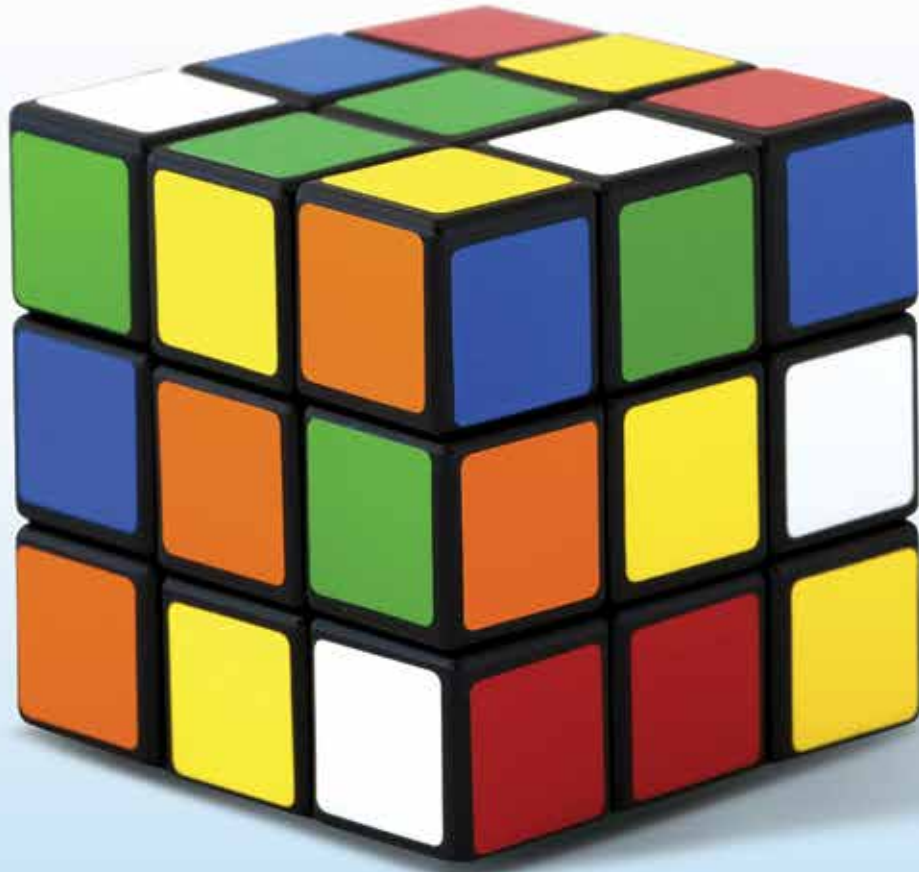


A SITUATION ANALYSIS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN TURKEY





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ERI, is an independent and not-for-profit think-and-do-tank that contributes to systemic transformation in education for the benefit of the child's and the society's development through sound evidence, constructive dialogue and innovative/critical thinking. Evidence-based decision-making processes in education concerning stakeholder engagement and ensuring the access of all children to quality education are the key elements of systemic transformation. ERI, established in 2003, is a good example for the Turkish civil society, since it is an initiative supported by leading foundations in Turkey. ERI carries out its' research and education activities through ERI Education Observatory unit and Education Laboratory, a collective initiative with ATOLYE Labs.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	7
2. THE LEGAL BASIS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION	8
2.1. International Legislation	8
2.2. National Legislation.....	12
3. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	15
3.1. Gender.....	16
3.2. Disability	18
3.3. Mother Tongue, Religion and Ethnicity	21
3.4. General Evaluation	23
4. CONSIDERING THE STATE OF TURKEY IN TERMS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION.....	24
4.1. Access to Education in Turkey	24
4.2. How Inclusive of Women is the Education System in Turkey?	28
4.3. Education for Individuals with Disabilities in Turkey.....	31
4.4. Mother Tongue, Religion and Ethnicity Identity	36
4.5. Socioeconomic Status.....	39
5. CONCLUSION	42
REFERENCES	44

GRAPHS AND TABLES

GRAPHS

GRAPH 1: SCHOOLING RATES OF THE 15-19 YEAR AGE GROUP IN OECD COUNTRIES, 2012	25
GRAPH 2: SCHOOLING RATES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TURKEY BY YEAR, BETWEEN 1994-95 AND 2014-15	26
GRAPH 3: SCHOOLING RATES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 2014-15	26
GRAPH 4: SCHOOLING RATES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BY YEAR, BETWEEN 1994-95 AND 2014-15	29
GRAPH 5: SCHOOLING RATES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 2014-15	29
GRAPH 6: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ENTIRE POPULATION, 2010	32
GRAPH 7: PERFORMANCE IN 8TH GRADE TIMSS MATHEMATICS BASED ON WHETHER TURKISH IS THE LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME OR NOT.....	38
GRAPH 8: DISTRIBUTION AMONGST DIFFERENT PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (15-YEAR-OLDS).....	40

TABLES

TABLE 1: SHARE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ACCORDING TO COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 2002	31
TABLE 2: THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF INDIVIDUALS REGISTERED IN THE NATIONAL DATABASE OF DISABLED PEOPLE, 2010	32
TABLE 3: THE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION AGED 6 AND OVER ACCORDING TO TYPE OF DISABILITY, 2010	33
TABLE 4: THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY STUDYING IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, ACCORDING TO GENDER AND TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, 2010	33
TABLE 5: THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN MAINSTREAMING EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS ACCORDING TO YEAR	34
TABLE 6: THE DISTRIBUTION OF COUNSELING AND RESEARCH CENTERS ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL REGION.....	34
TABLE 7: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, 2010.	35
TABLE 8: ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN TURKEY	37
TABLE 9: THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION BASED ON ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN TURKEY, 2006.....	37
TABLE 10: EDUCATION LEVEL ACCORDING TO MOTHER TONGUE	38

ABBREVIATIONS

ADP: Turkish Prime Ministry Presidency on the Administration of Disabled People

BLNE: The Basic Law of National Education

CCTs for Education: Conditional Cash Transfers for Education

CEDAW: The International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women

CESCR: The United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

CETS No.163: The Revised European Social Charter

CRC (Committee): The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child

CRC (Center): Counseling and Research Center

CRPD: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

ECHR: The European Convention on Human Rights

ECSR: The European Committee of Social Rights

ECtHR: European Court of Human Rights

EFA: Education for All

ERI: Education Reform Initiative

EU: The European Union

GAMM: The Gradual Absence Management Model

ICCPR: The United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR: The United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

IEP: Individualized Education Program

ISEG: Project to Increase School Enrollment Rates Especially for Girls

KAGİDER: Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey

LCSN: The Law on Children with Special Educational Needs

LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex

LPD: The Law for Persons with Disability

LPEI: The Law on Private Education Institutions

MoFSP: Ministry of Family and Social Policies

MoNE: Ministry of National Education

MoNE SDD: Ministry of National Education Strategy Development Directorate

MoNE SEGD: Ministry of National Education Secondary Education General Directorate

NDDP: National Database of Disabled People

OECD: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RCME: Religious Culture and Morals Education

SEÇBİR: İstanbul Bilgi University Sociology and Education Studies Division

SESR: The Special Education Services Regulation

SIS: State Institute of Statistics

SSEP: Strengthening Special Education Project

TIMSS: Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

TOHAD: Social Rights and Research Association

TurkStat: Turkish Statistical Institute

TÜSİAD: Turkish Industry and Business Association

UDHR: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN: The United Nations

UNCRC: The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

UNESCO: United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

USA: United States of America

1. INTRODUCTION

This document has been prepared in order to analyze the state of the education system in Turkey in terms of inclusive education. The concept of “inclusive education” has emerged out of UNESCO’s (The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) well-accepted definition of inclusion as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the state to educate all children.”¹ In practice, inclusive education refers to a wide range of strategies, activities and processes that seek to make a reality of the universal right to quality, relevant and appropriate education.² Inclusive education is closely related to but not confined to the educational rights of children with disabilities. It is an approach needed to provide the right to education of all children who are disadvantaged for diverse reasons.³ The focus of the document is on secondary education and it includes a general assessment of the inclusivity of the education system in Turkey.

The document is comprised of three main sections. The first section is an examination of national and international legislation in order to delineate the legal basis of inclusive education. The second section is a literature review regarding inclusive education. This section also includes good examples of inclusive education from across the world. The third section is a data-based evaluation of the state of inclusive education in Turkey. Inclusive education is, in fact, a concept that encompasses a variety of aspects such as the structure of the education system, governance and financing, teachers, course materials, learning environments and processes. However, due to limited data and to enable a more refined analysis, the methodology adopted for this study has been to assess Turkey’s current situation with regard to inclusive education focusing on language, religion and ethnic identity; gender; disability and socioeconomic status. Other components referred to here have also been discussed with the aforementioned focal points in mind. Socio-economic status has been taken as a factor that cross-cuts all other factors.

1 UNESCO, 2005.
2 Stubbs, 2008.
3 UNICEF, 2012.

2. THE LEGAL BASIS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

The Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and many binding international conventions to which Turkey is party forbid discrimination based on gender, language spoken, religion, race and having a disability. The right to education is seen as a right that belongs to everyone, in both national and international legislation. Although the term “inclusive education” is not used per se in national legislation, it may be observed that a compatible approach does exist in terms of gender and disability.

2.1. INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATION

The right to education is guaranteed by many international conventions and documents to which Turkey is also party. According to the 26th article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the 28th article of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and the 13th article of the United Nations International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), everyone has the right to an education and primary education must be mandatory and free of charge. Signatory states to the UNCRC are under obligation to ensure regular attendance to schools and lower dropout rates. The UNCRC also requires states to render secondary and higher education accessible to everyone.

The 14th article of the UNCRC guarantees the freedom of thought, faith and religion of children. The 18th article of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) signed by Turkey in 2000 and ratified in 2003, and the 9th article of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) also secure the freedom of thought, faith and religion. Turkey has, on the other hand, placed a reservation on the 27th article of the ICCPR, which concerns minority groups. This article is related to the right of minority groups to benefit from their own cultures, believe in and practice their own religions, and use their own languages. Another article of an international convention on which Turkey has placed a reservation is the 29th article of the UNCRC. According to this article, one of the goals of education should be to encourage children to respect their parents’ cultural identities, languages and values as well as others’ cultures. With these reservations, Turkey preserves its right to interpret and implement these articles in a manner consistent with the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey and the Treaty of Lausanne (July 24, 1923). Turkey signed the United Nations International Covenant for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination in 1972 and ratified it in 2002. All state parties to this covenant are under the obligation to guarantee the fundamental rights and freedoms of everyone, regardless of their race or ethnic origin. The right to education is among these rights that must therefore be guaranteed.

According to Article 29 of UNCRC, the States Parties accept that education aims to do the following:

- “a) The development of the child’s personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;
- b) The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

- c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;
- d) The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;
- e) The development of respect for the natural environment."⁴

CRC (Committee) is overseeing the applications of UNCRC. Paragraph 11 of the General Comment 1 published by CRC (Committee) mentions Article 29 of UNCRC that deals with racism, xenophobia and intolerance related to these. The relevant paragraph emphasizes the importance of internalizing the principles of Article 29 and teaching the principle of non-discrimination with a community focus.⁵

According to Article 8 of UNCRC (Convention), "States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognized by law without unlawful interference."⁶ According to paragraph 55 of General Comment 14 published by CRC (Committee), States Parties should seek the best interest of the child as suggested by Article 8 of UNCRC. In the relevant paragraph, the identity of the child has been defined including features such as "gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion and beliefs, cultural identity and personality."⁷

The ECHR and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) forbids gender-based discrimination. According to CEDAW, which was ratified by Turkey in 1985, states are required to legally guarantee gender equality. As prescribed by CEDAW, states must ensure equal access to educational institutions as well as equal quality of education for men and women. Furthermore, states must take precautions in order to lower the dropout rates of girls as well as close the educational gap between men and women. CEDAW encourages that stereotypical judgements regarding male and female roles be combed out from the education system by way of closely examining textbooks and curricula. There is no international convention regarding sexual orientation or gender identity. The fact that the UDHR and the ICESCR emphasize everyone's right to education, however, must be interpreted in a manner that includes children with different sexual orientations and gender identities. Although it is not legally binding, the Recommendation CM/Rec (2010)5 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member states on Measures to Combat Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity, published in 2010, is an important international document that addresses this matter. According to this Recommendation, member states must take the necessary legal precautions to prevent children from being deprived of their right to education due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. Educational services must be provided to these children without having them subjected to discrimination, exclusion or bullying due to their sexual orientation or gender identity. This Recommendation calls for member states to take precautions on various levels in order to preserve tolerance and respect within schools in a manner that includes sexual orientation and gender identity as well.

