

Farmers' opinion about Syrian workers in agricultural sector in Turkey: Case study of Gaziantep

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Abstract

Due to the Syrian Civil War, many Syrians have had to flee their country and seek refuge in neighbouring countries, and they face a great deal of financial and social problems in their new countries of residence. Problems such as language barriers and hostility from the host community make it difficult for refugees to integrate into the countries which took them in, and the fact that they must become a part of the work force as a matter of priority to meet their daily needs means that they often work unskilled jobs for low wages and are not registered in any official systems. The structural properties of the agricultural sector means that it is one of the most popular work areas for Syrian migrants. This study aims to evaluate the circumstances of Syrian individuals under temporary protection status in Turkey in the agricultural sector from the perspective of farmers. To this end, a survey was conducted with 395 farmers working in the agricultural sector in the province of Gaziantep. According to the findings of the research, 61.5% of agricultural businesses in Gaziantep employ Syrian refugees. The main reason for farmers opting to employ Syrian workers under temporary protection order is low wages (78.8%). 82.9% of Syrian refugees work only during harvesting season. 92.4% work both harvesting and hoeing, while 79.2% of business owners state that employing refugees allows them to decreased their production costs. Despite the presence of legal regulations in Turkey outlining how refugees can become a part of the labour force, these haven't prevented the prevalence of off-the-books employment. Making the necessary amendments to legal regulations regarding seasonal workers in the agricultural sector would benefit both local workers and Syrian refugees. Additionally, legislation regarding salaries would improve the living standards of refugee workers and increase their motivation to work, thus improve productivity in agricultural products.

Keywords: *Syrian refugees, Agriculture, Seasonal workers, External migration.*

1. Introduction

Migration is the act of individuals or communities abandoning their places of residence for other regions or countries due to political, social, or economic reasons (Saltık, 2001). Voluntary migration refers to individuals leaving their place

of residence and choosing to move to another place for a better life due to financial, social, or similar circumstances, while involuntary migration refers to leaving one's place of residence for a safer location due to compulsory circumstances such as natural disasters or war (Gürel Üçer *et al.*, 2018). However, migration is a multifaceted

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phenomenon with social, financial, political, and cultural implications both on the migrant and the receiving country, and must not be reduced to mere geographical mobility (Aktaş and Gülçür, 2017). It is thought that the lack of food security has an impact on both internal and external migration. The connection between food security and migration is increasingly discussed by both international agencies and academic literature (Mulazzani *et al.*, 2020). Đokić *et al.* (2021) states that countries with high levels of food security and political stability have the highest influx of immigrants. Individuals who migrate leave behind the life they are accustomed to and the safety of their home to try and establish a new life within an unfamiliar culture speaking a language they don't understand (Harunoğulları and Cengiz, 2014). This attempt at establishing a new life pushes immigrants into difficult circumstances financially and socially. Migration has always been a factor in life on earth and has brought problems with it, and many countries actively work towards solving these problems and unearthing their underlying reasons. There are many international organisations which are tasked with tackling the issue.

After the Syrian Civil War broke out in March 2011, those overwhelmed by the hunger and poverty created by the war were forced to leave their country and become temporary refugees in other countries. Since 2012, when the civil war intensified, Turkey has been home to one of the largest Syrian refugee populations in the world, followed by other countries in the region such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq (Erol *et al.*, 2017). Turkey's humanitarian approach and its "open door" policy since the start of the crisis made it the leading country by the number of refugees it hosts in 2015, a title it still holds today (Ministry for Development, 2018). As of May 2021, 3.672.646 Syrians live under temporary protection in Turkey. Currently, more than 98% of Syrian refugees live in towns, cities, and rural areas across 81 Turkish provinces, and less than 2% live in the seven Temporary Accommodation Centres (TAC) that were established (3RP, 2021). Provinces with the largest number of Syrian refugees in order of refugee population size are Istanbul, Gaziantep, Hatay, and Şanlıurfa. 449.667 Syrian

residents live in Gaziantep, constituting 21.56% of the population (Presidency of Migration Management, 2021). The significant role played by refugees in the daily life of the province will be made clearer when the number of resident refugees is compared to the size of the general population. In this regard, it can be said that Gaziantep has been transformed in terms of both financial and socio-cultural aspects.

