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## **Women in Turkey in the Context of Being Deprived of Capabilities and Feasibilities\***

By Senem Kurt Topuz<sup>1</sup> and Hülya Erkanli<sup>2</sup>

### **Abstract**

The concept of poverty, defined as deprivation of capabilities and feasibilities, in the context of Amartya Sen's "The Capability Approach" is explained through ideas of "what people can or cannot do" and "what they can be or cannot be" rather than through their income or expense tendencies. In this study, conducted to understand the poverty conditions of women living in Turkey, the participants were asked "what are the things they want to do but cannot do?", "what do they want to be but cannot be?", both from the perspective of being deprived of capabilities. The answers given were evaluated from the perspective of The Capability Approach.

In this study, 741 women living in seven different cities selected from seven geographical regions of Turkey were asked to select the things "they want to do but cannot do", "they want to be but cannot be" among the given statements or write in their own words within "the other" option. In the following section, they were asked to explain why "they cannot do" or "they cannot be". The answers given are the explanation of on what aspects and why women are deprived; in other words, why they are impoverished. Accordingly, women living in Turkey gave such answers as they cannot travel alone or go on a vacation, cannot drive, cannot live as they wish, and cannot spare time for themselves. When the reasons were asked, they provided mainly such explanations as financial incapability, not being allowed by family elders, social pressure, and lack of self-confidence. Having education and a profession are also stated as the things that the participants most wanted to have but cannot have. Why they cannot have these are explained with reasons as, again, financial incapability, not being allowed by family elders, or not being able to spare time.

*Keywords:* capabilities, feasibilities, women and poverty, women in Turkey

### **Introduction**

One of the most significant developments in the welfare economy and ethics philosophy during the last 25 years is that the non-welfarist approaches to welfare economy has been included within the social selection and welfare theories (Annand and van Hees, 2005: 269).

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Traditional economy bases a person's welfare level upon his/her consumption of goods and services and the benefits he/she gains from this consumption. This generates the concept of a welfare economy that grounds the benefit provided by individuals upon the evaluation of society's total welfare. However, this approach is considered a restricted point of view as it bases an individual's welfare level only on the goods he/she possesses and thus is debated. Within these frame of debates, an alternative approach is proposed. This alternative approach is termed as the "The Capability Approach". Within this context, the perspective that was proposed by Amartya Sen in 1979 has had a stimulating contribution. This approach replaces a goods- and-benefits-based point of view with functions and capabilities. According to Sen's terminology, functions are what an individual chooses to do or to be. While what a person possesses (commodity), is a tool to realize different functions, functions from Amartya Sen's point of view are the basic notions of human welfare that are not only accomplished functions but also the freedom of being able to make choices, among a set of feasible functions. This is defined as a person's capability (Kaushik and Lopez-Calva, 2011: 153, Mowafi, 2014). This point of view forms the basis for the definition of "human poverty" mentioned in the UNDP's "Human Development Report". According to this view, human poverty is the experience of being deprived of the most basic opportunities and options required for a person's human development. Poverty is not only the financial incapability of a person but also inadequacy of opportunities stemming from social limitations and personal conditions that prevent a person from pursuing a valued life (UNDP, 1997). Within this context, poverty is a person's not being able to realize his/her capability; in other words, "capability deprivation" as defined by Amartya Sen. There is a direct connection between the concepts of human poverty and capability deprivation and how we encounter these concepts in daily life. In other words, concepts of human development and human poverty are basically based on Amartya Sen's "The Capability Approach" (Sam, 2008: 60). Poverty, within this context, as stated above, is being deprived of resources, opportunities, and/or freedoms generally known as poverty dimensions. The concept of women's poverty expresses the change based on sexist prejudice when it comes to possessing resources, opportunities, and freedoms (Medeiros and Costa, 2008).

The Capability Approach intersects with many approaches such as a basic needs paradigm, the human rights movement, a human security framework, the millennium development objectives, and sustainable development efforts. We argue, that Sen's approach is superior in that it has a more articulated theoretical basis (Poli, 2015: 105).

