention defines gender equality as the equality in all areas of life not just as the equality before the law. This convention is also one of the conventions approved by most countries. Turkey has become a party of the convention in 1986 after finishing the approval process. The optional protocol is a legal instrument, approved in 2000, to strengthen the enforcement of the convention in the party countries. Being a party to the convention and the protocol means abiding by the regulations and agreeing to be inspected on the practices because a country grants that it condemns all forms of violence against women and that it will take all kinds of precautions -including temporary and specific- to eliminate them. (Isik, 2004, p:12-13)**

**When the participants were asked whether they are aware of CEDAW, only 5% of them said, "Yes". This result is also a negative one considering women. Turkey has become a party in 1986, but Turkish women are not aware of the benefits and rights that the convention offers them. The most important promises of the party countries are to eliminate any forms of gender discrimination women face in social life and education life and to take measures to put an end to female illiteracy. These topics and the articles of the convention haven't been issued in mass media and women haven't been provided with sufficient information. Only 1.67% of the participants said, "Yes" when they were asked whether they are aware of international conventions and decrees while the rate of the participants who said "No" was 98.33%. This high rate of negative answer indicates that women are not aware of such important conventions and decisions and therefore, they are not able to take part in the efforts to put those decisions into practice. This rate is in direct proportion to the "No" answer with 95% to the question whether women are aware of CEDAW. Women feel that they don't have sufficient information about international conventions and decrees, and they would like to be informed about them like they do about laws.**

**In Turkey, the New Labour Code was approved on June 10<sup>th</sup> 2003. The most prominent improvement that the new code offers is that in employee-employer relationship, no discrimination violating fundamental human rights is allowed including gender discrimination. In this sense, the code prescribes that pregnancy or gender cannot be a cause to perform discriminating attitudes during preparation, implementation and termination of employment contracts.**

People cannot be paid lower for equal work just because of their gender. The code also states that gender, marital status, family responsibilities, pregnancy and childbirth cannot be valid reasons to terminate the employment contract. The code incorporates other provisions pertaining to employees' justified right to terminate employment contract when they are exposed to sexual harassments by their employers, coworkers or other people in the workplace and necessary measures aren't taken even if they report it to the employer. Other provisions of providing short-term employment and short-term employment allowance following an economic crisis or other compelling reasons and extending the paid birth and maternity leave. (KSGM, 2010, p: 4-5) When Participants' answers to the question whether they are aware of the amendments in laws concerning women in work life, the rate of the participants who said "Yes" is only 28.33%. This is a negative result since 70% of the participants are employed working women. For a woman, being financially free is the biggest condition to stand strong as an individual in social life. Although women have become a part of work life, they still don't have sufficient information about laws concerning them. And this situation undermines women's combat power against the problems they face in work life where gender discrimination intensely occurs.

### **Women and Violence**

In this section, the institutions to consult and the procedures women can follow when they are exposed to violence are examined. The participants were asked whether they are aware of the units in law offices, consulting firms and women's shelter in case of a violent behavior against them. Their answers to the question whether they have sufficient information about women's health is also evaluated.

The educational guide prepared in the scope of Social Studies and the Combat with Violence against Women Project lists the steps that women should follow after a violent act against them. "First, report to the nearest police station and make an official complaint with an official document. Let them know that you want a medicinal report from a doctor of forensic medicine. Then, appeal to the public prosecutor and make a criminal complaint and ask them to forward you to forensic medicine. Next, go to the Women's Counseling Center in the Bar Association in your city and learn your legal rights and ways to protect yourself from violent acts. Seek for legal solutions to your problem. Take benefit of Law No. 4320 on Protection of the Family. After you file a petition to the public prosecutor and report that you have been exposed to a violent act, public prosecutor will inform Family Court Judges even if you do not have a request to be done so. You can also take benefit of the law by making a petition directly to the Family Court Judges without going to the Public Prosecution Office" (Unlü, Bayram, Baycu ve Uluyagci, 2009, p: 22-23). When participants asked whether they are aware of the institutions to consult and the procedures women can follow when they experience violence, they said "Yes" with a rate of 45%. Considering the fact that 1 out of 3 women is exposed to violence at least once during their lifetime, what to do in case of a violent act against them gains more importance. 55% of the participants said that they are not aware of the institutions to consult and the procedure they can follow when they experience violence. This indicates that they are unprotected from violence.

Since they do not also have sufficient information about governmental and non-governmental organizations, international conventions and laws related to protection of women, they cannot know the institutions to consult and procedures to follow when they face a violent act. In order to overcome this problem, mass media should also be sensitive about violence against women.

One of the aims of Women's Rights Commissions of Turkish Bar Associations, which works for protection of women's human rights and social gender equality, is "to eliminate problems caused by any discriminating act against women including domestic violence and to combat any ignorance, degradation and similar discriminating behavior women may face when they take their official complaints to various institutions and organizations." Many bar associations house studies on this issue. In addition to this, another aim of these commissions is to offer free counseling to women with low-income and with insufficient information about their rights and places to consult and to broaden this counseling across the country. (<http://bianet.org/bianet/siyaset/17420-tubakkom-esitlik-mucadelesine-devam>)

When participants were asked whether they are aware of counseling and attorneyship services in bar associations, 33.33% of them said "Yes" whereas 66.67% of them said "No". The fact that 66.67% of the participants said that they are not aware of the counseling and attorneyship services is an unfavorable result because of the high number of violent behaviors against women in Turkey. This is in direct proportion to participants' answers to the question whether they are aware of the institutions to consult and procedures to follow in case of a violent act against them. The places where women and their children who have been victims of or are under the risk of violence can take shelter are called "Women's Shelter House, Women's Shelter or Women's Guest House". Article 14 of the Municipal Law no. 5393 "Metropolitan municipalities and the municipalities of the cities with a population of 50.000 and above open shelter houses for women and children." charges municipalities on this issue.