Migration also creates an employment-related effect when migrants become jobseekers in order to provide for their families (Güder, 2016). Since March 2011, when high numbers of majority Syrian refugees began to arrive in Turkey in increasing numbers, the employment rights of refugees and migrants and their integration into the local economy have become one of the most oft-discussed issues (İşcan and Çakır, 2019). Many legal and administrative regulations have been put in place in order to facilitate the Syrian population's integration into the workforce and to increase their participation in registered employment, such as a 60% reduction in the work permit fee employers are liable to pay in the event of employing Syrian refugees under temporary protection in 2018. The regulations have also made those working in seasonal agricultural or husbandry jobs as being exempt from requiring work permits (3RP, 2019). This might appear to be a positive influence on the agricultural sector, however, those with no prior agricultural experience joining the sector also brings various problems along with it. Regardless of what profession they might have held in their home countries, the obligation for these individuals to quickly integrate into the workforce to ensure their survival in their new home country pushes them to work for low wages and without social security. Due to a lack of knowledge, skills, and experience, they generally work in sectors in which off-the-books employment is easy. The potential for unofficial employment due to the structural properties of the agricultural sector and its lack of auditing and organisation often allow potential refugee-migrant labourers to find employment with ease (Bozdemir *et al.*, 2019). The agriculture and food industries are among the main sources of income and employment not just for the host community but also for the migrant and refugee communities in southeastern Turk-

ish cities such as Gaziantep, Kilis, and Şanlıurfa (3RP, 2021). In terms of businesses, the employment of unskilled/cheap labour lowers costs and increases profitability (Kutlu, 2019). Due to these reasons, Syrians living under temporary protection in Turkey work mainly in the agricultural sector, particularly at seasonal jobs such as sowing, planting, hoeing, and harvesting.

In national and international research literature on the subject, studies focusing on migrants and refugees are mainly based on interviews to evaluate their circumstances in their host country and their integration process (Martin, 2002; Franz, 2003; Cannizzaro and Corinto, 2012; Harunoğulları and Cengiz, 2014; Özkarslı, 2015; Açikel, 2016; Ertürk, 2016; Collins *et al.*, 2016; Çetin, 2016; Duruel, 2017; Erol *et al.*, 2017; Gürel Üçer *et al.*, 2018; Güneş-Aslan and Güngör, 2019; İşcan and Çakır, 2019; İlgazi, 2019; Kutlu, 2019; Schneider *et al.*, 2020; Turkmani and Hamade, 2020). There are limited studies exploring employers' approach to migrants and refugees. This study aims to evaluate the circumstances of Syrian agricultural workers under temporary protection in Turkey from the perspective of farmers. The attitudes of farmers towards refugees and migrants working in the agricultural sector will be examined, and the resulting data is expected to contribute to the creation of policies to mitigate disadvantages for both sides, as well as provide a resource for policy makers.

2. Materials and method

The main material of this study were provided from questionnaires conducted by face to face and telephone interviews with farmers working in the agricultural sector in the province of Gaziantep. Earlier national and international research on the subject, information obtained from public and private institutions about agricultural enterprises and refugees were also included in this study. According to data obtained from the Provincial Directorate for Agriculture and Forestry in Gaziantep, there are 31.609 agricultural businesses located in central Gaziantep and surrounding towns (Şahinbey, Şehitkamil, Nizip, İslahiye, Araban, Oğuzeli, Yavuzeli, Karkamış, Nurdağı). The survey questions for the study

were developed with awareness of the study's aims, the contents of the subject, and the features of the group whom the survey was intended for.