The Capability Approach is philosophically deep but methodologically hard to understand. Sen proposes this approach to be used in a broad context. In academia, the Capability Approach is addressed not only through abstract and philosophical terms but also with applied studies. One of the examples that stand out in this context is, as stated above, the Human Development Index developed by the UN Development Program (Zheng and Walsham, 2008: 225). The Capability Approach is significant in terms of forming an analytical and philosophical basis as in the UN's human development approach (as quoted from Evans 2002 by Zheng and Walsham, 2008: 225).

As stated above, functions within the context of the Capability Approach are the things that a person chooses to do or to be. In this context, in this study that aims to analyze the status of women in Turkey in the context of being deprived of capabilities and feasibilities, The Capability Approach is discussed firstly, the study's method and data collection technique are explained secondly, demographic information about the participants is given thirdly, and then the findings obtained from the study are analyzed. Finally, evaluation and discussion of the findings are done in the conclusion section.

## The Capability Approach

There are two basic concepts stressed in the Capability Approach. These are capabilities and functions. Function is an accomplishment, capability is having the ability or power to accomplish (Sen, 1987: 36). In other words, functions refer to realized accomplishments and satisfied expectations while capabilities refer to possibilities regarding the effective realization of accomplishments and satisfaction of expectations (Zheng and Walsham, 2008: 225). In this respect, the important thing is ethically a person's being able to be or to do anything he/she values freely; in other words, being able to be fully functional (Cornelius and Skinner, 2005: 599).

Capabilities can be considered as a set of options that a person can choose to be or to do. Basically, capabilities require three components: freedom, human development, and the realization of rights (quoted from Denmuck 2008 by Subramanian et al., 2013: 294).

To better understand the concept, two basic differences should be realized. One of them is dissociating capabilities from functions that refer to the real accomplishments of a person. Capabilities represent a person's potential functions: the things he/she can be or do. According to Sen, a person's capability refers to alternative combinations of functions that he/she can accomplish or realize and the person can choose one among these combinations (Sen, 1999). Capabilities refer to a set of real options possible for a person as a capabilities and feasibilities combination that he/she can accomplish. In other words, capabilities are a person's freedom of choice. Secondly, there is a significant need to distinguish resources and capabilities. Resources are acquirable goods and entitlements for people. What Sen wants to emphasize here is that people facing the same situations (for example losing their job) and reaching the same set of resources (unemployment aids, replacement services, education opportunities) will not generate the same opportunity to overcome such a situation and find a new job. The reason behind this is that not all people have the power to transform the opportunities available for them to overcome the situation they are in to real freedom (quoted from Robeyns 2010 by Subramanian et al., 2013: 294, Bellanca et al., 2011: 159).

The most basic feature of the Capability Approach is the emphasis it makes on people having the real freedom to choose a life they value. Such a perspective can both be used to evaluate individual situations and for collective regulations such as justice. Sen discusses his understanding of justice in his work *Equality of What* (Sen, 1979). As an answer to this question, Sen states that the most significant and primary factor is the scope or dimension of the freedom provided for people. In other words, creating equal freedom to take action is the most basic principle of social justice. Sen's approach provides an informative basis to scale equality among people to evaluate justice. This informative basis cannot be degraded to basic goods and material elements or to subjective benefits or satisfaction. Instead, social regulations regarding freedoms that enable people to be or to do the things they value should be taken under review (Subramanian et al., 2013: 294, Gasper, 2007: 337).

What Sen refers to as significant freedoms are basically total opportunities to choose and take action. These are answers to the question "what this person can do and can be". The Capability Approach basically focuses on the person (Poli, 2015: 106). Besides, Sen's arguments are based on the premise of improving the ability of a person to realize the life he/she values (Mowafi, 2014).