4 UNCRC, 1990.

5 CRC, 2001.

6 UNCRC, 1990.

7 CRC, 2013.

In the General Comment 4 about adolescent health and development published by CRC (Committee), it is emphasized that children cannot be discriminated against while benefiting from their rights mentioned in UNCRC. In the 6th paragraph about non-discrimination, it is mentioned that sexual orientation and health status (including HIV/AIDS and mental health) cannot be reasons to discriminate against adolescents.⁸

According to the 23rd article of the UNCRC, signatory states are responsible for ensuring the respectability of mentally and/or physically disabled children, and for creating conditions to facilitate their active participation within society. The Convention encourages states to cover educational costs for children with disabilities. CRC (Committee) published the General Comment No. 9 that emphasizes the importance of teachers receiving training on caring for children with different abilities and talents so that positive results may be achieved in the education of children with disabilities. States that are party to the Convention present periodic reports to the CRC (Committee), and the Committee publishes its observations regarding these reports. Assessments addressing the situation of children with disabilities may be found in the observatory note published by the CRC (Committee) with regards to the joint second and third periodic report presented by Turkey. Among these is an emphasis on the need for systematic data collection regarding children with disabilities as well as an increase in efforts to enable children with disabilities to take full advantage of their right to education. In its note, the Committee also recommends giving special training to teachers and rendering schools more accessible in order to be able to provide inclusive education for children with disabilities.⁹

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) signed by Turkey in 2007 and ratified in 2009 is an important protocol for individuals with disabilities insofar as it enables them to take full and equal advantage of human rights and freedoms and serves as a further step towards the elimination of discrimination against those with disabilities. Within this Convention, issues involving those with disabilities are considered an intrinsic part of strategies for sustainable development and the rights of individuals with disabilities are seen as a matter of human rights, and therefore, it is emphasized that the human rights of persons with disabilities must be supported and preserved. According to the 24th article of the Convention, states are obligated to take precautionary measures to ensure that children with disabilities have rights equal to other children, to acknowledge the right to education of those with disabilities, and to provide them full access to this right on all levels of the educational system without being subjected to any kind of discrimination. States that are party to this Convention must provide options such as sign language or the *Braille* alphabet (for the visually impaired), so that students with disabilities may adapt more easily to the educational system. Moreover, as per the convention, the rights of individuals with disabilities must be respected on all levels of the educational system, and programs must therefore be created to raise awareness regarding these rights.

The body that monitors the implementation of the ICESCR, signed by Turkey in 2000 and ratified in 2003, is the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). In its General Comment No.13, this Committee emphasizes that the accessibility of education is one of the fundamental factors in the 13th article of the Convention, which delineates the right to education. According to the CESCR, for education to be accessible it is necessary that there be no

8 CRC (Committee), 2003.

9 CRC, 2012.

de jure or de facto discrimination within the educational system, and those educational services be both physically and economically accessible. Although it is not legally binding, the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities accepted by the United Nations (UN) in 1993 also explains that states must provide equal opportunities to those with and without disabilities within their educational systems. This document also states that education systems must be inclusive of individuals with all types and degrees of disability.

The principle that is widely accepted in international legislation with regards to the education of children with disabilities is that children with disabilities should receive education alongside their peers within the general educational system. The General Comment No.5 of the CESCR emphasizes how important it is for individuals with disabilities to receive their education in integrated environments. To this end, it is necessary for teachers to be trained in a manner that empowers them to meet the needs of children with disabilities within the general educational system. It is also important that the equipment required for the education of children with disabilities and the necessary support be made available on a large scale. In its General Comment No.9, the CRC (Committee) places states under the obligation to render the physical conditions accessible, train teachers on the issue, and develop educational programs and curricula in a way that takes the needs of children with disabilities into consideration, so that children with disabilities are able to take advantage of the educational services in regular schools. According to the CRC (Committee), if regular schools are not able to provide the best possible educational conditions for children with disabilities, separate educational environments can be used as an option.

Turkey is also party to the Revised European Social Charter. The implementation of this Charter is monitored by the European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR). This Committee also declares the right of persons with disabilities to receive equal education in regular schools and places responsibility on the states party to the Charter to take proper measures to ensure this right. The ECSR also monitors whether signatory states are transitioning from a special education model to an inclusive education model, and requests the following information from states:

- “Whether children’s disabilities have been taken into account in designing the regular curriculum, and if so, in what way this has been done,
- Whether individual education plans have been prepared for students with disabilities, and how this has been done,
- Whether financial and human resources – including support personnel and other technical forms of support – have been made directly available to children in order to ensure their education,
- Whether any adaptation has been made in methods for evaluating the results of education, and what kind of adaptation this is,
- Whether the diplomas and degrees received at the end of the educational period are the same as those received by other children, and whether these are officially recognized”.¹⁰

The Education for All (EFA) movement launched by UNESCO considers inclusive education as a key strategy towards an education system that includes everyone. According to the Salamanca Declaration recognized by EFA in 1994 in Spain, every child has the right to education, and the specific qualities, abilities, talents, interests and learning needs of all children must be taken into account. The declaration has adopted student-centered learning with an inclusive approach for

¹⁰ ERI, 2009.

children needing special education as its principle. The main issues emphasized by the declaration include the need for supporting the inclusive education principle with laws and policies, the importance of sharing experiences on inclusive education amongst countries, the monitoring of the implementation of mechanisms for individuals needing special education, and the necessity of increasing parent participation in decision-making processes regarding children with disabilities.

In short, many international conventions clearly prohibit any form of discrimination based on gender, language-spoken, religion and having a disability, and underline the principle of equality in taking advantage of the right to education. As these documents are legally binding for their signatory states, states are required to bring their national legislation in line with international conventions. Committees responsible for monitoring if these conventions are being implemented in the correct manner publish comments that include important provisions, which must be taken into account by states that are party to these afore-mentioned conventions.

2.2. NATIONAL LEGISLATION

According to the 42nd article of the Constitution of the Republic of Turkey, individuals may not be deprived of their right to receive an education; primary education is mandatory for all citizens, regardless of gender, and free of charge in public schools. According to the Basic Law of National Education (BLNE), receiving primary education is “the right of every Turkish citizen,” and equal opportunity in education is provided for everyone, male and female alike. Based on the principle of equality in the BLNE, educational institutions are open to everyone regardless of their gender, language-spoken, religion or race.

The Constitution forbids that Turkish citizens be taught any other language than Turkish in Turkish schools. In the 2nd article of the Law on the Learning and Education of Foreign Languages and Turkish Citizens’ Learning of Different Languages and Dialects, it is stated that “different languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives,” may be taught in private courses, and that private schools may be established in order to offer education in these languages. These private schools and private courses are subject to the Law on Private Education Institutions. According to this law, only the children of those citizens of the Turkish Republic belonging to minority communities may study in minority schools. The Regulation on the Education of the Children of Migrant Workers allows the children of migrant workers to take advantage of educational services in Turkey, and includes these children within the scope of mandatory primary education. According to this Regulation, it is among the duties of provincial directorates of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) to place the children of migrant workers in schools close to their homes, on levels equivalent to those they were attending in the countries they came from, to offer courses, to the extent possible, that teach their mother tongues, and to take the necessary measures to ensure that migrant students learn Turkish.

According to the 24th article of the Constitution regarding the freedom of faith and religion, everybody has freedom of religious belief and the right to practice their belief in line with their own faith, nobody may be forced to join religious ceremonies or declare their religious belief, and nobody may be accused or condemned on account of their beliefs. On the other hand, the same article includes the following statement: “The teaching of religious culture and morals education is considered to be one of those lessons made mandatory in primary and secondary educational institutions.” This statement is what creates the foundation for the existence of mandatory Religious Culture and Morals Education classes.

According to the 8th article of the BLNE, special measures are taken in the upbringing of children who require special education and protection. What these measures are, however, has not been explained in the BLNE. The Law No.2916 on Children with Special Educational Needs (LCSEN) passed in 1983, and the Law No.5378 for Persons with Disability (LPD) passed in 2005 contain clearer provisions on the education of children with disabilities. The LPD states that the education of persons with disabilities cannot be prevented on any grounds whatsoever. Individuals with disability may take advantage of the option of life-long education, with their difference being taken into due consideration, on the basis of full equality, and without being subjected to any form of discrimination. According to the LPD, the state must make the necessary planning within the educational system so that individuals with disability are able to receive all levels of education, and take measures for the inclusion of individuals with disability who, for whatever reason, have made a late start into formal education programs. The law places responsibility on the Ministry of National Education for the provision of materials, such as audiobooks and items using the sign language system or Braille alphabet, which may be needed by persons with disabilities. According to the 13th article of the LPD, measures must be taken to ensure that persons with disabilities are able to choose a profession and receive education in their field. The same article states that vocational training programs are to be developed through the cooperation of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of National Education. The LCSEN states that all children requiring special education are to be given the opportunity of special education, regardless of the type and level of their disability, and that the mainstreaming method be given priority in their education. The mainstreaming method in education was comprehensively delineated and regulated in national legislation for the first time in 1997, with the Statutory Decree No.573 on Special Education. In the Statutory Decree, "mainstreaming," has been defined as "the creation of educational environments designed to ensure interaction between individuals needing special education and others, and thereby achieve the goals of education to the highest degree." The Statutory Decree emphasizes the importance of prioritizing mainstreaming education for children with disabilities, beginning special education at an early age, developing individual education plans for children with disabilities, and actively including families in the process of special education.

The Special Education Services Regulation (SESR), passed in 2006 and revised in 2012, has consolidated the principles of starting early in terms of special education and prioritizing mainstreaming education. According to the 29th article of the SESR, preschool education is mandatory for children with disabilities who are between the ages of 37 to 66 months, and mainstreaming education is given priority in this mandatory preschool education. The SESR comprehensively regulates the methods and rules governing the right of children with disabilities to receive an education. The 7th article of the SESR addresses identification, where it states, "the identification of the educational level and evaluation of the individual is carried out by a special education evaluation board formed within the counseling and research center, using standard, objective tests and measurement methods that fit the qualities of the individual." According to the *Regulation, a Special Education Evaluation Board Report* is prepared for children who are determined to have disabilities, and these children are then placed in a school that is able to meet their needs based on this report. Priority is given to mainstreaming education in the school placement process. The roles of CRCs (Center) and IEPs in identifying students who have disabilities have also been outlined in the Ministry of National Education Regulation for Preschool and Primary Education Institutions and the Ministry of National Education Regulation for Secondary Education Institutions. The 23rd article of the SESR concerning mainstreaming

education emphasizes that schools in which mainstreaming education is present must be rendered physically suitable for children with disabilities, and that the necessary educational materials must be provided. In the same article, it is also set forth that the employees, students and parents in mainstreaming education schools must be informed about the situation of children with disabilities.

For all intents and purposes, the national legislation in Turkey is in line with international legislation, especially on the issue of the education of children with disabilities. The education of children with disabilities has been explained and regulated in a comprehensive manner within national legislation; the same, however, cannot be said of the approach taken towards gender, language-spoken, religion and ethnicity. Although gender-based discrimination is forbidden in the Constitution and in many other legal documents, there are no regulations in place that serve to render educational environments inclusive for girls and for children with different sexual orientations. A comprehensive regulation that particularly pertains to the education of LGBTI (Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) children is seen to be lacking in international legislation. Moreover, the question of whether or not the positive regulations that do exist within the legislation are actually being implemented in an adequate manner must be thoroughly examined. The reports of committees that monitor conventions to which Turkey is party demonstrate that there are many obstacles that are yet to be overcome in the implementation of these provisions.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNESCO, inclusive education is a principle that should be adopted generally for the education system to be inclusive of children, youth and adults; it is a requirement of human and children's rights, and an important condition of societal inclusiveness and development.¹¹ Making early childhood education more widespread so as to include children in the most disadvantaged conditions, ensuring the access of all children to free, mandatory and quality education – prioritizing girls and ethnic minorities – by the year 2015 are among the goals of the Education for All movement under UNESCO. Another goal is to meet the learning needs of all young people and adults, and to ensure equal access to all learning and life skills programs to this end.¹² Inclusive education is among the primary goals of the UN. Of the eight Millennium Development Goals adopted by member states of the UN in 2000, one was the achievement of universal primary education, while another was the establishment of gender equality in primary and secondary education.¹³

The approach that inclusive education can only be achieved by rendering regular schools within the general education system more inclusive is one that has been adopted by many international organizations. In other words, including all children within the general education system by creating suitable conditions and taking the necessary measures is considered the main tenet of inclusive education. This approach is justified by UNESCO on three separate grounds. The educational ground is that inclusive schools develop teaching methods that respond to individual differences, which is of benefit to all students within these schools. The social ground is that inclusive schools create an attitude change and form the foundation for a more just and inclusive society. The economic ground is that schools which provide education for all students at once are much less costly in comparison with a more complicated educational system where separate schools are established for separate student groups.¹⁴

Within the research conducted on inclusive education, the recognition and appreciation of difference in educational environments is treated as more than a mere set of strategies; rather, it is viewed as an approach that concerns the attitudes and perceptions of society at large. An important part of the literature on inclusive education focuses on children with disabilities. In recent years, studies on differences based on factors such as language-spoke, religion, ethnicity and migration have also proliferated. Gender and poverty have also been featured in many studies as factors causing multiple disadvantages. Studies in the field of inclusive education show a great deal variety, such as the groups they focus on, their methods and the issues they take into consideration. While some of these studies aim to bring to light the difficulties experienced by disadvantaged groups through qualitative or quantitative methods, others examine curricula and textbooks.

Many studies emphasize the key role teachers play in inclusive education and note the major importance their attitudes have in the development of an inclusive education system. Pijl and Meijer in particular attribute great significance to the attitudes of teachers in creating an inclusive environment for the education of children with disabilities. According to Pijl and Meijer, teachers

11 UNESCO, 2009.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

must be supported in terms of method, materials and in-service trainings in order to be able to create an inclusive environment in their classrooms for the education of children with disabilities.¹⁵ The International Bureau of Education (IBE) under UNESCO has conducted regional preliminary meetings with participants from 128 countries. In these meetings, it has been highlighted that teachers must be supported pedagogically as well as financially, through a raise in their living standards and social status, so that inclusive education can actually be achieved.¹⁶

One of the main pillars in developing inclusive education systems is the attitude of parents. A study conducted by Akkan et al. draws attention to the pressure placed on Roma children in Turkey by the parents of non-Roma students.¹⁷ UNESCO also points to the importance of the attitude of parents and stresses the possibility of transforming the negative attitudes of parents into positive ones with correct practices. On this matter, UNESCO gives as an example the negative reactions of teachers and the parents of other students towards the inclusion of visually impaired students in regular schools in China, and how these reactions disappeared after this practice was actually put into effect.¹⁸

There are three general headings under which studies fall within the literature on inclusive education. The first of these three is having a disability. In studies within this field, the general importance of mainstreaming is emphasized; attention is drawn to attitudes and statements that are not inclusive of persons with a disability, to problems regarding physical accessibility, and to the lack of data on students with disabilities. In studies on language, religion and ethnic identity, the focus is on the discrimination experienced by individuals from minority groups, as well as content and teacher attitudes that are not compatible with an inclusive approach towards different religious and ethnic groups. Under the heading relating to gender, the studies largely focus on gender-based discrimination in education and gendered language in textbooks.