The Simple Random Sample method was used to calculate sample sizes. The formula used to calculate sample size according to this method is as follows (Yamane, 2001):

$$n = \frac{Nz^2s^2}{Nd^2 + z^2s^2}$$

n: Sample size

N: Accessible population (31609)

z: z value on the standard normal distribution table based on error ratio (z: 1,96)

d: Accepted error tolerance level (d:±5)

s: Sample standard deviation (s: 50.95).

The sample size has been calculated as 394 with a standard deviation value of (s: 50.95) calculated from the pilot sample, with a confidence level of 95% (z: 1.96) and an area width median within the boundary of ±5. When considering the sample size distribution across towns, a proportional distribution has been made based on the number of businesses. The survey began in December 2019, and was conducted through face-to-face and telephone interviews with farmers. The findings of the study have been presented as frequency and percentage distribution, and averages.

3. Study findings and discussion

Farmer characteristics and enterprise information are given in Table 1. Almost eighty percent (79.2%) of farmers were male and 20.8% were female. Most were between the ages of 20-60. Twenty one percent of farmers received no formal education at all, only 12.7% had a university graduates degree. The percentage of farmers who graduated from primary, secondary, or high school is 67.3% and distributed evenly across the three educational level. Majority of farmers (66.3%) main income is solely agriculture, while the rest conduct agricultural activities as a secondary source of income. The latter are generally small business owners or public servants, and practice agriculture as an additional job. Only 6.1% of farmers have less than 5 years of experience in agriculture, while 6.8% have been farm-

Table 1 - Farmer characteristics and business information.

<i>Gender</i>			<i>Age</i>		
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Female	82	20,8	18-25	26	6,6
Male	313	79,2	26-40	181	45,8
<i>Number of Individuals in the Family</i>			41-60	149	37,7
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	61+	39	9,9
1-5	181	45,8	<i>Land Size</i>		
6-10	202	51,1		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
11+	12	3,0	1-10	146	37,0
<i>Job</i>			11-20	99	25,1
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	21-50	98	24,8
Small business	54	13,7	51-80	24	6,1
Officer	40	10,1	81-100	10	2,5
Private sector	26	6,6	100+	18	4,6
Student	8	2,0	<i>District where the land is located</i>		
Self-employment	6	1,5		<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>
Farmer	261	66,1	Nizip	80	20,3
<i>Land Ownership Status</i>			Oğuzeli	100	25,3
	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	Şahinbey	62	15,7
Property	208	52,7	Şehitkamil	60	15,2
Partner	126	31,9	Araban	34	8,6
Hirer	61	15,4	Yavuzeli	29	7,3
			İslahiye	30	7,6

ers for more than 40 years. It was observed that the majority of farmers in the research region have been practicing agriculture for more than 10 years. Almost fifty percent of farmers cultivate only plant produce, while 37% has plant and animal production. The number of farmers who only practice husbandry is very low. 52.7% of farming land is privately owned, while 31.9% are shared and 15.4% are rented. In Gaziantep, there are nearly as many shared and rented farm lands as privately owned ones, however, shared ownership is more common than renting. About 37% of farmers surveyed cultivate land smaller than 10 decares, while 13.2% cultivate land larger than 50 decares. It was observed that farmers in the province of Gaziantep do not generally own large areas of land. 51.9% of farmers state that they cannot easily make a living from agriculture. About 50% percent are satisfied with being in the agricultural sector, while the rest are

dissatisfied. The reasons for their dissatisfaction is insufficient income, high costs of materials, not being able to create any savings, being unable to work in a different sector due to lack of education and being forced to remain in the agriculture industry, and the inadequacy of support funds and grants.

Data shows that in agricultural businesses, family and relatives are the most often employed individuals with 90%, due to the majority of agricultural businesses being small or family businesses. About 60% of businesses employ permanent staff for tasks such as guarding and animal care. About 34% of businesses employ between 1-5 temporary staff members, while 24.6% employ between 6-10, 14.2% employ between 11-20, and 13.8% employ more than 21 temporary workers. Since pistachios are highly economically valuable and a speciality of the Gaziantep region, it is generally a common occurrence for lands with pistachio trees

grown on them to have guards. The vast majority of producers (67.1%) state that they haven't had any problems recruiting workers recently due to increased migration and an influx of refugees, while 32.9% state that they have encountered problems finding workers.

