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Research Article

**Unwanted Short-Term Guests of School: Romani Children's Access to Education The
Case of Mersin, Turkey**

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Abstract

As for all children on earth, education, as a fundamental human right, must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to diverse needs for Romani children as well. This study has addressed the issues of Romani children's access to education, their reasons for being absent from school, the fact that they are branded as "retarded", the problems they face when accessing quality education by being based on the data of a field research. According to the data it has been concluded that Romani children in the educational institutions have remained as unwanted short-term guests of the educational institutions, under conditions extremely remote from the principles of inclusive education.

This study, which is based on a field research, was conducted in the city of Mersin in Turkey. The process of data collection of this study was realized in two stages. First of all, data were collected through a semi-structured questionnaire form, which sampled 530 Romani households and contained subcategories such as the demographic qualities, employment areas, educational status, exposure to discrimination, daily life practices, etc. of the residents. Beside this quantitative data collecting technique, data were also collected through in-depth interviews on these subcategories and focus group techniques. The heading on which this study will focus will be the educational problems of Romani children in different subcategories of the field research.

Keywords: Romani children, inclusive education, disadvantaged children, vulnerable children, segregation

JEL Codes: I24, I26, I32, J13, J15

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Araştırma Makalesi

**Okulun İstenmeyen Kısa Süreli Misafiri: Roman Çocukların Eğitime Erişimi
Mersin Örneği, Türkiye**

Neriman Açıklın^a & Hasan Sever^b

Öz

Yeryüzündeki tüm çocuklar gibi Roman çocuklar için de, eğitim temel bir insan hakkı olarak, mevcut, erişilebilir, kabul edilebilir ve farklı ihtiyaçlara uyarlanabilir olmalıdır. Bu çalışma Roman çocukların eğitime erişimi, devamsızlık nedenleri, “zeka geriliği” ile damgalanmaları, kaliteli eğitime erişimde karşılarına çıkan sorunları, alan araştırması verilerine dayalı olarak ele almıştır. Verilere göre, eğitim kurumlarında Roman çocukların, kapsayıcı eğitimin ilkelerinden son derece uzak koşullarda eğitim kurumlarının kısa-dönem istenmeyen misafirleri olarak kaldıkları ortaya çıkmıştır.

Saha araştırmasına dayanan bu çalışma, Türkiye'nin Mersin ilinde yapılmıştır. Bu çalışmanın veri toplama süreci iki aşamada gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öncelikle, 530 Roman hanesini örnekleyen ve mahalle sakinlerinin demografik özellikleri, çalışma alanları, eğitim durumları, ayrımcılığa maruz kalma durumları, günlük yaşam pratikleri gibi alt kategorileri içeren yarı yapılandırılmış bir anket formu aracılığıyla veriler toplanmıştır. Bu nicel veri toplama tekniğinin yanı sıra, bu alt kategorilere ilişkin derinlemesine görüşmeler ve odak grup teknikleri ile de veriler toplanmıştır. Bu çalışmanın odaklanacağı başlık, saha araştırmasının farklı alt kategorilerinde yer alan Roman çocukların eğitim sorunları olacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Roman çocuklar, kapsayıcı eğitim, dezavantajlı çocuklar, savunmasız çocuklar, ayrımcılık.

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Introduction¹

The document that is received from formal educational institutions is the most important condition for individuals in modern societies to be employed in any job and this is called “credentialism”. The position of the individual in professional life and the possibilities of social mobility are determined by the rules of credentialism. The subject matter of this study comprises children’s access to educational opportunities in Romani society, the quality of the education and the possibilities of social mobility. For this purpose, a field study, in which quantitative and qualitative data were collected, was conducted with students in primary and secondary schools, class teachers and school counselors, school administrators, and the families of the children in areas of Mersin densely populated by Romanis.

Leaving school early for good, absenteeism, failure, and diplomas received without gaining qualification are the most commonly seen educational problems among Romanis. In other words, a meaningful accessibility is the most important problem of Romani children in relation to education. The phenomena of lack of education, not having qualities fit for the conditions of the market, unemployment, having to work under bad conditions, early marriage, not having access to basic human living conditions all constitute a vicious cycle and become one huge, complicated problem in which the relations of cause and effect are interwoven. The subject matter of this study is to make an effort to assess Romani children’s situation in educational institutions, the most fundamental institutions of modern societies in which possibilities of social mobility may be created.