3.1. GENDER

Although the gap between the schooling rates of girls and boys in Turkey has gradually closed within the last ten years, there is, however, still a certain amount of regional differentiation. The schooling rates of women are lower than those of men, especially in secondary education. In eastern provinces, this difference increases by 7-8 points.¹⁹ Closing this gap is important in terms of gender equality, particularly when it is taken into consideration how essential of a step secondary education is in the life of an individual who is in pursuit of their future profession and status.

There are certain studies within the relevant literature that do focus on the education of women in Turkey, but these are relatively limited in number. In the *Gender Equality Scorecard of 81 Cities* prepared by Demirdirek and Şener, the fact that the literacy rates and levels of education of women show serious variations amongst provinces is brought to light. This study underlines the impact that having to carry out domestic work – especially in families on the lower end of the socioeconomic scale – has on keeping girls from attending school.²⁰

15 Pijl and Meijer, 1997.

16 UNESCO, 2009.

17 Akkan et al., 2011.

18 UNESCO, 2005.

19 ERI, 2014.

20 Demirdirek and Şener, 2014.

In the *Report on Gender Inequality in Turkey* published by the Turkish Industry and Business Association (TÜSİAD) and the Women Entrepreneurs Association of Turkey (KAGİDER) in 2008, attention is drawn to how department choices made by men and women on the higher education level are distributed in a manner compatible with stereotypical gender roles, as well as on gender-based inequalities in accessing education itself. The study also points out the inadequacy of gender segregated data in the field of education in Turkey and of data on women who are not within the education system.²¹

The Human Rights in Textbooks Project No.III, carried out by the Istanbul Bilgi University Center for Sociology and Education Studies (SEÇBİR) and the History Foundation of Turkey, demonstrates that within the textbooks there are good examples that lead one to question patriarchal gender roles. These good examples are usually encountered at the primary educational level, in Social Studies and Science of Life textbooks. In the section regarding information on domestic duties in textbooks for the Science of Life lessons, for instance, it is emphasized that the burden of housework should be on the shoulders of all members of a family, regardless of whether they are men or women, rather than on one single person. Similarly, it can be observed that women are indeed depicted as doctors, engineers and school principals in many of the pictures in these textbooks. It has also been found, however, that alongside these positive examples, gender-based discrimination continues to exist within many textbooks. For example, many different textbooks depict women as those responsible for housework. In one section of a Sociology textbook used in a social sciences high school, having men do housework is defined as “a conflict of roles within the family” and it is also stated here that “if familial roles, such as those of the grandmother or grandfather, motherhood, fatherhood, womanhood, manhood, brotherhood, sisterhood and childhood are unclear and all jumbled up, it is impossible to speak of any familial order.”²²

As part of this literature, the protection of the right to education for all individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity, is taken into consideration within the framework of inclusive education. There are many studies on measures that may be taken in schools with regards to the education of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) persons. In the study they conducted on the high school experiences of gay, lesbian and bisexual students, Ellis and High focused on the effects values espoused by teachers have on students. In this study, it is stated that teachers’ attitudes and statements that consider homosexuality an illness have a negative effect on homosexual students.²³ Warwick et al. argue that there are measures that may be taken, both on the school and on the classroom level, in order to protect the rights of students with different sexual orientations. Among these precautions are the school management’s recognition of peer-to-peer bullying due to homophobia, support provided to students when necessary, the rewarding of inclusive behaviours among peers, and an increase in opportunities for the in-service professional development of teachers.²⁴ UNICEF also emphasizes that children’s right to education may not be restricted on account of not only their own sexual orientation, but also of their parents.²⁵

21 KAGİDER and TÜSİAD, 2008.

22 Çayır, 2014.

23 Ellis and High, 2004.

24 Warwick et al., 2004.

25 UNICEF, 2014.

3.2. DISABILITY

The view stating that the best method for the education of children with disabilities is to provide them an education within the general education system, in regular schools, alongside their peers has been supported by many studies. In research conducted in recent years, the term “integration” has begun to be preferred over that of “inclusion” in order to place an emphasis on the importance of transforming the system so that it comes to respond to the needs of students with disabilities and fits them into the mold of an already existing system.²⁶

Peters states that the first steps in the education of persons with disabilities were taken in Europe in the 19th century with the inclusion of the visually impaired. He then explains that later on, in the 20th century, the education of those with mobility impairments also began to gain importance. According to Peters, the education of persons with disabilities started to be considered a right in Europe and North America towards the end of the 20th century.²⁷ In parallel with the emphasis on the relationship between inclusive education and having a disability, most of the examples of inclusive education in the world today are on the education of persons with disability.

The educational act titled PL-94-142, passed in the United States of America (USA) in 1975, was an important step in ensuring access to education for all individuals, regardless of their type of disability. This legislation was further developed in 1997 and transformed into the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.²⁸ A variety of programs regarding inclusive education have been put into practice in many provinces of Canada as well. These programs have been effective in spreading an inclusive education perspective amongst families and the entire society. The practice of inclusive education was made mandatory in certain areas of Canada in the 1980’s, and individuals with disabilities started receiving an education within the general education system by way of individualized education plans.²⁹

Inclusive education practices have spread among many countries outside of Europe and North America as well. South Africa, for example, has an education system that has realized – to a great extent – the Millennium Development Goals of UNESCO with regards to education. Gender-based differences in schooling rates in the country have been eliminated and literacy rates among adults are quite high (89%).³⁰ A plan (Education White Paper 6) was put into effect by the Ministry of Education in South Africa in 2001 with the aim of transforming the education system so as to meet the needs of all individuals by using an inclusive approach. This document contains factors that are important in terms of inclusive education, such as the development of an inclusive curriculum and the training of teachers.³¹ Donohue and Bornman state that there are still obstacles preventing the full establishment of an inclusive education system in South Africa, but that inclusivity is seen as a right, both in the educational system and in society at large.³²

When it comes to inclusive education, important transformations have taken place in the educational system in New Zealand within the last twenty years. According to the education act passed in 1989, all individuals, from the ages of 5 to 19, have the right to free education, and persons with disabilities have equal rights in education to those who do not have disabilities. The rights that this law provides for individuals with disabilities in the field of education have been

26 Çayır, 2014.

27 Peters, 2004.

28 Ibid.

29 Ibid.

30 Donohue and Bornman, 2014.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

reinforced with documents such as the New Zealand Disability Strategy accepted in 2001.³³ The general principles of special education in New Zealand are as follows: persons with disabilities have equal rights with those who have no disability; the focus must be on meeting the individual needs of each student; partnerships must be established between families and educators; special education funds must be used in an effective manner; the languages and cultures of individuals must be taken into account when preparing educational programs; and the education of individuals with disabilities must be provided in a flawless manner upon the determination of these needs.³⁴ Many resources have been set aside in New Zealand for the support of people with disabilities, starting from early childhood education onwards.

According to Forlin et al. precautions must be taken both on the school and on the classroom level in inclusive education systems. Precautions to be taken on the school level include the establishment of necessary support mechanisms and structures for the provision of equal access to learning opportunities and for inclusive education. Precautions to be taken on the classroom level include creating variations in the curriculum, preparing individualized education programs and focusing on quality education for all students. Forlin et al. emphasize the importance of vocational training programs in order to equip teachers with teaching methods fit for inclusive education, and of creating environments suitable for the implementation of these methods they learn.³⁵

There are many studies demonstrating the key role of teachers in providing an inclusive educational environment for children with disabilities. A significant portion of these studies focus on the cooperation of special education teachers and general education teachers within the classroom. Scruggs, Mastropieri and McDuffie have carried out a meta-synthesis study on thirty two qualitative studies conducted on the topic of co-teaching. According to the findings of their research, co-teaching is considered useful by managers, teachers and students both for the professional development of teachers and for the social and academic success of students. On the other hand, it has been underlined in this study that for co-teaching to succeed, it is important that teachers work in harmony and those managers are supportive.³⁶

In research focusing on Turkey, it has been shown that mainstreaming is the most effective method for the individual development as well as the social integration of children with disabilities. Studies on the access to education of disadvantaged groups – especially persons with disabilities – in Turkey underline the problems faced in practice, in spite of the positive regulations within the legislation. In the study titled *Mainstreaming/Integrated Education Practices in Turkey: Implementation and Policy Recommendations* published by the ERI in 2011, attention is drawn to the fact that difficulties persist in the implementation, although highly developed legal regulations are in place regarding mainstreaming education in Turkey. This study also underlines how important it is that actors with roles and responsibilities in education truly internalize the philosophy of mainstreaming and that these persons are equipped with the necessary information and skills to overcome these difficulties in implementation.³⁷ The study titled *Inequalities in Turkey* published by Candaş and Yılmaz in 2012 focuses on inequalities in income distribution, work life, education and social security. In the section on education within this study, it is stated that although positive legal regulations have been made in terms of access to education for persons with disability and mainstreaming, such as the Law for Persons with Disabilities passed in

33 Powell, 2012.

34 Ibid.

35 Forlin et al., 2013.

36 Scruggs et al., 2007.

37 ERI, 2011.

2005, many problems continue to exist in practice.³⁸ According to the writers, measures need to be taken to diversify the tools of accessibility and education to enable persons with disability to have access to education in a manner equal to other citizens. Importance is also placed on supporting teachers so that mainstreaming education may be implemented in an effective manner that contributes to social inclusion.³⁹

The *Right to Education and Rights in Education: National Legislation in Light of International Human Rights Documents* report, published by the ERI in 2009, evaluates the legal basis of the ban on discrimination in education against persons with disability. A similar study was conducted by the Equal Rights Association in 2011. This study contains examples of cases of discrimination that were observed, as well as a review of the legislation regarding the education of children with disabilities and an analysis of the current situation.⁴⁰ *The Monitoring Report on Discrimination Based on Disability in Turkey*, prepared by Akdağ et al. as part of the Project on Combating Discrimination in Turkey through Documenting and Reporting implemented by the Istanbul Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Center, also includes detailed examples of rights violations faced by children with disabilities in the field of education that have been taken to court or have appeared in the media.⁴¹ Another recent study on the access children with disabilities have to education is the report titled *Towards a Barrier-free Turkey: Where Do We Stand? The Status Quo and Proposals*, published by Sabancı University in 2013. A comprehensive analysis of the state of persons with disabilities on all levels of education – from early childhood education, to higher education and lifelong learning – has been carried out in this report.⁴² An additional recent study on the education of persons with disability is titled *From Legislation to Practice: The 2013 Report on the Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disability*, published by the Social Rights and Research Association (TOHAD). In contrast to other similar studies, this report elaborates on the historical evolution of education policies for persons with disabilities. A detailed analysis is conducted on the legal regulations and educational policies regarding persons with disabilities on different levels of the educational system in this report.⁴³ *From Legislation to Practice: The 2014 Report on the Monitoring of the Rights of Persons with Disability* published by TOHAD in August 2015 evaluates the contemporary education policies related to persons with disabilities.⁴⁴

A recent study conducted by Çayır and Ergün on the manner in which having a disability is handled in textbooks demonstrates that textbooks have not been prepared using an approach that is inclusive of children with disabilities. While conducting the study in question, textbooks used in the 2013-14 academic year in Democracy and Human Rights, Religious Culture and Morals Education, the Science of Life, Medical Sciences, Social Sciences, Sociology, Turkish, and Citizenship and Democracy classes were reviewed using content and discourse analysis methods. As a result of this research, it has been determined that terms such as “disabled”, “handicapped” or “crippled” are treated in these textbooks as entailing some kind of deficiency, illness, flaw or dependency on the care of others. Moreover, it has been observed that persons with disabilities are depicted as helpless, impotent and needy in pictures used in these textbooks and that statements provoking pity towards individuals with disability are common.⁴⁵

38 Candaş and Yılmaz, 2012.

39 Ibid.

40 Equal Rights Association (Eşit Haklar Derneği), 2011.

41 Akdağ et al., 2011.

42 Sabancı University, 2013.

43 TOHAD, 2014.

44 TOHAD, 2015.

45 Çayır and Ergün, 2013.

3.3. MOTHER TONGUE, RELIGION AND ETHNICITY

The issue of the education of different religious and ethnic groups living together continues to be a topic of research and discussion in many parts of the world. Studies treating the right to education of linguistic, religious or ethnic minorities as part of the inclusive education approach have been proliferating within the international body of literature. A significant portion of these studies emphasize the role of teachers in providing an inclusive education to students with different religious and ethnic identities.