About 57% of farmers chose workers' clubs and coffeehouses to seek out prospective employees, while 28.4% found staff through their social circle and 12.7% opted for employment agencies. Farmers also used more than one source of employees when needed. An interesting finding is that the internet was also cited as a resource to recruit possible workers, though its prevalence was low (2.3%). Fifty one percent (51%) of business owners concurred that the salaries paid for agricultural workers were sufficient, while 49% disagreed with the statement.

The most important criteria when recruiting agricultural labourers were the resilience of the worker (66.3%), the daily fee requested (66.1%), and work performance (58.8%). Age (36.2%), the worker's ethnic background (22.5%), and gender (17%) were also cited as being important criteria (Table 2). Landowners place a high importance on the workers' physical makeup and resilience, due to concerns about health issues which might arise after working intensively in very warm weather at tasks such as harvesting, hoeing, and irrigation. Age is an important criteria because elderly or very young people are regarded as not being capable of physical toughness or a high level of performance. Only 32.7% were undecided regarding the importance of the ethnicity of the worker, while 31.3% stated it was unimportant. Only 3.3% farmers do not think that the performance of labourers were im-

portant, which is due to the fact that workers are paid based on the amount of land they tend to, not based on how they perform at their work. Some landowners opt to pay workers at the end of the task rather than on a daily basis, calculating their wages by acre.

About 62% of farmers interviewed had refugee and migrant workers on their payroll, while 38.5% did not. 62% of farmers who employ refugee and migrant workers employ between 1-5 workers, while About 22% employ between 6-15, and 16.2% employ between 16-40 workers. Many refugees in Gaziantep work in labour-intensive sectors such as agriculture. Views of employers in the agricultural sector and other sectors state that Syrians are able to fill the deficit in the supply of labour. Al-Turk (2016) states that Syrians, who work skilled jobs for lower wages compared to Jordanians, dominate the labour market for this reason. Ilgazi (2019) states that according to employers, the refugee workforce fills in the gaps in sectors with a worker deficit. Similar conclusions are drawn from interviews conducted in other sectors. Interviewing employers in the textile manufacturing sector for their study, Erol *et al.* (2017) state that after the Syrians joined the labour force they began to work jobs in the textile sector that locals in Turkey preferred not to work, and were influential in keeping the sector afloat through a time of difficulty.

About 52% of agriculture business owners in Gaziantep state that the migrant workers they employ have work permits, while 48.3% state they don't. The most cited reason for the preference for refugee workers is low wages (78.8%), while low wages and undiscerning acceptance of work were cited by 96.3%, and low wages, undiscerning ac-

Table 2 - Qualities sought in prospective employees.

Qualities	Very important		Important		Undecided		Unimportant		Very unimportant	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Age	143	36,2	84	21,3	79	20,0	28	7,1	61	15,4
Gender	67	17,0	66	16,7	106	26,8	58	14,7	98	24,8
Ethicityity	89	22,5	53	13,4	129	32,7	40	10,1	84	21,3
Performance	232	58,7	141	35,7	9	2,3	7	1,8	6	1,5
Resilience	262	66,3	123	31,1	10	2,5	0	0	0	0

ceptance of work and flexible schedules were influential for 79.1%. Research studies also support these findings. In a study conducted in Mardin, Özkarslı (2015) states that jobs in the construction and agriculture sectors are preferred by Syrian workers due to there not being a requirement for a high level of education or skill, their widespread availability, their seasonal nature, and the ease of finding work in these sectors. Lordoğlu and Aslan (2016) claim that due to not having a sufficient amount of rights and securities, Syrian migrants generally become labourers for low wages in the agriculture and construction sectors, regardless of what their previous status or experience might have been. Duruel (2017) says that in Hatay, Syrian refugees work in the industrial, construction, or service sector, and like in other cities in the region, they generally work low-skilled jobs that aren't preferred by local workers. Franz (2003) states that Bosnian refugee women in Vienna and New York often work low-skilled and low-wage jobs regardless of whether they had a successful career in their homeland, due to not being able to afford participating in cultural programs in their host countries such as language schools.

