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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF MIDDLE EASTERN AND NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TURKEY

Abstract:

The aim of this paper is twofold: The first concentrates on the very recent development performance of two country groups, namely Middle Eastern and North African countries, and the second focuses on Turkey in an attempt to determine the position of the country in the context of human development.

To reach the above mentioned aims, very simple methods are followed: Descriptive statistical analysis is used and existing data is assessed in a comparative way to be more specific about the position of Turkey in her path of human development. The analysis period is restricted with the last five years.

□The main argument to be tested throughout the current study can be formulated in the following way: Although Westernization and secularization attempts of the country have prevailed since the establishment of the Republican period, recent human development outcome of the Turkish economy seems to coincide with those of Middle Eastern and North African countries where Arab and Islamic cultures dominate socio-economic life rather than highly developed European countries. To put differently, one may suggest that the development path of Turkey considerably deviates from the European trends not only in terms of economic performance but also with respect to societal, cultural and in particular with gender-based developments.

□An additional argument can be associated with the fact that certain resource-rich but relatively underdeveloped countries included in the sample of the current study provides us an appropriate ground to understand better the need to construct human development index in considering development level of the countries not via solely relying on the indicators biasing the material well-being of the countries such as absolute level of income or per capita GDP and ignoring the rest but also through concerning with the humanitarian aspect of development like looking at the achievements associated with education, healthcare, gender equality, social participation and so on.

□In the light of this preliminary information, the organization of the paper can be stated as follows: Next section reviews the origins and the emergence of the human development index. Third section deals with descriptive statistical analysis of the main human development indicators of the Middle Eastern and North African countries especially focusing on the position of Turkey, and final section evaluates the findings alongside with the main arguments of the paper.

Keywords:

Development, Human Development, Middle East, North Africa, Gender Equality, Turkey

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