The term ‘multicultural education’ is preferred in studies that are part of the literature on the education of different linguistic, religious and ethnic groups. According to Banks, it is important for multicultural education that teachers form their teaching methods in a manner that is able to meet the needs of different groups.⁴⁶ In their work focusing on the inclusivity of the education system in Ireland, where many different ethnic groups live due to the waves of immigrants entering the country since the 1990s, Travers et al. also mention the role of teachers. According to this study, measures that are to be taken at the classroom level are of major importance in ensuring the success of providing an inclusive education to persons from ethnic and linguistic minority groups. Within this context, it is seen as a necessity that teachers consider the education of all children to be part of their responsibility and that they receive the required assistance and support in doing so. Travers et al. emphasize that the negative attitudes of teachers pose a substantial challenge to achieving inclusive education.⁴⁷

Studies focusing on discrimination based on religious belief and ethnic origin in Turkey tend to use an in-depth interview approach. The *Report on Discrimination Against Children in Turkey*, prepared by the Gündem Children’s Association and conducted by interviewing persons aged 18 to 25 about their past childhood experiences, concentrates specifically on experiences relating to religious belief, ethnic identity, being a victim of crime or under institutional care. Difficulties experienced in school or with teachers were among childhood experiences recounted by individuals that were interviewed. These interviews conducted with people with different ethnic identities clearly reveal the ethnicity-based exclusion these people experienced during their childhoods.⁴⁸

Another study, carried out by the Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association was also based on interviews with persons with different ethnic identities regarding their childhood experiences. These interviews focused on the negative attitudes demonstrated by teachers and peers towards children with different ethnic identities and on the representations of ethnic identities in textbooks. The results of this study demonstrate how these attitudes and representations put pressure upon children, particularly the pressures caused by the depiction of certain minority groups as culprits in textbooks, especially in those used in history classes, upon students from these minority groups. Attention is drawn to the fact that when teachers lecture in class they are able to create a picture even more negative than the problematic image already existing in these textbooks.⁴⁹

A Monitoring Report on Discrimination Based on Race or Ethnic Origin has been prepared as part of the Project on Combating Discrimination in Turkey through Documenting and Reporting

⁴⁶ Banks, 2009.

⁴⁷ Travers et al., 2010.

⁴⁸ Gündem Children’s Association (Gündem Çocuk Derneği), 2014.

⁴⁹ Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association (Ermeni Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği), 2013.

conducted by the İstanbul Bilgi University Human Rights Law Research Center from 2009 to 2011. In its section on education, there is mention of various ethnic groups, asylum-seekers, refugees and groups that have no legal status whatsoever. The Roma people are determined in this study to be the ethnic group facing the greatest difficulties in accessing education. The low schooling and literacy rates amongst Roma children are seen to be related to poverty and early marriages. Roma children who continue their education, on the other hand, face the prejudices of non-Roma children, parents and teachers; and it is emphasized here that these prejudices play an important contributing role in making Roma children quit school. The fact that Roma people live in their own segregated and closed communities and attend neighbourhood schools has been cited as an obstacle preventing social inclusion as well. It has also been pointed out that most of the teachers working in these schools have low levels of motivation.⁵⁰

In Turkey, the mother tongue issue is usually treated as coupled with ethnic identity. Studies in recent years carried out on the problem of using the mother tongue in education demonstrate the disadvantaged state of children whose mother tongues are different from Turkish in schools in Turkey. According to a study conducted by the ERI in 2014, it was found that the success shown in mathematics classes by students whose mother tongue is not Turkish lags two school years behind that of students whose mother tongue is Turkish.⁵¹ In the report published as a result of the Project on the Role of Education as a Means to Societal Reconciliation conducted by the History Foundation of Turkey, the fact that students whose mother tongue is not Turkish face the challenge of having to learn another language, along with how to read and write, when they start school is highlighted.⁵²

The Human Rights in Textbooks Project No.III, carried out by SEÇBİR and the History Foundation of Turkey focuses on the role of textbooks in constructing the definition of national identity and the concept of citizenship in Turkey.⁵³ The results of the evaluations of textbooks carried out under the project have been published by Kenan Çayır in his book titled *Who are “we”? Identity, Citizenship and Rights in Turkey’s Textbooks*. This study reveals that the ‘citizen’ represented in these textbooks is associated ethnically with Turkishness and religiously with Sunni Islam. What results from an analysis of Geography and Turkish Literature textbooks is that “Turkishness” refers to “an ethnic identity defined as citizens who have originated from Central Asia, having migrated and settled in Anatolia due to geographical conditions and who have adopted Islam over time. All those who do not fit this definition are left outside the scope of this identity.” It has been determined that different ethnic identities, religions or beliefs are not mentioned much in textbooks and that when they are, it is only to depict them in a negative manner.⁵⁴

A recent report on discrimination based on ethnicity, language and religion looks at the inequalities students in formal education face in the 2014-15 school year. The report deals with the relationship between educational discrimination and structural issues such as school registration processes, elective courses and school budgets.⁵⁵

There are other studies that focus on religious education from a legal perspective in Turkey. In a study by Ünal, religious education in Turkey has been examined in light of decisions made in the Turkish legal system and in European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). About the ECtHR

50 Alp and Taştan, 2011.

51 ERI, 2014.

52 Fırat, 2010.

53 Çayır, 2014.

54 Ibid.

55 Kaya, 2015.

decisions on religious education in Turkey, Ünal says: “The question primarily addressed by the European Court of Human Rights in its processes to provide for the right to religious education and to identify violations is whether the state accords an effective right of exemption to the parent in terms of religious education. If there is no effective exemption practice in place, the Court pays attention to the question as to whether or not the content of religious lectures is objective, refrains from a single-sided perspective and presents a critical point of view, is of sufficient flexibility not to pursue any aim of doctrination and is of a nature that may not by-pass the rights of the parent to provide for the religious education of their children in line with their own opinions. As long as these positive and negative conditions have been satisfied, the Court does not consider compulsory religious education to be objectionable.”⁵⁶ In his examination of the lawsuits filed to be exempt from Religious Culture and Morals Education classes, he states that the decisions of the State Council and the İzmir 1st Administrative Court are compatible with the ECtHR decisions. The decision of the Constitutional Court, on the other hand, “demonstrates an approach which appears to be under the influence of the opinion that religious education must be implemented absolutely under the supervision and control of the state, regardless of such education being delivered in intra-curricular or extra-curricular terms and which revolves around the fundamental aim of protecting the stage, extending beyond the concerns pertaining to the protection of the right to religious education.”⁵⁷

3.4. GENERAL EVALUATION

Especially in recent years, studies on inclusive education have proliferated in number and have been more diversified in terms of the groups they focus on. Greater variety in the methods of research has also been seen. In studies on inequalities based on language, religion and ethnic identity, qualitative methods have been mostly preferred. The lack of a rich source of statistics that would allow for comprehensive studies based on quantitative data has also become quite evident.

While studies are usually seen to focus on one or two disadvantaged groups, there are, however, some that address multiple disadvantages. In the report titled *Towards a Barrier-free Turkey: Where Do We Stand? The Status Quo and Proposals* published by Sabancı University in 2013, for instance, examples of multiple disadvantages, such as having a disability and at the same time being affected by factors such as gender, language, ethnic identity and poverty, are mentioned.⁵⁸ Multiple disadvantages may also be observed at the root of problems associated with the access to education of Roma children in Turkey. In a study carried out by Akkan et al., it was shown that the existence of low rates in access to education among Roma children is closely related to poverty.⁵⁹ As these examples also demonstrate, the fact that many different types of disadvantage are taken into consideration simultaneously in studies regarding inclusive education in Turkey corresponds to the multi-faceted nature of inclusive education itself.

56 Ünal, 2011.

57 Ibid.

58 Sabancı University, 2013.

59 Akkan et al., 2011.

4. CONSIDERING THE STATE OF TURKEY IN TERMS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

In this section, the state of education in Turkey shall be analyzed by considering whether or not the conditions that must exist in an inclusive education system are present. The primary goal of this analysis is to reveal what kinds of interventions are necessary and in which areas for the development of an inclusive education system – especially at the secondary level.

Access to educational services is considered the first and foremost condition of inclusive education. Therefore, the first section contains an analysis of data regarding schooling, absentee and dropout rates. The second section will then look into women's access to education, especially at the secondary level and evaluate the compatibility of textbooks to an inclusive perspective on gender, in order to determine how inclusive the education system is in terms of gender. This section shall also evaluate the inclusion of women from a perspective that considers secondary education an important step in the transition to higher education and professional life. In the following section, an assessment shall be made on the manner in which and the extent to which persons with disabilities are included within the education system. Here, there shall be a special focus on mainstreaming at the secondary educational level. The reason of focusing on mainstreaming is that system in Turkey is still in integration stage. A factor in this section that creates difficulties in conducting detailed analyses on persons with disabilities who have been left outside the education system is the lack of up-to-date data. This section also includes the ways in which persons with disabilities are represented in textbooks and their perceptions of the discrimination they face, as well as their access to education.

Whether the needs of different groups in the field of education are met with an inclusive approach or not is discussed under a separate heading. As the data on education segregated in terms of linguistic, religious and ethnic groups is limited, it is difficult to conduct detailed analyses regarding many issues. This gap is partly filled by data collected on minority groups by way of qualitative methods. Thus, this section shall also include an evaluation of data regarding the representations of minority groups in textbooks.

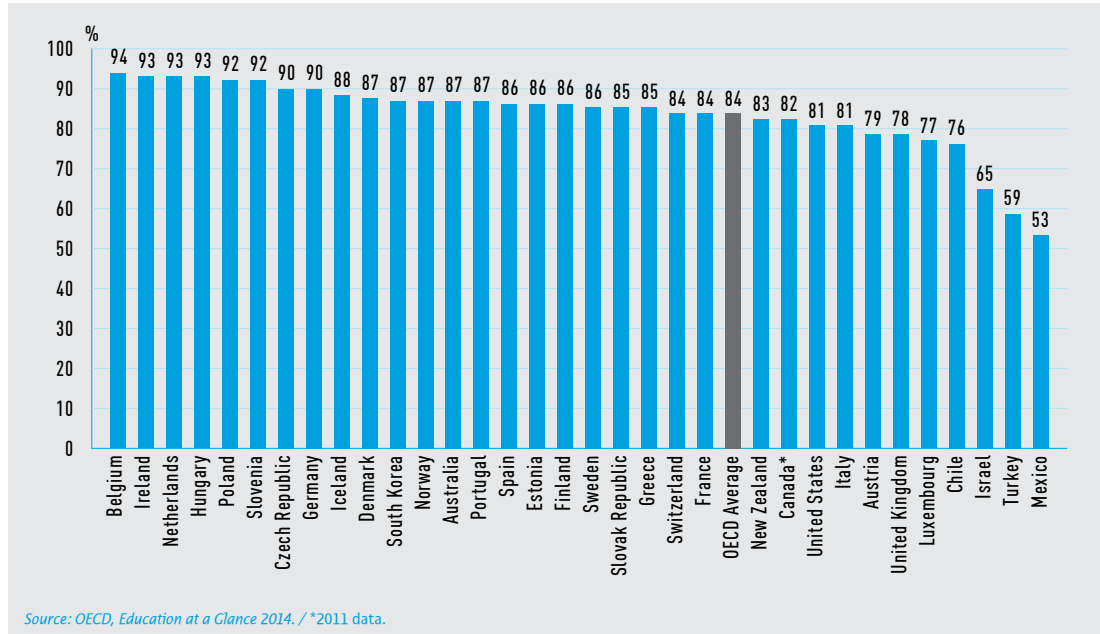
Socioeconomic status, like gender, is a variable that cross-cuts other variables relating to inclusive education. For this reason, the fifth section contains an analysis of the manner in which socioeconomic status relates to the inclusivity of education. To this end, particular focus is directed towards evaluating how schooling rates and academic success in children is associated with household income levels and the educational backgrounds of parents.

4.1. ACCESS TO EDUCATION IN TURKEY

When analyzing the inclusivity of the education system, it is important to take the accessibility of education into consideration. Although considerable progress has been observed in access to basic education in Turkey in the last ten years, this progress still falls short of expectations, especially at the secondary level of education. According to data published by the OECD with regards to the year 2012, the schooling rate of the 15-19 year age group is 59%. Looked at another way, this means that the schooling rates of the 15-19 year age group have shown a 29-point increase since 1995. When Turkey is compared with other OECD countries based on data from the year 2012,

however, it is shown that not only does Turkey rank 31st among the 32 OECD countries that are included in the calculation, but it also falls 25% below the OECD average in schooling rates, which is 84% (Graph 1).⁶⁰ Furthermore, the data from the year 2012 also demonstrates that 29% of the youth in the 15-19 year age group in Turkey is neither within an educational program, nor part of the work force. This rate is far above the OECD average, which is 15%.⁶¹

GRAPH 1: SCHOOLING RATES OF THE 15-19 YEAR AGE GROUP IN OECD COUNTRIES, 2012



According to MoNE (MEB) data on the 2014-15 academic year, the schooling rate at the primary level of education is 96.3%, while it is 94.4% in middle school level. Schooling rates also vary among provinces. The highest rates are observed in Adıyaman, Ağrı, Amasya, Ardahan, Bartın, Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, Iğdır, İstanbul, Kars, Kastamonu, Mardin, Samsun, Şanlıurfa and Zonguldak (98%), while the lowest rates are found in Gümüşhane (80%), Çankırın (90%), Yozgat (90%), Bayburt (92%), Tokat (92%) and Hakkari (93%).⁶²

The net schooling rate in secondary education was seen to be only 79% in the 2014-15 academic year, despite the implementation of a 12-year mandatory education system starting from the 2012-13 academic year.⁶³ The progress observed in the increase of schooling rates at the secondary level of education over time is, however, quite striking. Since the 1994-95 academic year, this rate has gradually risen from 37% to 79% (Graph 2).