The main point of view non-Romanis have regarding Romanis lurches from an extremely romanticized view that Romanis are “freedom loving”, “itinerant” people, an approach which ignores the sociological reasons for being “of no fixed abode”, to a view in which Romanis are declared a scapegoat which is automatically responsible for all the evil, the root of crimes, and all the crimes the perpetrators of which are unknown in society, thus criminalizing a group altogether. Nonetheless, these efforts to romanticize include extremely serious ironies in themselves and go as far as to make explicit or inexplicit references that Romanis are a group of people that are “carefree, work and eat on a daily basis and therefore are unconcerned about the future”. This general view is reflected on the problems Romani children face in educational institutions. If Romani children are failing, it must be because they are “lazy, low motivated, fatalist, unsuccessful because of not fulfilling their obligations”; with this criminalizing point of view, the side which considers itself to have the power/authority to determine the “culprit, perpetrator” tends to be of the opinion that “There is nothing that can be done for these people any longer, so we should at least separate our children from the Romani children and isolate them”. In other words, the Romani community is classified as belonging to a ‘sub-culture of poverty’ (Cemlyn & Clark 2005). Therefore, the subject matter of this study is to open a discussion on the educational problems of Romani children, to determine the problems in a realistic way, and to try to put forward suggestions for a solution based on the data of the field research conducted.

The study will primarily address the issue of Romani children’s access to education as a fundamental human right. Later on, the role the educational institutions play in the maintenance of existing inequalities will be assessed pursuant to the data and the experiences of Romani children. Another heading will be about the situation of Romani children that are at

¹ Ethics Committee Permission obligation has been introduced in every survey, interview observation conducted after 2020. However, since this study was conducted before 2020, ethics committee approval was not obtained.

a disadvantage and risk in the educational institutions, in the context of factors such as school, family and teachers. The answer to the question in which way the relation between private educational institutions and disadvantaged families and their children exposes Romani children to double disadvantage will be addressed over the experiences of an expert psychologist in work life. Romani children's access to preschool education and the importance of this in breaking the vicious cycle of poverty constitute another matter of debate. The segregation Romani children are exposed to in the cities and neighborhoods they live and in the schools and classes they attend will be the last heading worth being addressed as one of the most important phenomena in Romani children's access to quality education.

Method

The purpose of this study is to address Romani children's access to education, the quality of the education they are able to access and the reasons why they leave school early for good from a sociological perspective. The field research of this study was realized in two stages. In the first stage, quantitative and qualitative data on demographic information, level of education, employment areas, work and accommodation conditions, educational problems of the children, and practices of exclusion and discrimination were collected, including 530 households. For this purpose, the structured questionnaire form technique and in-depth interviews were conducted. In the assessment of the quantitative data the SPSS program was used. This study contains not only data collected from the Romanis, but at the same time in-depth interviews with the teachers and students in Romani schools and non-Romanis living in the neighborhoods. This study was carried out in Kiremithane, Turgut Reis, Alsancak, Barış and Mahmudiye neighborhoods of Mersin. The data of the study were collected between 1 February 2019 and 30 March 2019. Ethics Committee Permission obligation has been introduced in every survey, interview observation conducted after 2020. However, since this study was conducted before 2020, ethics committee approval was not obtained.

When we look at the educational status, in Romani community in which both the woman and the man are extremely disadvantageous, it is understood that women have to experience this disadvantage much more greatly because of their gender. For example, while the illiteracy rate is 46.1% among women, this rate is 19.4% among men; the rate of elementary school graduates is 12.6% among women, while the same rate is 41.3% among men. The study, in which the level of education, professions and jobs of the parents of the interviewees were also asked about, clearly puts forth how the disadvantageous heritage is transferred from generation to generation. For example, the interviewees said that 57.1% of their fathers and 83.2% of their mothers were illiterate. 84.6% of the men interviewed have casual jobs with irregular pay. A vast majority of the women go do house-cleaning irregularly and both groups have to work without social security. It was found out that in the previous generation 96.6% of the fathers worked in temporary irregular jobs and 31.2% of the mothers went out to do jobs like house-cleaning.

Romani Children's Access to Education as a Human Right

“...none of us goes to school...”

(Literate, Romani woman, 26).

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights regards everyone's right to have access to education as a fundamental human right irrespective of their language, religious beliefs, ethnic roots, and gender. According to this;

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (UN 2015:54).

In this context, education as a fundamental human right, must be available, accessible, acceptable and adaptable to diverse needs for everyone (UNESCO, 2017). The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights on the other hand discusses education in the contexts of eradicating poverty and being able to provide opportunities to participate in society: "... education is the primary vehicle by which economically and socially marginalized adults and children can lift themselves out of poverty and obtain the means to participate fully in their communities" (CESCR, 1999).