2007-2010 National Action Plan for Combating Domestic Violence against Women, issues the duties of Governor's offices, local authorities and Social Services and General Directorate of Child Protection Agency (SSGD CPA) on opening shelter houses and improving quality and quantity of existing ones.

In Turkey, there are 49 women's shelter houses, 25 of which are under the supervision of SSGDCPA. Considering the fact that 1 out of 3 women experience violence against them at least once during their lifetime, more shelter houses need to be opened and the existing ones should be improved. (Karatas, Sener ve Otaran, 2008, p: 3).

60% of the participants said "Yes" when they were asked whether they are aware of the women's shelter houses. This rate is higher than the former awareness questions, but the participants' negative answer to the question whether they are aware of the institutions to consult and procedures to follow suggests that they will not be able to apply even if they are aware of these kind of places.

**This issue gains more importance considering the facts that there are not shelter houses in every city in Turkey and women have no choice but to return to the place where they were exposed to violence. Local authorities should do what is necessary to prevent women from being violent act victims.**

**When the participants were asked whether they have sufficient information about women's health, 35% of them said "Yes". This is a negative result like the ones of the answers to the other questions. Women should be provided with necessary health services as well as sufficient information about their health, which is of vital importance. Every year, hundreds of women die in childbirth because of unfavorable health conditions. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are also a major threat to women's health. Necessary precautions about women's health should be taken as soon as possible because of marriage and childbirth at early ages, giving birth multiple times and diseases caused or triggered by these. The participants stated that they feel they don't have sufficient information about women's health and they would like to be informed about this subject. It is a prerequisite for restoring women's human rights to equally provide women with maximum and complete healthcare. Social gender issues related to women and health can be evaluated under two broad categories: health problems and disease risks related to social gender and women's access and use of related health services.**

**Women's health covers emotional, social and physical welfare and is affected by biological, social, political and financial conditions. Reproductive health and birth control are two important health topics for women. However, the fact that women have longer life span than men brings a different perspective to the health issues.**

**Women's health is also under the influence of many other factors such as psychosocial factors in the family and society, women's personal health conditions, women's role in reproduction and accessibility and shape of the health services. Health problems can be caused by not only unhealthy work conditions but it can also follow abuse or violence. Victims of domestic violence are mostly women. Besides, there are regional differences in the accessibility of health services for women. (KSGM, 2008, p:53).**

#### **Distance Education and the Subjects Women Feel Insufficient About**

**In this section, the answers of the participants to the following questions are evaluated. About which subjects do you feel insufficient? Which mode of delivery do you prefer if you want to receive training on these subjects? Which educational media do you prefer if you want to receive training on these subjects? How much time can you allocate for the training?**

**When the participants were asked if they would like to be informed about the subjects in the questionnaire, 96,67% said "Yes, I do". And when they are asked which subjects they feel insufficient about, "laws" was the leading answer with a rate of 95% followed by "politics" with 73,30%. The third most preferred answer was "education " with a rate of 68.30%.**

The results showed that women want to receive education about these subjects and other subjects they have insufficient information. 61.67% of the participants prefer distance education as the mode of delivery. They also would prefer face-to-face education as a supplementary to distance learning. Only 5% of the participants stated that they prefer face-to-face education alone.

When the participants were asked which educational media they would prefer, "television" was the most popular answer with 51.67%. The second most preferred answer was "computer-internet" and its rate was 45%. The first choice of high school graduates was "TV" while higher education graduates preferred "computer-internet" as their educational media. Books were the least preferred educational media. Most of the participants who preferred "computer-internet" belong to the age group 35-49.

"1-2 hours" was the most preferred answer with 66.66% when the time they would allocate for their education was asked. It was followed by "less than 1 hour" with a rate of 25%. All subject groups preferred "1-2 hours" as their first choice. When age groups are considered, It is seen that most of the women who prefer "1-2 hours" are in the age group 35-49. Therefore; the amount of time participants can allocate will be 1-2 hours when they are delivered such an education.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As a result of the questionnaire conducted in this study, women's awareness of women's governmental and nongovernmental organizations and laws was detected and if they are not aware of these and would like to receive education, the mode of delivery and educational media that they prefer and the amount of time they would allocate for this education was determined.

According to the data, the majority of the women participants stated that they are not aware of these mechanisms and that they would like to receive education on these mechanisms. In other words, there are serious insufficiencies of women about these mechanisms, laws, international conventions, decrees, violence and women health. They clearly stated that in the study. As they would like to receive information on these, necessary actions should be taken as soon as possible.

When the data of the study is analyzed, it was concluded that women should be given education on the functions of women's governmental and nongovernmental organizations and women related international and national conventions and laws. Since they prefer both distance and face-to-face education as the mode of delivery and television and the Internet as educational media, and since they said they would allocate 1-2 hours, educational materials should be designed according to these findings. It was also concluded that women should be informed about the future studies that will be carried out by women's organizations, and furthermore, projects should be prepared to do the necessary things and start the education as soon as possible.

Apart from giving women a licensed education at primary, secondary and higher education level, distance education programs, which will contribute much to women's having a job and encouraging work, raising their awareness of woman rights, becoming a self esteemed, socially successful and modern individuals, are necessary to be opened. These services for women are crucial for our national progress, women's personal improvement and eliminating gender inequalities.

In addition to these, in order to provide gender equality, men and women should be informed about laws, rights that are newly obtained, international conventions and decrees at every stage of their education via formal, public and distance education. Also the functions, activities, advertisements of mass media and governmental and non governmental organizations and the ways to reach them and the amendments in laws should be included in their educational program and necessary precautions for them to be sensitive about violence should be taken.

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