About 83% of Syrian refugees employed by agricultural businesses surveyed by the study work only during harvesting, while 92.4% work during harvesting and hoeing (182 businesses). Hundred thirty (130) businesses employ Syrian refugees for harvesting, hoeing, and watering. Syrian workers also work in guarding (2.1%) and animal care (3.8%) jobs, though with much fewer frequency. According to the FAO and AKCAM, many Syrian women under temporary protection status work in the agriculture-food sector, particularly in planting, sowing, weeding, harvesting, and post-harvesting tasks such as packaging (3RP, 2021). In a study focusing on Mexican workers in the US agricultural sector, Martin (2002) states that agriculture is an important starting point for migrants from rural and agricultural communities, and that migrants in the US mainly work in fields and agriculture-adjacent sectors such as cattle and poultry processing.

Almost all of the enterprises (99.6%) were provided with food to the workers, while 44.4% of businesses provided both food and shelter, and 50.4% provided food, shelter, and transport.

About 79% of businesses state that employing refugees lowers costs, while 98 business owners state that an increase in productivity is seen as well as a decrease in costs. Cannizzaro and Corinto (2012) state that local communities and local authorities mainly prefer a migrant workforce in order to lower production costs. Açikel (2016) states that the active role played by Syrians in the business world is regarded as a positive development by industrialists and small business owners, the main reason for which is the economic advantages created by lower wages due to an expansion of the labour market. Ertürk (2016) states that Syrian refugees working in olive groves in Altınözü have filled the existing labour gap in the olive growing sector, and that they play an important part in ensuring the sustainability of olive growing. In their study, Collins *et al.* (2016) state that migrants in Australia contribute greatly to the workforce in the agricultural sector, and an increase in agricultural productivity was anticipated following the opening up of agricultural jobs to migrant populations.

Adverse outcomes of employing refugee workers were cited as a lack of information and knowledge (39.8%), security concerns (33.6%), and language problems (26.6%). After arriving in Turkey due to force of circumstance, refugees require a job in order to meet their personal needs, and they accept any job they are offered without having the right to choose. Due to many refugees not speaking the local language at all or having a limited understanding of it, they struggle to clearly comprehend the work they are expected to complete or the tasks they are given, which can lead to conflict.

About 45% of farmers state that refugee workers encountered problems with other workers, while 8.3% state that such problems were encountered occasionally. About 47% stated that there were no problems. Out of those who confirmed encountering problems, 27.3% stated the problems arose due to insults and name calling, and 25% were petty disagreements. Language problems were behind 25% of issues, while political reasons accounted for 22.7%.

Table 3 lays out farmers' views regarding the effects of the arrival of Syrian refugees into the country. The majority of farmers interviewed

Table 3 - Farmers' opinions regarding the effects of the arrival of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey.

Opinions	Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Mean
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Syrian workers work for lower wages	27	6,8	69	17,5	299	75,7	2,69
They create off-the-books employment and unregulated production	58	14,7	100	25,3	237	60	2,45
They cause unfair competition in employment and when opening businesses	76	19,2	124	31,1	195	49,4	2,35
Syrian workers have more flexible work schedules	82	20,8	117	29,6	196	49,6	2,29
Syrian workers are more productive in labour intensive jobs	85	21,5	117	29,6	193	48,9	2,27
Migration has had a positive influence on the country's economy in terms of the agricultural sector	100	25,3	112	28,4	183	46,3	2,21
The local labour market suffers as a result	93	23,5	143	36,2	159	40,3	2,17
The increased requirement for agricultural production due to refugees, and their influence on agricultural production cancel each other out	94	23,8	159	40,3	142	35,9	2,12
Migrants' contribution to agricultural production lowers product standards	108	27,3	148	37,5	139	35,2	2,08
Refugees and the local population work under the same conditions	163	41,3	134	33,9	98	24,8	1,84
I have no difficulty finding agricultural employees thanks to Syrian workers	203	51,4	116	29,4	76	19,2	1,68
I would prefer to recruit Syrian workers for my agricultural business	211	53,4	132	33,4	52	13,2	1,60
Syrian workers working in agricultural production possesses a high level of knowledge	238	60,3	116	29,4	41	10,4	1,50