As stated previously, function is an accomplishment; capability, on the other hand, is the ability or power to accomplish. In this context, functions have a more direct relation with life conditions as they are different perspectives regarding life conditions. In contrast, capabilities are an idea about freedom with a positive freedom dimension. In other words, capabilities are how

real opportunities you have to realize the life you want to live (Sen, 1985: 48). At this point, unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power makes a difference for women. In this context, the state of how real opportunities women have to realize the life they want to live when their capacity of controlling their own lives and the possibilities they have are examined, have a determining quality regarding having freedoms. Data showing this situation related to daily life can be examined from different angles: education, reproduction, sexual health, access to basic rights, employment, political contribution, and violence against women (Vicente, 2005; Bhat, 2002).

Sen (1985b: 186) approaches capabilities of people from two different perspectives. One of these is the well-being aspect, the other is agency aspect. Sen defines the agency aspect as a person's freedom to choose and follow—to pursue—his/her goals and interests. A person pursuing his/her well-being might, in fact be one of his/her goals and interests. On the other hand, in the context of social and ethical norms, it might include others' pursuing their own well-being or acting for individual commitments. One person him/herself can be considered as the subject. Therefore, the focal point of The Capability Approach is not only the material resources (although material resources provide significant opportunities to reach the end) but it is also having real opportunities to realize his/her well-being freedom and agency freedom. These two concepts are related. Being deprived of one of these freedoms creates a significant effect on the other (Zheng and Walsham, 2008: 225).

Basic capacities, in other words, personal abilities we have, are internal capacities ready to be used or activated. However, the opportunity to use the internal capacities can be revealed by the environment, society, and social factors having a combination with internal capacities and work (Cornelius and Skinner, 2005: 599). These three factors can be separated but they should act as a combination, thus requiring an interdisciplinary perspective. As a result, it is a requirement to have detailed information about the environment effective in realizing or not being able to realize the functions (Cornelius and Skinner, 2005: 599). For this reason, Sen is skeptical about creating lists<sup>3</sup> for qualitative analyses to determine how people realize their capacities, because such lists are not created among the communities they intend to serve. One perspective list might ignore women in different societies. Women in different societies might have opportunities to realize different capacity sets, depending on their own conditions and different areas of struggles they encounter. Thus, such lists might be limited to allow for different voices, to represent differences, and, in this context, to form a democratic activity (Cornelius and Skinner, 2005: 603).

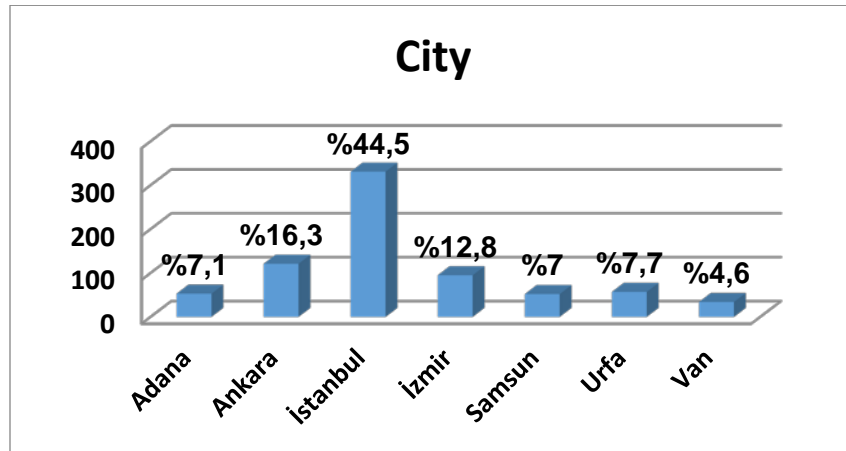
## **Method and Data**

This study constitutes quantitative and descriptive research using a survey method to collect data. Data was collected between September 2014-April 2015 in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Şanlıurfa, Samsun, and Van from women aged 18 and over. The cities were chosen based on judgment sampling as they are accepted as representative of seven different geographical regions of Turkey and the ones with the highest populations among the cities in their respective regions. At the end of the field study, 741 valid survey data was obtained chosen with convenience sampling method.