Schooling rates in secondary education show serious regional variations. According to data regarding the 2014-15 academic year, the schooling rate is 65% in Northeast Anatolia and Central East Anatolia, 66% in Southeastern Anatolia and 80% or higher in the other regions of Turkey (Graph 3).

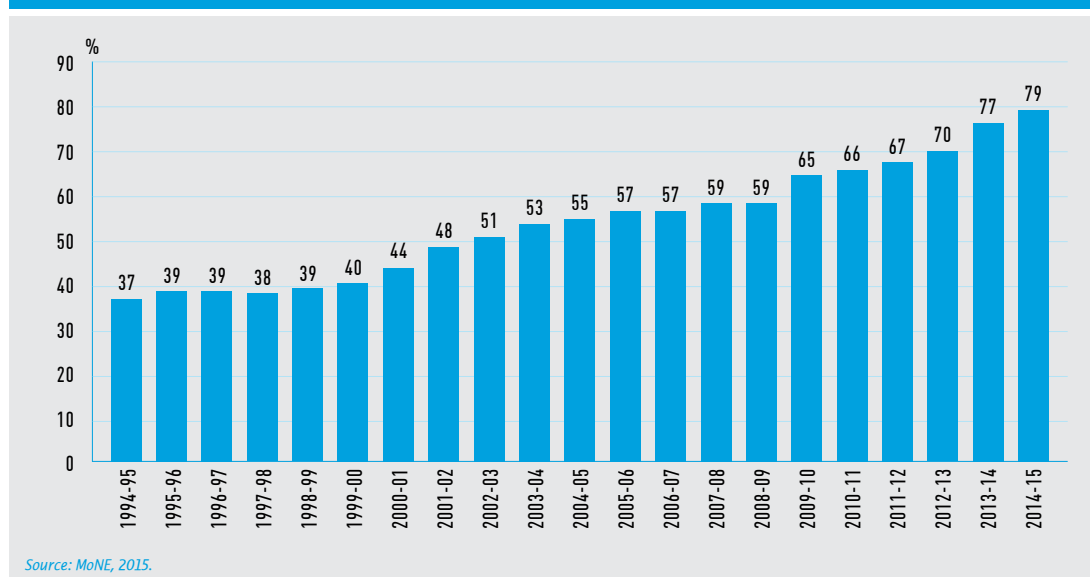
60 OECD, 2014.

61 Ibid.

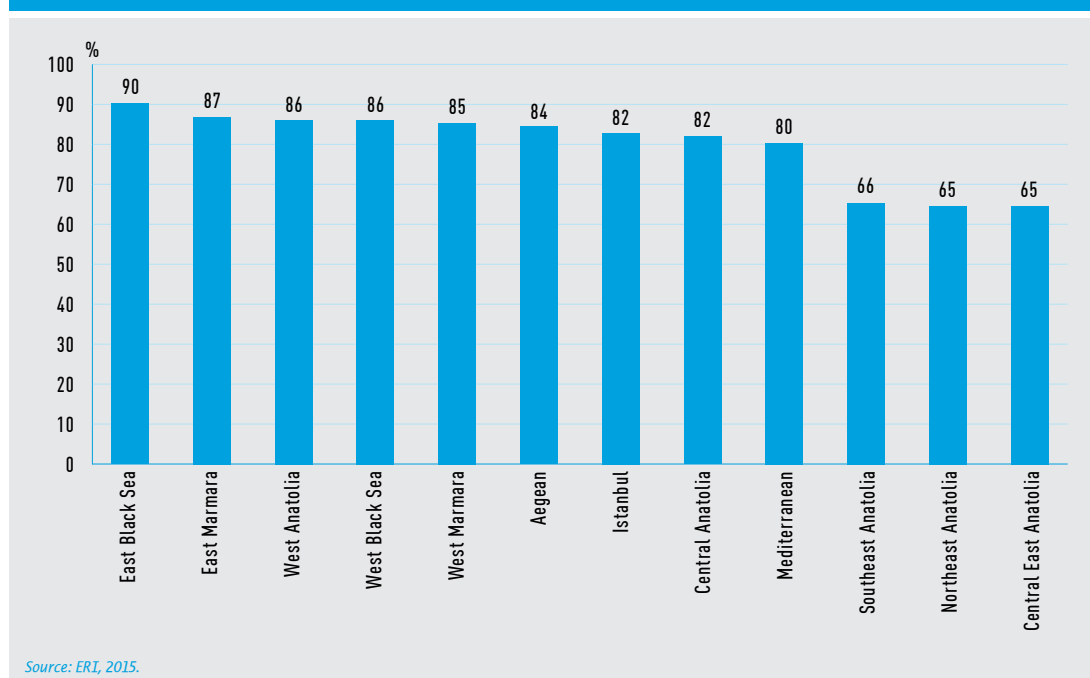
62 MoNE, 2015.

63 Ibid.

GRAPH 2: SCHOOLING RATES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION IN TURKEY BY YEAR, BETWEEN 1994-95 AND 2014-15



GRAPH 3: SCHOOLING RATES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 2014-15



The net schooling rate at the level of preschool education in Turkey, in the 2014-15 academic year, was 33% for the 3-5 year age group and 42% for the 4-5 year age group.⁶⁴ These rates are far below the targets set by the Ministry. As seen at other educational levels, net schooling rates in preschool education also show stark differences among provinces. The net schooling rate in preschool education within the 4-5 year age group is below 35% at its lowest, as is the case in Ağrı, Gaziantep, Hakkari, İstanbul, Mardin and Şırnak. It is above 55% at its highest, which can be observed in Amasya, Giresun, Kırklareli, Mersin, Nevşehir, Tokat and Tunceli. The fact that preschool education is not legally defined by the state as a right, is not mandatory or free of

⁶⁴ MoNE, 2015.

charge prevents preschool education from becoming accessible to everyone. The development of the Project on Strengthening Preschool Education by the MoNE General Directorate for Basic Education with support from UNICEF to increase the inclusion of disadvantaged children within preschool education is an important step.

Absentee and dropout rates are other important indicators that must be taken into consideration in terms of access to education. The rate of students that were absent for ten or more days in the first semester of the 2012-13 academic year across Turkey at the secondary education level was 32.7%. Absentee rates also show regional variations. The region with the highest absentee rate in secondary education is the Aegean, where it is 37.1%.⁶⁵ Absentee rates, however, are lower in primary education. According to data on the 2010-11 academic year, the absentee rate of girls at the primary educational level was 10.3%, while that of boys was 12.7%.⁶⁶

The MoNE has made efforts to monitor and reduce absences in recent years. The Gradual Absence Management Model (GAMM) implemented in 2011 was one of these efforts; it has, however, been a short-lived practice. Another important project put in motion by the MoNE General Directorate for Basic Education with the support of the EU is the Project to Increase Continuity in Primary Education Institutions. With this project, which began in 2013, the aim is to monitor absences at the level of primary education, determine measures to prevent these absences, enhance the language skills of students whose language skills are not adequate, develop policy and legislative recommendations, and increase the personnel capacity of the MoNE in 12 pilot provinces.⁶⁷ According to data from 2010-11 school year published by MoNE Secondary Education General Directorate (MoNE SEGD), the ratio of students that drop out of secondary education is the highest at 9th grade. In the 2010-11 school year, 204,384 (28%) out of 727,624 9th graders dropped out of school.⁶⁸ Furthermore, the MoNE SEGD has designed adjustment plans for 9th graders, the level at which dropout rates are highest, in collaboration with UNICEF. The pilot project was put into effect in 12 schools in the 2012-13 academic year. The expanded second step of the pilot has been implemented as well. Furthermore, it has been stated in the *2015-2019 Strategic Plan of MoNE* that the "Adjustment in Secondary Education Program" will be extended.⁶⁹

As one of the common practices used to lower absence rates in Turkey, school managers and teachers arrange meetings with the parents of students who have absence problems. This practice depends, however, on school policy and the attention given by teachers, and therefore, it is not implemented in a similar manner in every region and at every single school.⁷⁰ Another policy put in place to lower absentee rates is the provision of Conditional Cash Transfers for Educational Assistance (CCTs). CCTs are provided by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies (MoFSP) to poor families whose children aged 6-17 years are unable to take advantage of educational services due to economic difficulties, under the condition that they send their children to school regularly. Detailed analyses on these CCTs for Education are given in the fifth section of this report.

65 MoNE, 2013a.

66 ERI, 2014.

67 Ibid.

68 MoNE SEGD and UNICEF, 2013.

69 MoNE SDD, 2015.

70 Köse et al., forthcoming.

4.2. HOW INCLUSIVE OF WOMEN IS THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN TURKEY?

Upon analyzing the data on schooling rates in Turkey according to gender, it can be seen that gender-based inequality has been eliminated to a great extent in elementary and middle schools, but that this inequality persists in preschool and secondary education.

The low schooling rates at this educational level can be attributed to the fact that preschool education is neither mandatory nor free of charge in Turkey. When schooling rates are analyzed according to gender, boys in the 4-5 year age group are seen to have a net schooling rate that is 2% above that of girls in the same age group across Turkey. Narrowing it down to just 5-year-old boys and girls, this difference rises to 4%. Many studies show that children who receive a quality early childhood education grow to be more successful academically than those who do not in their ensuing educational careers.⁷¹ With these findings, it is quite clear that gender-based differences must be prevented in preschool education.

The gender gap in schooling rates in elementary and middle school in Turkey has closed in recent years. According to the 2014-15 MoNE statistics, the net schooling rate for girls in primary school is 96.6% and 96% for boys, while in middle school, the net schooling rate for girls is 94.3%, and 94.4% for boys.⁷²

Women's schooling rates have shown great improvement at the secondary education level in recent years (Graph 4). In the 2014-15 school year, the net secondary education schooling rate for women in Turkey is 79.3%, while this number is 79.5% for men.⁷³ When schooling rates are analyzed according to region, it can be observed that gender based inequality persists in some regions (Graph 5). According to data from the year 2014-15, in Southeast Anatolia – the region where the gap between the schooling rates of men and women is the largest – the schooling rate of women (63.2%) was 4.7 percentage points below that of men (67.9%). Central East Anatolia is the other region where the gender gap in schooling rates at the secondary education level looms large. In Central East Anatolia, the net schooling rate of women was 62.6%, while that of men was 66.8%. The difference between women and men in Bitlis, Siirt and Şanlıurfa is above 10 percentage points.⁷⁴

Istanbul, Aegean, West Anatolia and Central Anatolia are regions where the net schooling rates of women are at least 1 percentage point higher than those of men.

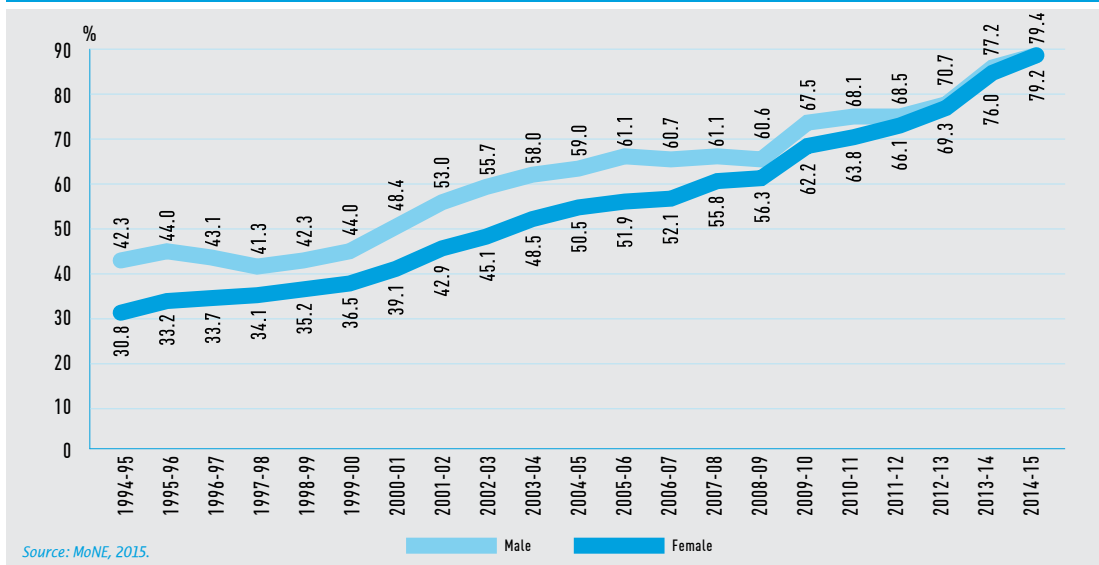
71 AÇEV and ERI, 2013.