state that Syrian workers work for lower wages, while the opinion that they create an unregulated labour and production market and cause unfair competition in employment and the opening of businesses is also prevalent. Despite employing Syrian workers in their businesses, 61.5% of farmers state that they do not prefer to employ Syrian individuals when recruiting workers, and that they hold the view that Syrian workers have a low level of knowledge. Various studies in the area review the effects of refugees and migrants, regarded as a cheap labour force, on the labour market, and their work circumstances. Bayramoğlu and Bozdemir (2019) claimed that despite migrants employed in seasonal agricultural jobs in Turkey having proficiency and expertise

working in other areas in their home country, the fact that they do not have sufficient knowledge regarding agricultural produce grown in Turkey and lack of skills to operate agricultural machinery leads to a decrease in the quality of agricultural produce and the productivity of the workforce, as well as produce yield. Their study states that due to an increasing refugee population and the workforce potential they create, the prevalence of refugees as agricultural workers will also bring about social changes in rural communities. Bozdemir *et al.* (2019) state that migrant-refugee workers becoming a source of cheap labour will not only have a detrimental effect on the wage policies in the labour market in the agricultural sector, but also create an en-

Table 4 - Opinions regarding the training of Syrians under temporary protection status in the agricultural sector.

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>%</i>
No comment	121	30,6
I view the idea negatively	33	8,4
I view the idea positively	53	13,4
It is permissible if it lowers production costs	11	2,8
It is a good move to solve the labour shortage	31	7,8
I would support the idea if the state didn't pay for it	7	1,8
It's a good idea if those who deserve to be a part of it are chosen	13	3,3
It could be beneficial if the training is thorough	8	2,0
I do not support the idea because Turkish workers should be given priority	40	10,1
The state must not be involved in such matters	16	4,1
I think it is an unnecessary idea	28	7,1
We wouldn't want it because we don't employ Syrian people	11	2,8
There are benefits and drawbacks, I am undecided	10	2,5
They must not be involved in an important sector like agriculture	4	1,0
It would cause many problems. I don't support the idea	6	1,5
It would place an unnecessary burden on the state	3	0,8
Total	395	100,0

vironment of conflict in rural areas. In a study by Schneider *et al.* (2020), it is revealed that migrant workers in Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden encounter sub-standard and exploitative working conditions in the agricultural food production sector. In their study, Turkmani and Hamade (2020) state that refugee agricultural workers in Lebanon feel trapped in insecure and non-contracted jobs, and that they encounter problems due to working for minimum wage for long hours, having no social security, being exposed to many health risks and dangerous working environments, and cyclical poverty.

As for the effects on agricultural production of certain precautions taken by the government due to the Syrian civil war, it was found that restrictions on the import of raw materials affected producers adversely, causing a rise in raw material prices and causing problems for low-cost input supply.

In 2017, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) launched an agricultural vocational training project for Syrian refugees and host communities in Turkey. The aim of the project was to provide sustainable job opportunities for 900 individuals who would receive voca-

tional training in five provinces – Adana, Mersin, Şanlıurfa, Gaziantep, and Isparta. The project was financed by the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) and cost 1.7 million USD. The Turkish Ministry for Food, Agriculture, and Husbandry was the primary executive stakeholder, while the FAO was the administrative organisation. The project aimed to create employment opportunities for Syrian refugees and host communities, increasing household income, productivity, and the quality of agricultural production, therefore improving social cohesion between these groups. The vocational training comprised the following subject: cattle farming and herding; apple, grape, olive, pistachio, and cotton planting and harvesting; bell pepper, citrus fruit, pomegranate harvesting and post-harvest processing; greenhouse vegetable growing; irrigation management; farm management; and food hygiene (TOB, 2017). The "Developing Resilience Through Increasing Economic Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities" project trained 900 people, 70% of whom were Syrian guests and 30% of whom were from the host community (TOB, 2018).