The distribution of the participants who took part in the study according to the cities is shown in the chart below:

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<sup>3</sup> See Robeyns, 2005 and Naussbaum, 2005



**Chart:1 Distribution of the Sample According to the Cities**

44.5% of the participants are from İstanbul and 16.3% from Ankara; 12.8% from İzmir; 7.7% from Urfa; 7.1% from Adana; 7% from Samsun; and 4.6% from Van.

## Findings

**Table 1. Demographic Features of Participants**

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>	18-28	194	26.2
	29-39	213	28.7
	40-50	195	26.3
	51-61	104	14.0
	62 and up	35	4.7
	Total	741	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>	Married	439	59.2
	Single	237	32.0
	Other	65	8.8
	Total	741	100.0
<b>Level of Education</b>	Illiterate	48	6.5
	Primary School	150	20.2
	High School	160	21.6
	College	59	8.0
	Undergraduate	263	35.5
	Graduate	40	5.4
	Other	21	2.8
	Total	741	100.0
<b>Personal Expenditure</b>	0-500 TL	491	66.8
	501-1000 TL	128	17.4
	1001-1500 TL	55	7.5
	1501-2500 TL	36	4.9
	2501 TL and higher	25	3.4
	Total	735	100.0

	Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Profession</b>	Housewife	225	30.4
	Worker	52	7.0
	Civil servant	35	4.7
	Engineer	18	2.4
	Teacher	93	12.6
	Self-employment	34	4.6
	Other	282	38.2
	Total	739	100.0
<b>Have Regular Income</b>	Yes	363	49.5
	No	370	50.5
	Total	733	100.0
<b>Personal Income</b>	0-500 TL	242	33.7
	501-1000 TL	121	16.8
	1001-1500 TL	97	13.5
	1501-2500 TL	131	18.2
	2501-3000 TL	65	9.0
	3001 TL and higher	63	8.8
	Total	719	100.0
<b>Source of Personal Income</b>	Job	387	53.4
	Investments	17	2.3
	Social Support Funds	11	1.5
	Other	310	42.8
	Total	725	100.0

26.2% of the participants are in the 18-28 age group; 28.7% of the participants are in the 29-39 age group; 26.3% of the participants are in the 40-50 age group; 14% of the participants are in the 51-61 age group; 4.7% of the participants are in the 62 and over age group.

In terms of marital status, participants are distributed as 59.2% married; 32% single and 8.8% other. The other category involves 4.3% divorced; 3.8% widow; 0.5% living apart from her spouse; 0.1% living with a man without marriage.

In terms of the level of education, 6.5% of the participants are illiterate; 20.2% of the participants are graduated from primary school; 21.6% of the participants are graduated from high school, 8% of the participants are graduated from college with two years. 35.5% of the participants have an undergraduate degree; 5.4% of the participants have a graduate degree. The other category with 2.8% involves participants with 1.6% literate and 1,2% having a doctorate degree.

In terms of the profession, 30.4% of the participants are housewives. The rest of them are distributed as 7.0% worker; 4.7% civil servant; 2.4% engineer; 12.6% teacher; 4.6% self-employed and 38.2 % other (retired, student, doctor, bank employer, accountant, nurse, lawyer, secretary, etc.)

49.5% of the participants have a profession with regular income and 50.5% do not.

In terms of monthly personal income, participants are distributed as 33.7% with 0-500 TL income; 16.8% with 501-1000 TL income; 13.5% with 1001-1500 TL income; 18.2% with 1501-2500 TL income; 9% with 2501-3000 TL income; 8,8% with 3001 TL or higher income.

For 53.4% of the participants, the source of the personal income is their job. 2.3% of the participants replied this question as investments; 1.5% of the participants replied this question as Social Support Funds. 42.8% of the participants are in the other (retirement, pocket money, financial support from her family, scholarship) category. Participants could give more than one answer to this question.