72 MoNE, 2015.

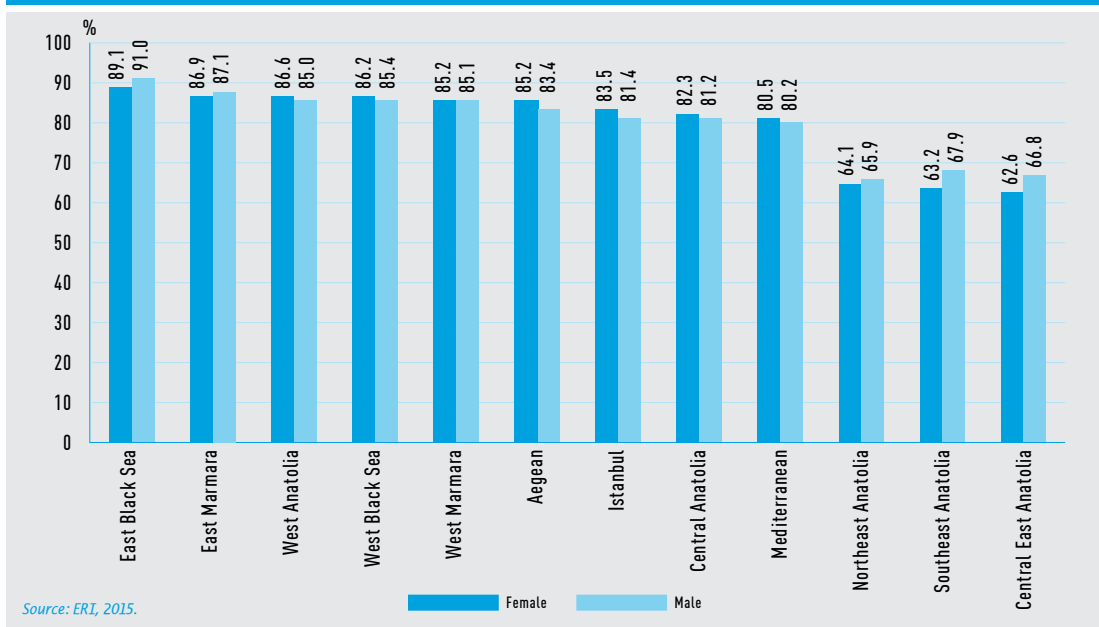
73 Ibid.

74 ERI, 2015.

GRAPH 4: SCHOOLING RATES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BY YEAR, BETWEEN 1994-95 AND 2014-15



GRAPH 5: SCHOOLING RATES OF MEN AND WOMEN IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON GEOGRAPHICAL AREA, 2014-15



Important differences stand out in the absentee rates of male and female students at the secondary education level. Data on the 2012-13 academic year shows that men had a 40.6% absentee rate in secondary education, while this rate was 24.1% for women.⁷⁵

Secondary education is an important step in the transition to higher education and professional life. The low levels of both women’s participation in higher education and their employment rates may therefore be seen as directly related to how they access secondary education and the quality of the education they receive. According to TurkStat statistics from 2014, 46% of students enrolled in higher education are women while 54% are men. The 2014 household labor force statistics published by TurkStat shows that female labor force participation (in the 15+ age group) is 30.3% while for men this rate is 71.3%.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ ERI, 2014.

⁷⁶ TurkStat, 2014.

It is stated in the *2013 Progress Report* by the European Union that the enrollment rates of girls during the mandatory period of education must be improved, and that measures must be taken to solve the problems in schooling at the secondary level of education. This report also cites the discrimination LGBTI students face in high school and university, which in some cases leads to them having to quit school.⁷⁷

In the *2010-2014 MoNE Strategic Plan*, it is declared that importance shall be given to the schooling of girls, and that for this purpose, campaigns such as “Come on Girls, to School” shall continue.⁷⁸ Increasing girls’ access to education is included in the *2015-2019 Strategic Plan of MoNE* as well.⁷⁹ An important step taken by the Ministry to improve the schooling rates of girls is the Project to Increase School Enrollment Rates Especially for Girls (ISEG). This project was completed in the year 2011, in coordination with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and with the support of the European Union. As part of this project, field research was carried out in 16 pilot provinces with low enrollment rates in schools, high dropout rates, and large gaps between the enrollment rates of girls and boys. This research has demonstrated that socioeconomic status has a significant effect on continuity in school, that poverty prevents children from continuing their studies due to the children having to work either inside or outside the home, and that poverty is a particularly major obstacle preventing girls from receiving an education.

The goal to increase the school enrollment and continuity rates of girls is a special highlight of the *Tenth Development Plan (2014-2018)* prepared by the Ministry of Development. This Plan states that access to education shall be ensured at the primary educational level for all children – with a special emphasis on girls and on those with disabilities – that grade repetitions and dropouts shall be reduced, and that infrastructure necessary for children with disabilities shall be strengthened in order to provide them with an integrative education in suitable environments.⁸⁰ There is a conspicuous absence of goals, however, with regards to the situation of LGBTI students, in either the *Strategic Plan of the MoNE* or the *Development Plan*. No project is being carried out regarding these students.

It is important to look at the content of education as well when evaluating the inclusivity of the education system in terms of gender. A gender-based analysis of textbooks provides important information on this matter. Observations made as part of The Human Rights in Textbooks Project No.III by SEÇBİR and the History Foundation of Turkey, demonstrate that gender-based discrimination is prevalent in textbooks. According to the findings of this study, content advocating for patriarchal gender roles are common in textbooks. In a Social Sciences High School Sociology textbook, for example, men doing housework are considered to be causing “a conflict of roles in the family.” This study states that examples similar to this have been observed in material at other educational levels as well.⁸¹

Data regarding LGBTI (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex) persons’ access to educational services is very limited in Turkey as well as the rest of the world. In the Report on *Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Europe* published by the Council of Europe, it is asserted that LGBTI persons are the target of peer-to-peer bullying in almost all member states, and that this bullying starts in the very early stages of their lives. It is also stated in the report that policies for the protection of LGBTI students, teachers and employees from peer bullying and harassment are in place in only very few countries.⁸²

77 European Commission, 2013.

78 MoNE SDD, 2009.

79 MoNE SDD, 2015.

80 The Ministry of Development, 2013.

81 Çayır, 2014.

82 The Council of Europe, 2011.

4.3. EDUCATION FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES IN TURKEY

In the context of this report, the CRPD definition of disability has been utilized. According to this definition, persons with disabilities include “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.”⁸³ It is difficult to find up-to-date data on persons with disability in Turkey. The most current and comprehensive study is the one carried out in 2002. In the Turkey Disability Survey conducted by the State Institute of Statistics (SIS) and the Turkish Prime Ministry Presidency on the Administration of Disabled People (ADP), persons with disability are addressed in two categories. The first category includes persons with speech and language, visual, hearing, orthopedic and mental impairments, while the second is made of up those with chronic illnesses. The rate of persons in the first category within the entire population is calculated as 2.6%, while those with chronic illnesses constitute 9.7% of the population. The total rate of persons with disability in the population is 12.3%. This study does not provide data on the inclusion of persons with disability under the age of 25 within the education system, or on their levels of education – i.e. there is no information on either how many children with disabilities are studying or in what kinds of schools they are studying in; the rates of persons with disabilities have, however, been determined to be 4.2% in the 0-9 year age group, and 4.6% in the 10-19 year age group.⁸⁴

The literacy and educational levels of persons with disabilities over the age of 25, according to data compiled in the 2002 survey, are depicted in Table 1. It can be seen that the educational levels of those over the age of 25, who have speech and language, visual, hearing, orthopedic or mental impairments, are lower in comparison to the educational levels of persons with chronic illnesses. Gender and where one lives also appear to have an important effect on the educational levels of persons with disabilities (Table 1).⁸⁵

TABLE 1: SHARE OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ACCORDING TO COMPLETED LEVEL OF EDUCATION, 2002 (%)

Those over the age of 25, who have speech and language, visual, hearing, orthopedic or mental impairments							
	Illiterate	Literate	Literate without schooling	Primary school graduate	Middle school or equivalent vocational school graduate	High school or equivalent vocational school graduate	Graduate of higher education
Turkey	36.4	63.6	7.7	41.0	5.6	6.9	2.4
Urban	27.4	72.6	6.9	42.8	8.0	10.6	4.4
Rural	45.4	54.6	8.5	39.2	3.3	3.2	0.5
Men	25.8	74.2	8.0	47.2	7.0	9.0	3.1
Women	51.3	48.7	7.3	32.2	3.8	4.0	1.5
Those over the age of 25, who have a chronic disease							
	Illiterate	Literate	Literate without schooling	Primary school graduate	Middle school or equivalent vocational school graduate	High school or equivalent vocational school graduate	Graduate of higher education
Turkey	26.6	73.4	8.1	47.1	6.3	7.6	4.2
Urban	22.0	78.0	7.0	47.0	7.9	10.1	6.0
Rural	35.1	64.9	10.1	47.3	3.4	3.0	1.1
Men	10.2	89.8	7.4	54.4	9.5	11.4	7.1
Women	37.3	62.7	8.5	42.4	4.3	5.1	2.4

Source: SIS and ADP, 2009.

⁸³ CRPD, 2006.

⁸⁴ SIS and ADP, 2009.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

A more contemporary study on persons with disability is from the year 2010. Although the Study on the Problems and Expectations of Persons with Disabilities conducted by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies and TurkStat provides more up-to-date data in comparison to the 2002 Survey by ADP and SIS, its scope is limited to persons with disability registered in the National Database of Disabled People (NDDP). A total of 280,014 individuals registered in the NDDP with speech and language, visual, hearing, orthopedic, psychological, mental and emotional impairments, as well as impairments caused by chronic diseases, with degrees of disability that are at least 20% or higher, have been included within this study. According to the findings of the study, a significant portion (41.6%) of individuals registered in the NDDP is not literate. Levels of education are lower among women in comparison to men, and lower in rural areas in comparison to urban areas (Table 2).

TABLE 2: THE EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF INDIVIDUALS REGISTERED IN THE NATIONAL DATABASE OF DISABLED PEOPLE, 2010 (%)

	Total			Urban			Rural		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Illiterate	41.6	32.1	54.9	37.5	29.0	49.7	48.2	37.2	63.3
Literate without schooling	18.2	19.2	16.8	18.3	18.4	18.2	18.1	20.6	14.6
Primary school	22.3	26.3	16.5	22.8	26.7	17.3	21.3	25.8	15.2
Middle school or its equivalents	10.3	12.5	7.1	11.5	13.5	8.7	8.2	10.8	4.6
High school or above	7.7	9.8	4.7	9.8	12.4	6.1	4.2	5.5	2.3

Source: MoFSP and TurkStat, 2010.

In order to better understand the discrimination experienced by persons with disabilities in the field of education, it is important to compare the educational levels of persons with and without disability. Upon looking at data from the year 2010, it can be seen that there is a particularly important difference between the literacy rates of persons with and without disability. There is also a stark difference between the number of persons with disabilities and those without, who have received a high school level or above education (Graph 6).

GRAPH 6: COMPARISON BETWEEN THE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ENTIRE POPULATION, 2010

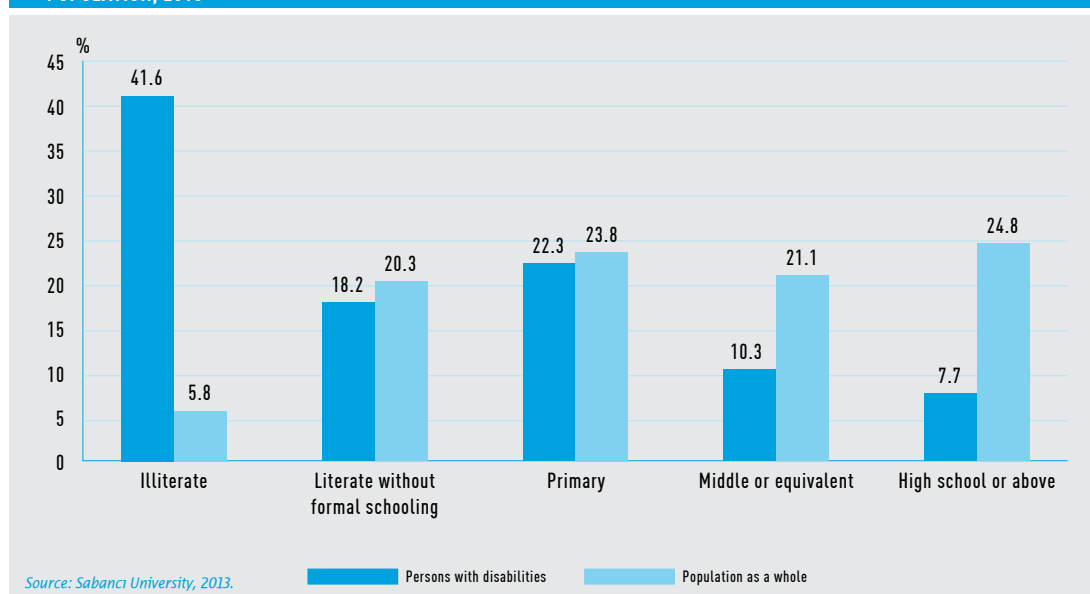


TABLE 3: THE EDUCATIONAL LEVELS OF THE POPULATION AGED 6 AND OVER ACCORDING TO TYPE OF DISABILITY, 2010 (%)

	Total	With visual impairments	With hearing impairments	With speech and language impairments	With orthopedic impairments	With mental impairments	With psychological and emotional impairments	With chronic diseases	With multiple disabilities
Illiterate	41.6	32.1	31.6	33.6	26.4	57.5	24.0	32.2	48.5
Literate but without schooling	18.2	11.8	23.0	38.6	10.9	28.9	12.7	12.8	15.3
Elementary school	22.3	29.0	17.9	10.7	32.9	4.6	33.0	34.9	22.9
Primary education/middle school or its equivalents	10.3	12.5	16.4	11.0	13.4	8.2	15.2	10.2	8.0
High school and above	7.7	14.6	11.1	6.1	16.4	0.7	15.1	9.9	5.3

Source: MoFSP and TurkStat, 2010.

In Turkey, persons with disabilities receive education in three separate categories. The type of education that is considered the least restrictive is full-time mainstreaming education. Education received in special education classrooms located within regular schools that are part of the general education system is seen as a more restrictive method. The most restrictive form of education for persons with disabilities is being educated in special education schools. The degree of restriction increases when the school is a boarding school.⁸⁶ Persons with disabilities may also receive education in rehabilitation centers, apart from or along with different types of schools. According to data from the year 2010, more than half of those registered in the NDDP who are still studying in an educational institution are receiving their education through a mainstreaming approach in institutions within the general education system. While the rates of women and men, in terms of persons receiving special education or education in rehabilitation centers, are close, it is interesting to see that the rate of women is lower than that of men in mainstreaming education (Table 4).