Table 4 details the views of farmers on training Syrians under temporary protection status in the agricultural sector and directing them towards regions where there is a lack of agricultural labourers in order for them to work. About 31% of farmers declined to comment on the subject, while 13.3% viewed it as a positive idea. Issues such as solving labour shortages and a decrease in costs were regarded positively, while some farmers did not support the idea due to reasons outlined below.

4. Conclusion and recommendations

Syrians who've had to flee their country due to the Syrian civil war have had to seek refuge in neighbouring countries such as Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq. Due to its humanitarian approach and open door policy, Turkey has accepted the largest number of refugees worldwide. Individuals who are forced to migrate are required to join the labour force so as to create a life for themselves in their host countries. Regardless of what profession they might have held in their own country, due to their need to integrate into the labour force as quickly as possible in their new country, they often end up working unregistered and undocumented jobs in various sectors. Problems, such as not speaking the language of migrated country and lack of knowledge and experience push refugees to work for low wages at unskilled jobs, and without social security. The agriculture sector has a vast number of seasonal jobs due to its inherent nature, and it is one of the sectors with the largest number of refugee and migrant workers. It is an important employment field not just for Syrian refugees but migrants from different countries. Refugees and migrants work extensively in seasonal tasks such as sowing, planting, hoeing, irrigation, and harvesting. This study was conducted in the province of Gaziantep to provide an overview of farmers' attitudes to the circumstances of Syrian agricultural workers under temporary protection in Turkey, and 61.5% of farmers were found to employ refugees. The primary factors for the preference towards refugee workers are low wages, indiscriminate acceptance of jobs, and flexible work schedules. It was stated that refu-

gee workers contribute to lower the costs due to working for lower wages, however, problems between migrant workers and other workers were also encountered. Despite working extensively in the agricultural sector, Syrians under temporary protection status are rejected by a not insignificant portion of farmers in the sector. Syrian refugees were trained as part of an agricultural vocational training program implemented by FAO in Turkey in 2017, and many farmers found this an objectionable idea due to various reasons.

Refugee and migrant workers in the agricultural sector have become a fact of life in Turkey, and despite their employment being profitable for farmers due to low costs and increased profitability, they are certain adverse socio-cultural effects. Additionally, factors viewed favourably by farmers such as low wages and employment without social security have a negative effect on the living conditions of refugees. Despite the presence of legal regulations in Turkey outlining how refugees might participate in the work force, these aren't enough to curtail off-the-books employment. However, this is not only limited to refugees working seasonal jobs in the agricultural sector. Due to the structural properties of the agriculture sector, nearly all workers who work seasonal jobs are devoid of social security. For this reason, implementing the necessary changes to improve the social rights of labourers working seasonal agricultural jobs in Turkey would be a significant benefit to both local workers and Syrian refugees. Additionally, putting regulations in place regarding wages would improve the living standards of migrant workers, thus increasing employee motivation and therefore productivity. Syrian refugees provide an important labour supply in sectors where recruiting local workers is difficult, such as agriculture, and improving their work and living conditions would solve the labour shortage in the agriculture sector. Considering the importance of agriculture when it comes to providing food to communities and its' contributions to the food industry, its' problems are worth solving and labour conditions are worth improving. Without ignoring the support of Syrian refugees as part of the workforce in the agriculture sector in Turkey, and keeping in

mind their continued presence here, the government must take the necessary precautions to ensure they play a more productive role when it comes to production.

One of the limitations of the study is its taking place in the Southeastern Anatolian region, and additional studies are required to discern problems which might be encountered in other regions and cities. The findings of this study are expected to provide a valuable resource for future studies in the field.

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