In terms of monthly personal expenditure, participants are distributed as 66.8% with 0-500 TL personal expense; 17.4% with 501-1000 TL personal expense; 7.5% with 1001-1500 TL personal expense; 4.9% with 1501-2500 TL personal expense; 3.4% with 2501 TL or higher personal expense.

### Responses Given by the Participants

The participants were asked to choose among the given statements that best represent “what they want to do but cannot do” and “what they want to be but cannot be” and/or write in their own words. In addition, they were asked to choose one or more among the given statements “why they cannot do” and “why they cannot be” and/or write in their own words<sup>4</sup>.

**Table 2. Statements on “what participants want to do but cannot do” and Frequency values**

	Frequency	Answers' %
Going to the theater/cinema/concert	184	8.7
Visiting the family	62	2.9
Going out with friends	101	4.8

<sup>4</sup> The participants were allowed to choose more than one option among the given statements.



Going shopping	118	5.6
Traveling/going on a vacation alone	243	11.5
Driving a car	295	14.0
Going out at night	161	7.6
Living as I wish	190	9.0
Sparing time for myself	154	7.3
Going to school	179	8.5
Actively participating in politics	134	6.4
Working	113	5.4
Making my own decisions about myself	92	4.4
Other	80	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>100%</b>

During the interviews with the 741 participants, they were asked to choose among the statements best representing “what they want to do but cannot do”. Fourteen percent (295 participants) stated that it is “driving a car”, 11.5% (243 participants) stated that it is “traveling/going on a vacation alone”, 9% (190 participants) stated that it is “living as I wish”, 8.7% (184 participants) stated that it is “going to a theatre/cinema/concert”, 8.5% (179 participants) stated that it is “going to school”, 7.6% (161 participants) stated that it is “going out at night”, 7.3% (154 participants) stated that it is “sparing time for myself”, 6.4% (134 participants) stated that it is “actively participating in politics”, 5.6% (118 participants) stated that it is “going shopping”, 5.4% (113 participants) stated that it is “working”, 4.8% (101 participants) stated that it is “going out with friends”, 4.4% (92 participants) stated that it is making my own decisions about myself”, and 2.9% (62 participants) stated that it is “visiting the family”. 3.8% (80 participants) chose the “other” category that includes starting own business, driving a motorcycle, owning a house, going on a vacation with my husband alone, going on a pilgrimage, stating my opinion freely, studying politics, doing exercise, being a pilot, being a teacher, going abroad, and practicing music.

**Table 3. Statements regarding the reasons “what participants want to do but cannot do” and frequency values**

	Frequency	Answers' %
I cannot afford it	295	21.0
Not being allowed by husband	66	4.7
Not being allowed by family elders	168	12.0
Social pressure	145	10.3
Not being able to spare time because of work	159	11.3
Lack of self-confidence	100	7.1
I am not interested	35	2.5
I have no one to go out with	22	1.6
I am not old/young enough	23	1.6

Because of my physical disability (sick, disabled, old)	11	0.8
I am not comfortable because of life safety	113	8.1
I do not have time because of my children	103	7.3
I do not have time because of the people I have to take care of	50	3.6
Other	113	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1403</b>	<b>100%</b>

As an answer to the question “why you cannot do”, 21% (295 participants) stated that it is because “I cannot afford it”, 12% (168 participants) stated that it is because “not being allowed by family elders”, 11.3% (159 participants) stated that it is because “I cannot spare time because of work”, 10.3% (145 participants) stated that it is because of “social pressure”, 8.1% (113 participants) stated that it is because “I do not feel comfortable because of life safety”, 7.3% (103 participants) stated that it is because “I do not have time because of my children”, 7.1% (100 participants) stated that it is because of “lack of self-confidence”, 4.7% (66 participants) stated that it is because “not being allowed by husband”, 3.6% (50 participants) stated that it is because “I do not have time because of the people I have to take care of”, 2.5% (35 participants) stated that it is because “I am not interested”, 1.6% (23 participants) stated that it is because “I am not old/young enough”, 1.6% (22 participants) stated that it is because “I have no one to go out with”, and 0.8% (11 participants) stated that it is because of “my physical disability (sick, disabled, old). 8.1% of the 741 participants (113 participants) chose the “other” category that includes answers such as not being educated enough, unconsciousness, fear of sexual harassment, not having the courage, widowed young with five children, “I was forced to marry by my father when I failed in school”, “there was no school in our village”, “we were ashamed”, and “because we were girls”.