TABLE 4: THE DISTRIBUTION OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITY STUDYING IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, ACCORDING TO GENDER AND TYPE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION, 2010 (%)

	Men	Women	Total
Mainstreaming education	56.0	50.7	54.0
Special education	20.6	21.6	21.0
Rehabilitation centers	46.0	47.9	46.7

Source: MoFSP and TurkStat, 2010.

It can be observed that over the years an increase occurs in the number of students who receive mainstreaming education in primary and secondary education (Table 5).

TABLE 5: THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN MAINSTREAMING EDUCATION IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY LEVELS ACCORDING TO YEAR

School Year	Primary	Secondary
2002-03	29,684	1,365
2003-04	30,960	1,768
2004-05	39,921	1,830
2005-06	43,535	1,428
2006-07	52,745	1,563
2007-08	55,866	1,797
2008-09	68,022	2,663
2009-10	71,147	5,062
2010-11	84,637	7,775
2011-12	137,893	10,860
2012-13	147,048	14,247
2013-14	152,485	20,632
2014-15	161,982	20,935

Source: ERI, 2014; MoNE, 2015.

The placement of persons with disabilities into educational institutions is decided upon based on the diagnostic procedure carried out by Counseling and Research Centers (CRCs). This diagnostic procedure is, however, inadequate, both in terms of how well-equipped personnel are, and in terms of measurement techniques.⁸⁷ Furthermore, it is quite important that children with disabilities are diagnosed at an early age. The fact that Turkey is deficient on this front has been revealed in a study conducted by UNICEF and the MoNE in 2009. According to this study, having a disability delays a child's registration into school and 12% of the children in the late registration group have congenital health defects or developmental disorders.⁸⁸

TABLE 6: THE DISTRIBUTION OF COUNSELING AND RESEARCH CENTERS ACCORDING TO GEOGRAPHICAL REGION (%)

Marmara	26
Aegean	13
Mediterranean	10
Central Anatolia	18
Black Sea	15
East Anatolia	8
Southeast Anatolia	10

Source: Sabancı University, 2013.

The physical accessibility of educational facilities is necessary for the provision of inclusive education for persons with disabilities. Although it is not possible to have the exact number of educational institutions designed in line with the needs of persons with disabilities, the current number of these institutions is insufficient to meet these needs.⁸⁹

It is not enough to only design the facility and organize registration procedures in a manner that is suitable for persons with disabilities in order to render education truly accessible to them. It is also important for the development of an inclusive education system that the educational tools and equipment are appropriate for persons with disabilities, that educators have been trained so

⁸⁷ Sabancı University, 2013.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

as to be able to meet the needs of these students, and that the necessary support be provided to them and their educators. According to data on the year 2010, persons with disability state that their educational environments do not meet the required criteria. In other words, persons with disabilities commonly experience discrimination in the education system (Table 7).

TABLE 7: EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES, 2010						
	Number of respondents	Never (%)	Rarely (%)	Occasionally (%)	Frequently (%)	Always (%)
My application to school was rejected due to my disability	1,191	80.3	7.8	4	4.1	3.8
I experienced difficulties in utilizing educational facilities (entering buildings, going upstairs, using toilets) because they had not been designed in a manner suitable to my disability	1,190	43.8	8.1	11	17.6	19.5
In comparison to students without disabilities, I was not provided education on the levels I desired (high school, undergraduate, graduate studies, etc.)	1,185	53.2	8.6	11.1	14.5	12.6
I was not provided the support services I needed as an individual with disability within the educational system (study sessions, personal assistance, technical help, etc.)	1,189	45.9	9.2	10.7	15.7	18.5
The educators in the educational facility I studied in were not trained in dealing with disability	1,181	36.5	7.8	8.4	19.1	28.3
Tools and technologies suitable for persons with disability were not used	1,179	37.7	7.4	8.4	15.1	31.5
I was not able to benefit from adult education (courses and programs for adult education such as painting, music and language) due to the lack of arrangements for persons with disabilities	1,188	42.3	9	10.9	17.3	20.5
I was not able to take advantage of vocational/occupational training opportunities (courses provided by the Turkish Labour Agency, municipalities or public education centers) due to the lack of arrangements made for persons with disabilities	1,186	46.6	8.9	10.4	14.9	19.1

Source: Sabancı University, 2013.

The way in which persons with disabilities are portrayed in textbooks is quite important for the development of an inclusive education system that is able to include them in a manner equal to others. A study conducted by Çayır and Ergün on the way in which having a disability is handled in textbooks demonstrates that textbooks have not been prepared with an inclusive approach in terms of children with disabilities. In textbooks used in the 2013-14 academic year in Democracy and Human Rights, Religious Culture and Morals Education, the Science of Life, Medical Sciences, Social Sciences, Sociology, Turkish, and Citizenship and Democracy classes, terms such as “disabled”, “handicapped” or “crippled” were treated as entailing some kind of deficiency, illness, flaw or dependency on the care of others. Moreover, it was observed that persons with disabilities were depicted as helpless, impotent and needy in pictures used in these textbooks, and that statements provoking pity towards individuals with disability were common.⁹⁰

One of the most important projects aiming to improve the education received by persons with disabilities in Turkey is the Strengthening Special Education Project (SSEP) supported by the EU and implemented by the MoNE. Started in 2011, this project has sought to render quality special education services widespread and accessible for all.⁹¹ Resources such as *The Teacher’s Manual on Educational Practices Part of Integrated Education*, *A Roadmap Towards a Barrier-Free School Model: Standards and Performance Indicators* and *The Manual of Integrated Education Practices in Vocational Training* have been developed as part of the SSEP.

⁹⁰ Çayır and Ergün, 2014.

⁹¹ MoNE, 2013b.

The attitudes of teachers, peers and parents are deeply important for inclusive education. Studies show that inclusive education environments are also useful for children without disabilities, insofar as they may acquire values such as tolerance and respect towards difference.⁹² There are many examples across the world that demonstrate the importance of changing the negative attitudes of parents into positive ones. The Golden Key Project put into practice in China is cited as a good example in the inclusive education manual prepared by UNESCO. Local teams were formed as part of this project in order to support the strengthening of ties between the school and the community and thereby encourage society to support inclusive education. These activities have made it easier to break the resistance shown by teachers and parents to the education of visually-impaired students. Negative attitudes had been seen among parents and teachers who had not quite embraced the idea of undertaking the education of students with disabilities. It was observed, however, that once visually-impaired students started being included in educational environments, these negative attitudes began transforming and becoming increasingly more positive. Their realization of the positive contributions made by inclusive education to the total learning environment has been seen to have an effect in convincing these teachers to change their attitudes.⁹³

A report published by Inclusion International in 2009 demonstrates that inclusive education can be achieved in countries where resources are limited as well as in countries with rich resources. Good examples in inclusive education were classified on three separate levels in the report: the micro-level (regarding the individual or classroom), the mid-level (regarding the school, society and educational system) and the macro-level (regarding legislation, policies and culture). One of the good examples on the micro-level cited in the report involves the hearing-impaired in El Salvador. A group of families of hearing-impaired students decided to teach their children sign language in order to facilitate their education in regular schools within the general education system. With the budget they obtained, not only did they have their own children learn sign language, but also some of their children's peers who were not hearing-impaired. As a result of this initiative, hearing-impaired children were able to continue in general education programs and the communication between peers with and without a hearing impairment was strengthened.⁹⁴

4.4. MOTHER TONGUE, RELIGION AND ETHNICITY

Turkey is a multicultural country, where there are many groups with different ethnic identities. According to a study conducted by KONDA Research and Consultancy in 2006, 81.3% of people living in Turkey identified 'Turkishness' as their ethnic identity, 9% identified themselves as 'Kurdish/Zaza', 4.5% identified as 'Citizen of the Republic of Turkey', and 5% identified as a variety of other ethnic identities. (Table 8).⁹⁵ As can be clearly seen from these responses, some of the terms used were associated with citizenship or religious belief rather than ethnic identity. This study is the most comprehensive and up-to-date study on ethnic diversity in Turkey.

92 Sabanci University, 2013.

93 UNESCO, 2005.

94 Inclusion International, 2009.

95 KONDA, 2006.

TABLE 8: ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN TURKEY (%)

Turkish	81.33
Kurdish-Zaza	9.02
Citizen of the Republic of Turkey	4.45
Local Identity	1.54
Muslim Turks	1.02
Arab	0.75
Migrants	0.40
Those Using General Definers	0.36
Alevi	0.35
Caucasian Origin	0.27
Balkan Origin	0.22
Non-Muslims	0.10
Asian Turks	0.08
From Other Countries	0.05
Roma	0.03

Source: KONDA, 2006.

The study carried out by KONDA has also revealed the relationship between ethnic identity and level of education. An analysis of the educational levels depicted in Table 9 shows that the levels of education of Kurdish individuals are lower than other groups.

TABLE 9: THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION BASED ON ETHNIC IDENTITIES IN TURKEY, 2006 (%)

	Below high school	Vocational school and high school	Higher education and university
Turkish	65.4	25.0	9.6
Turkish Origin	68.8	22.3	9.0
Kurdish	78.0	16.4	5.5
Arab	68.6	24.7	6.8
Those Using General Definers	61.9	23.9	14.2
Other Ethnic Identities	57.3	28.2	14.5
Turkey	67.4	23.5	9.1

Source: KONDA, 2006.

There have also been many qualitative studies conducted that focus on the exclusion of those with different ethnic identities from educational environments in Turkey. Although not generalizable by any means, the results of these studies do offer important examples. A study carried out in 2011 by Akkan et al. for instance, states that Roma children were excluded by their teachers, peers and the parents of other students in their educational environments, and highlights the effects of this exclusion in estranging Roma children from school.⁹⁶ A study conducted by the Agenda Child Association similarly demonstrates that children face discrimination in schools due to their ethnic identities.⁹⁷ Another study, conducted by the Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association, on the experiences of persons with different ethnic identities draws attention to the negative attitudes of peers and teachers towards these children, and to the discriminatory representations of different ethnic identities in textbooks.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Akkan et al., 2011.

⁹⁷ Gündem Children's Association, 2014.

⁹⁸ Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association, 2013.

Diversity in terms of mother tongue is as closely related to the inclusivity of education in Turkey as ethnic identity. There are differing approaches in Turkey about the education of children whose mother tongue is different from Turkish. However, arguing the strengths and weaknesses of these approaches would not fit the scope of this study. Thus, this section is an evaluation of the current situation by looking at the education levels and academic outcomes of individuals whose mother tongue is different from Turkish.

Studies on the relationship between mother tongue and education in Turkey mostly focus on individuals whose mother tongue is Kurdish. For this reason, the available data is mostly on this group.

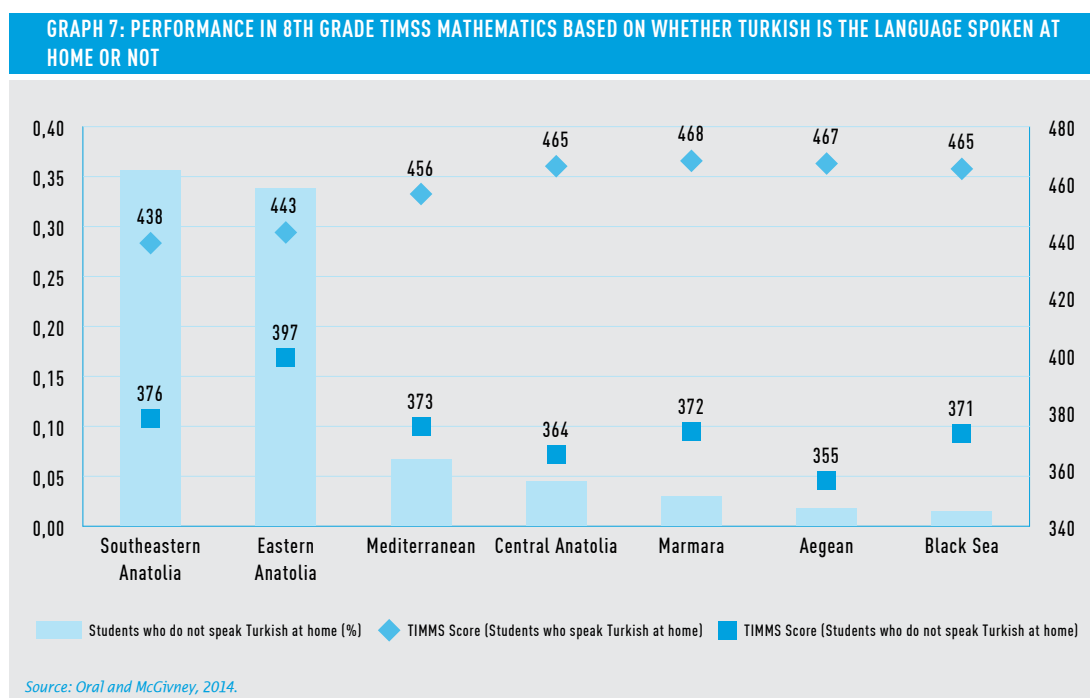
According to data shared by Candaş and Yılmaz, the educational levels of those whose mother tongue is Kurdish is significantly lower than those whose mother tongue is Turkish (Table 10).