**Table 4. Statements on “what participants want to be but cannot be” and Frequency values**

	Frequency	Answers' %
Having a profession	232	22.1
Being a deputy/mayor/headman	66	6.3
Being a member of an organization	31	2.9
Being a member of a political party	48	4.6
Having a title	117	11.1
Being effective/powerful /having a voice in the society	141	13.4
Being educated	229	21.8
Other	187	17.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>1051</b>	<b>100%</b>

As an answer to the question “what you want to be but cannot be”, 22.1% (232 participants) stated that it is “having a profession”, 21.8% (229 participants) stated that it is “being educated”, 13.4% (141 participants) stated that it is “being effective/powerful/having a voice in the society”, 11.1% (117 participants) stated that it is “having a title”, 6.3% (66 participants) stated that it is “being a deputy/mayor/headman”, 4.6% (48 participants) stated that it is “being a member of a

political party”, and 2.9% (31 participants) stated that it is “being a member of an organization”. 17.8% (187 participants) chose the “other” category that includes answers such as having my own business, being free, being more social, having a free and equal life.

**Table 5. Statements regarding the reasons “what participants want to be but cannot be” and Frequency values**

	Frequency	Answers' %
I cannot afford it	210	21.3
Not being allowed by husband	51	5.2
Not being allowed by family elders	157	15.9
Social pressure	90	9.1
Not being able to spare time	101	10.2
Lack of self-confidence	89	9.0
Not interested	47	4.8
Other	243	24.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>988</b>	<b>100%</b>

As an answer to the question “why you cannot be”, 21.3% of the 741 participants (210 participants) stated that it is because “I cannot afford it”, 15.9% (157 participants) stated that it is because of “not being allowed by family elders”, 10.2% (101 participants) stated that it is because of “not being able to spare time”, 9.1% (90 participants) stated that it is because of “social pressure”, 9% (89 participants) stated that it is because of “lack of confidence”, 5.2% (51 participants) stated that it is because of “not being allowed by husband”, and 4.8% (47 participants) stated that it is because of “not being interested”. 24.6% (243 participants) chose the “other” category that includes answers such as getting married too young, not being able to finish school, wrong choice of school/department, not being nominated, because of health issues, lack of consciousness, state pressure and not having secure political conditions, hard to be in politics as a woman, lack of ability, children, discrimination, coming from a family that says “girls do not go to school”, lack of education, and being a child-bride.

### **Evaluation of Findings and Conclusions**

When the participants were asked “what are the things they want to do but cannot do”, the most common answers were, respectively, “driving a car”, “travelling or going on a vacation alone”, “living as I wish”, “going to school”, “sparing time for myself”, “participating in politics actively”, and “working”. Then when they were asked “why they cannot do” what they want to do, the most common answers were, respectively, “I cannot afford it”, “not being allowed by family elders”, “not being able to spare time because of work”, “social pressure”, “I am not comfortable because of life safety”, “I do not have time because of my children”, and “lack of self-confidence”.

When the question “what they want to be but cannot be” was asked to the participants, the answers given were “having a profession”, “being educated”, “being effective/powerful/having a voice in the society”, and “having a title”, respectively. The answers given to the question “why

they cannot be” were “financial impossibility”, “not being allowed by family elders”, “not being able to spare time”, “social pressure”, and “lack of self-confidence”, respectively.

The most common response to the question what women want to do but cannot do, “driving a car”, introduces some important social dynamics: society’s sexist viewpoint towards driving a car certainly represents an impediment for women. Because driving a car is perceived as an act performed generally by men, the act of being mobile or in motion is perceived as a capability unique to men. Therefore, traffic is perceived as a public space, beyond the private spaces of women’s domains. Being mobile provides a person with freedom regarding the places and times that she/he can go and be. In the same way, the answers given such as “sparing time for myself” might be an effect of women’s pushed into the private space that represents the family and effects of being a mother, a wife, and being responsible for household chores as a result of society’s sexist viewpoint. The viewpoint that is attributed to women and that imposes responsibilities about home on women brings along women’s sacrifice of herself for other people and things with a stereotypical and selfless manner.

Freedom of travelling, freedom of having an education, freedom of existing in political life as an electorate and electee, the right to work, are guaranteed by the Constitution for all citizens. However, it can be said that realization of these freedoms in daily life practices is less likely for women than men. In other words, it is far from being acceptable for a woman to pursue a social life “alone” without being accompanied by a man because of, generally and most of all, family elders’ and society’s views. In the same way, there are some social obstacles, prohibitions, and restrictions against the way women wish to live. There are many factors determining the women’s choice of life outside of themselves. It is precisely related to the real opportunities one has, to realize the life one wants, as stated by Amartya Sen. In other words, how “real” opportunities women have to realize the life they want to live is necessary to understand freedoms enjoyed when women’s capability of controlling their own life and the opportunities they have are examined. Thereby, unequal distribution of resources, opportunities, and power creates a difference for women. This difference shows itself mostly in such statements as having a profession, being educated, being effective/powerful/ have a voice in the society, having a title in the category of what women want to be but cannot be. Actually, what shows itself here is the indication of women’s experience of inequality in terms of having power and opportunities.

It is seen that answers by the participants as an explanation regarding why they cannot be or do is mainly accumulated as “financial incapability”. This fact reveals once again that low level of income should not be ignored when the concepts of being deprived of things or in poverty are dealt with in the context of capacity as emphasized by Amartya Sen. Consequently, low level of income stands out as a determining factor concerning feasibilities and possibilities. Apart from that, the conditions that prevent women from what they can do or what they can be are similar and show themselves as not being allowed by family elders, social pressure, not being able to spare time, and lack of self-confidence.

As a result, the condition of women concerning being deprived of things in the context of feasibilities and possibilities specifically in this study identifies profoundly with the concept of “human poverty” referred in the UNDP’s “Human Development Report” (1997). Because, if we take ~~a~~ another look at the definition, human poverty is being deprived of the most basic opportunities and options necessary for individual’s human development. Poverty is not only the condition of financial incapability a person is in but also the condition of having lack of opportunities stemming from social limitations and personal situations (social pressure, not being

allowed by family elders, lack of self-confidence, etc.) that prevents the individual from pursuing a valued life (being educated, living as he/she wishes, working, traveling, etc.).

Sen considers well-being as a person's capability to realize valued actions or to reach a valued level of existence. Thus, a lot of things a person chooses to do or to be while pursuing his/her life are named as functions in Sen's terminology. One person's capacity means combination of alternative functions he/she can achieve and the person can choose for him/herself among these combinations. In this context, according to Sen, a person's well-being can be evaluated by his/her capacity of achieving personally or socially valued functions. Moreover, at one point, Sen takes this perspective forward and makes it equivalent with the definition of life quality (quoted from Sen, 1993 by Ruta et al., 2007:400).

Sen brings the definition of life quality a more comprehensible meaning with the definition of well-being within the context of The Capability Approach. In this context, first of all, the quality of life one enjoys not only refers to what he/she achieves but also to what options he/she has. In other words, the quality of life one enjoys depends not on achieving something but on having the freedom of achievement (meaning real opportunities a person has especially when compared to other people) (Ruta et al., 2007: 400).

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