TABLE 10: EDUCATION LEVEL ACCORDING TO MOTHER TONGUE (%)

	Turkish	Kurdish	Other	Total
Not graduated from elementary education	9	46	26	15
Graduate of elementary education	66	45	56	63
Graduate of secondary education	15	6	11	14
Graduate of higher education	10	2	7	9

Source: Candaş and Yılmaz, 2012.

In a recent study conducted by the ERI, the results of the TIMSS 2011 assessment were analyzed according to region and language spoken at home, in order to reveal the relationship between the language spoken at home and educational outputs. With this analysis, it has been discovered that students coming from homes where Turkish is not spoken perform significantly lower in school in comparison to their peers coming from only Turkish-speaking homes. Along with this, it can also be seen that among non-Turkish speaking homes, success levels are higher in the eastern and south eastern regions, where there are a concentration of students coming from homes in which a language other than Turkish is spoken (Graph 7).



Certain measures have been taken in Turkey in recent years in terms of the teaching of different languages. The inclusion of Living Languages and Dialects as an elective course within the curriculum in the 2012-13 academic year was an important step. In the 2012-13 academic year, a total of 21,432 students in middle school (5th grade) chose Living Languages and Dialects as their elective. Those who chose Kurmanji class numbered 9,993, while those who chose Zazaki numbered 417. Problems are, however, being experienced in the implementation of Living Languages and Dialects as an elective, including the insufficient number of teachers and lack of necessary teaching materials and training.⁹⁹

The manner in which the issue of religion should be handled within the education system in Turkey has been a matter of discussion for years, particularly the issue involving the existence of compulsory Religious Culture and Morals Education (RCME) lessons. There are many court cases against Turkey in the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) on charges that the compulsory teaching of the RCME course is a violation of rights. In its decision dated 16 September 2014, the ECHR ruled that the implementation of mandatory RCME classes in their existing state is a violation of the right to education.¹⁰⁰ The ECHR had also ruled in 2007, in the case of “Hasan and Eylem Zengin v. Turkey”, that compulsory RCME classes “do not take into account the religious diversity existing in Turkey, that this ‘violates the right to education’ of the community following the Alevi faith, and that this violation is caused by the education system in Turkey.”¹⁰¹

In the 2012-13 academic year, three other elective courses were added to middle school and secondary education curricula: The Life of the Prophet Muhammed, The Kuran, and The Basics of Religious Knowledge. A thorough examination must be carried out in order to determine whether or not these classes are in fact compulsory in practice, despite being put in place as electives. Also, it is important to see if an adequate variety of electives has been made available in schools. Measures may need to be taken to prevent students who do not wish to take religiously motivated electives from facing the risk of exclusion.

The study conducted by SEÇBİR and the History Foundation of Turkey under The Human Rights in Textbooks Project No.III, whose results were published by Kenan Çayır, also includes an examination of RCME textbooks. It has been found in recent years that the Alevi/Bektashi faith, Buddhism, the Nusayri faith and Judaism are presented in 12th grade RCME textbooks. Attention, however, is drawn to the representation of the Alevi/Bektashi faith as a folkloric branch of Sunnism.¹⁰²

4.5. SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

According to data regarding the year 2013, Turkey is second behind Mexico in terms of income inequality among OECD countries. In the *2014 Global Wealth Report* published by Credit Suisse, it is shown that the richest 10% in Turkey own 77.7% of the total national wealth.¹⁰³ As there are many studies that support the idea that socioeconomic status is an important factor in accessing educational services in Turkey, the effect of this income gap on the inclusivity of education merits serious attention. Many studies also reveal that poverty is a factor responsible for multiple disadvantages in education.

99 ERI, 2013.

100 Kap, 2014.

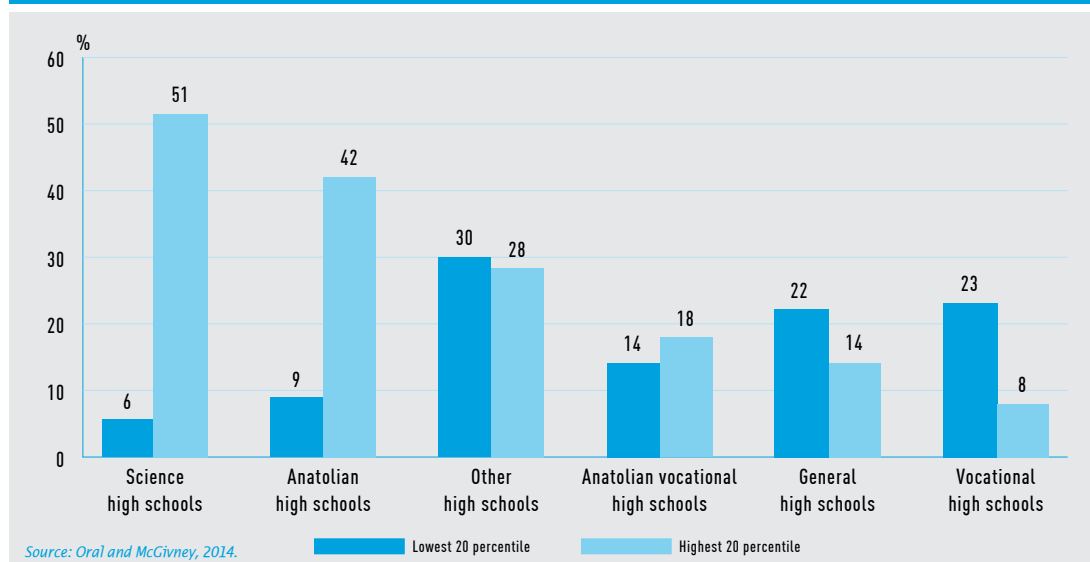
101 Ibid.

102 Çayır, 2014.

103 Credit Suisse, 2014.

The education that individuals wish to and are able to receive is closely related to their familial incomes. According to the study titled *Equality and Academic Success in the Turkish Education System* conducted by Oral and McGivney, the probability that a child registers in secondary education increases by 3.5% if the adults in a household work in formal jobs. The probability that a child enrolls in secondary education also depends on the sectors in which the working individuals of the household are employed. The employment of household members in the agricultural sector, for instance, lowers the chance of a child being enrolled in secondary education. The amount of siblings a child has also affects their probability of enrollment in secondary education; i.e. the more siblings they have, the lesser their chance of enrollment in secondary education. Furthermore, socioeconomic status has an impact on how students are distributed among types of schools, alongside its effect on enrollment rates themselves. While 15-year-old students from the highest socioeconomic segment mostly attend science high schools or Anatolian high schools, 23% of students in vocational high schools are from the lowest 20% in terms of socioeconomic status (Graph 8).¹⁰⁴

GRAPH 8: DISTRIBUTION AMONGST DIFFERENT PROGRAMS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION BASED ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS (15-YEAR-OLDS)



The schooling rates of children are also closely related to the educational levels of their parents. Oral and McGivney have found that the educational levels of families have a serious effect on enrollment, especially at the secondary educational level. According to this, the probability of those in the 14-17 year age group being enrolled in school increases 30% if their mothers are university graduates and 24% if their mothers are high school graduates, while this increase is 24% if their fathers are university graduates and 21% if their fathers are high school graduates. As can be seen, the effects of mothers' educational background on enrollment in secondary education are stronger than that of fathers. Moreover, the higher the educational level of the head of the family, the greater the expenses willing to be made for education.¹⁰⁵

The way in which socioeconomic status relates to school attendance and dropout rates is as important as its impact on enrollment in school. According to a study conducted by Köse

¹⁰⁴ Oral and McGivney, 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

et al., the economic status of the family, the number of children and the importance attributed to education in the family, along with other factors, all relate closely to absenteeism.¹⁰⁶ The effect poverty has on absenteeism and dropouts is not only due to difficulties experienced in meeting school costs, but also to the fact that children end up working either within the home or at a job outside the home. Köse et al. found that 25% of 8th graders were regularly absent from school for reasons such as taking care of their siblings at home, helping with housework or agricultural work, and working in paid jobs. This rate was 28% for girls and 22% for boys.¹⁰⁷ According to a study conducted by Bakış et al. based on e-school data from the years 2007-2011, the most important determinant on the household level of dropouts from school was poverty.¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, a study conducted by Cemalcılar et al. demonstrated that conditions such as good student-teacher relationships and quality counseling services have positive effects on the continuation of the attendance of successful students from socioeconomically disadvantaged families.¹⁰⁹

According to a report published by MoNE SEGD and UNICEF, the parental education level of children who drop out of secondary education is lower than the parental education level of the individuals above the age of 18 in Turkey. 90.2% of mothers and 80.2% of fathers of secondary education drop-outs have education levels of primary school or lower.¹¹⁰ 87.2% of mothers of secondary education drop-outs are housewives. 18.7% of fathers are workers in the private sector, 17.6% are busy with commerce in the small and medium scale, 16.6% are self employed and 11.1% are retired. The same study found that 37.2% of families whose children drop out have a household income of 1,000 TL or less.¹¹¹

Studies show that socioeconomic status also affects learning itself. According to analyses by Oral and McGivney, the results from 8th grade mathematics testing show significant regional variations. For example, mathematical success in the TIMSS assessment is much lower in South Eastern and Eastern Anatolia than in other regions.¹¹²

One of the steps that have been taken to decrease the effects of socioeconomic status on school attendance in Turkey is the implementation of Conditional Cash Transfers for Educational Assistance (CCTs). CCTs for Education are cash assistances provided by the General Directorate of Social Assistance and Solidarity under the Ministry of Family and Social Policies to families without regular income or social security, under the condition that they regularly send their children to school. A study conducted through the coordination of the MoFSP in order to measure the effects of CCTs on families, has revealed that these CCTs are especially effective in meeting children's needs for school stationery and in providing them breakfast.¹¹³ Bakış et al. have also observed that conditional cash transfers made to families in rural areas do work to decrease absenteeism, especially in the first five years of education.¹¹⁴ Köse et al. argue that providing CCTs for Education is a positive practice encouraging continuity in school, but that it is not effective enough in preventing absences caused by agricultural labour and traditional reasons.¹¹⁵ A project has been launched by MoFSP in January 2015 supported by the EU that focuses on strengthening the impact of CCTs in mitigating student absenteeism in secondary education.

¹⁰⁶ Köse et al., forthcoming.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Bakış et al., 2012.

¹⁰⁹ Conveyed by the ERI, 2014.

¹¹⁰ MoNE SEGD and UNICEF, 2013.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Oral and McGivney, 2014.

¹¹³ MoFSP, 2012.

¹¹⁴ Bakış et al., 2012.

¹¹⁵ Köse et al., forthcoming.

5. CONCLUSION

In this document, inclusive education is approached as “a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education”.¹¹⁶ The report focuses on issues of mother tongue, disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and gender – subjects of great importance to the development of an inclusive education system. Other dimensions of inclusive education such as teachers, school materials, learning environments and processes have been tackled under these subjects. The report has been designed around three main sections comprising of the legal dimensions of inclusive education, the literature on the subject and the current situation in Turkey.

The first section, based on a review of national and international literature regarding inclusive education, has shown that Turkey is signatory to many international conventions that forbid discrimination in education; yet this section has also revealed that certain provisions in these international documents are not adequately included in national legislation. For instance, the national legislation contains no detailed provisions on preventing discrimination based on religious belief and ethnic identity. Another controversial issue in the national legislation is that the religious courses remain compulsory by way of the Constitution. In this section, the reports of the committees that Turkey is a part of have been observed to underline areas open to progress.

The literature review includes studies that touch different aspects of inclusive education. Many studies demonstrate that the experiences of persons with different religious or ethnic identities in Turkey throughout their educational lives do not always correspond to an inclusive approach in education. These studies draw special attention to the importance of instilling teachers with positive attitudes in order to have a truly inclusive education system. In research conducted on Turkey in particular, socioeconomic status is treated as a factor that strongly affects access to education. Numerous studies focus on the multiple disadvantages caused by poverty. For instance, research on the access to education of Roma children is remarkable in terms of portraying these multiple disadvantages caused by poverty.

In this study, inclusive education is not handled as a concept just about individuals with disabilities, it is discussed in a broader sense. Despite this, education of individuals with disabilities is an important axis of inclusive education. As a result, the report emphasizes the educational situation of individuals with disabilities specifically. There are serious obstacles that must be overcome in establishing an educational system inclusive of persons with disabilities in Turkey. First and foremost amongst these is the lack of a robust and systematic data collection process regarding persons with disabilities. Existing data points to the fact that a significant portion of persons with disability remains outside the education system. Literacy rates and data on educational levels regarding persons with disability reveal that women with disability are at a greater disadvantage than men with disability. This is a striking example of multiple disadvantages caused by gender. The system in Turkey is on the track of integration rather than inclusive education; so the report focuses on mainstreaming education. The rate of students receiving mainstreaming education has increased in recent years, yet many studies have shown that the physical conditions of schools, the ways in which teachers are trained and equipped,

¹¹⁶ UNESCO, 2005.

as well as the available educational materials and support services fail to meet the needs of persons with disability. As a result, there are many steps that have to be taken, from legislation to practice, keeping in mind the many different disadvantaged groups, in order to develop an inclusive education system in Turkey. Specific attention should be given to efforts enabling practices that are already recognized by national and international laws. In this sense, it can be said that good examples regarding inclusive education, those that are not limited, in terms of scope, to Europe or North America geographically or to having a disability, clearly merit closer attention. These examples demonstrate the importance of collaboration between students, teachers, parents and school administrators in order to put in effect an inclusive education system. Steps to engage especially teachers and other stakeholders should be prioritized to reach the goal of internalizing an inclusive approach in schools.

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