Despite being important on its own, access to education, without a doubt, has to include much more than just meaning the duration of an individual's remaining in school. There are multi-dimensional problems including the duration of remaining in school especially on the topic of Romani children's access to school, which constitutes the subject matter of this study. The data of this study and similar quantitative studies indicate that (Uzpeder et al. 2008; Marsh 2008; Uzpeder 2008) Romani children's education problem in Turkey includes much more fundamental problems than just discussing the quality of the education Romani children receive. For Romani children, the problem that stands out in contemporary Turkey seems to be "leaving school early". Without a doubt, the problem of leaving school early directs the study to analyze elements such as the students, teachers, parents, physical conditions and administrative structure of the schools, all of which are constituent parts of the educational institution, and social conditions together. In other words, elements such as the student's conditions of being able to come to school physically and academically prepared, the opinions of the teachers of the student, parents and the location of the school, the expectations of the parents from the educational institution and the child, their educational status and occupations, the funds allocated to the schools, regional disintegration, the effects of values and norms produced by the social environment on the student, teacher, and parents all influence the quality of the education the student receives as well as the duration of his/her remaining in school. Unfortunately, all these conditions are unfavorable to Romani children who are born into disadvantageous conditions and at the same time put them in a vicious circle in which they are at the risk of being the uneducated, impoverished adults of the future, thereby rendering them fragile.

The Educational Institution

"Romani students do not cause a lot of trouble.

They are not mentally capable of causing trouble." (Non-Romani teacher)

Education is an extremely complex institution in which social, cultural, economic and political dimensions are interwoven. The educational institution has been defined in different ways throughout history. With the emergence of modern societies in which education had already left the traditional familial institution and started to become an institution on its own, the functionalist theory left its mark on the basic approach to examining the concept of education. From the perspective of this theory, the educational institution plays an important role in the socialization process of individuals. In this context, the functionalist theory regarded the educational institution as conservative, or in other words, having the task of maintaining the social structure already in existence. According to Durkheim, an important representative of the functionalist theory, “education is a social fact and its main task is transmission of cultures” (Durkheim, 1956).

Nonetheless, the functionalist theory, which examines the educational institution isolating it from social, economic and political contexts in the same way it does with other social institutions, has been severely criticized. Behind this criticism lie arguments that the educational institution too reproduces the inequalities that already exist in society like other social institutions do (Althusser, 2014; Illich, 1971, Bourdieu, 1998). According to this, social groups which are in a constant conflict of interest struggle with one another over the distribution of social resources, power, and status. The side that emerges victorious from this struggle imposes its values and culture on the other side through education. In Bourdieu’s words, in modern societies the nobility of the sword (“noblesse d’épée”) has left its place to the nobility of the robe (noblesse de robe) (Bourdieu, 1998: 22).

In this context, access to educational institutions appears to be an important social problem. In other words, education includes much more than its technical content by being an institution in which people socialize and acquire a profession only. Access to education means that the child becomes aware of his or her potential, is able to develop it together with his or her self-confidence, and have a life compatible with human dignity, as well as being an important instrument in minimizing social inequalities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child expresses the goal of education with its different dimensions as follows:

Article 29 (1) not only adds to the right to education recognized in article 28 a qualitative dimension which reflects the rights and inherent dignity of the child; it also insists upon the need for education to be child-centred, child-friendly and empowering, and it highlights the need for educational processes to be based upon the very principles it enunciates. [1] The education to which every child has a right is one designed to provide the child with life skills, to strengthen the child’s capacity to enjoy the full range of human rights and to promote a culture which is infused by appropriate human rights values. The goal is to empower the child by developing his or her skills, learning and other capacities, human dignity, self-esteem and self-confidence. “Education” in this context goes far beyond formal schooling to embrace the broad range of life experiences and learning processes which enable children, individually and collectively, to develop their personalities, talents and abilities and to live a full and satisfying life within society (CRC, 2001).

Article 24 (e) To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breastfeeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents (CRC, 2001).

One of the biggest problems Romani children face in educational institutions is that aside from being able to come to school academically prepared, being physically prepared for

school is even a bigger challenge under current conditions, and there are approaches in which these situations are tied to the matters of “conscious” or “intelligence”. This approach is extremely discriminatory and go as far as turning into hate rhetoric aimed at Romani children. In fact, the laws guarantee that children are not to be discriminated against because of their identity as well as being entitled to receive education in schools.

The Committee also wishes to highlight the links between article 29 (1) and the struggle against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance. Racism and related phenomena thrive where there is ignorance, unfounded fears of racial, ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic or other forms of difference, the exploitation of prejudices, or the teaching or dissemination of distorted values. A reliable and enduring antidote to all of these failings is the provision of education which promotes an understanding and appreciation of the values reflected in article 29 (1), including respect for differences, and challenges all aspects of discrimination and prejudice. Education should thus be accorded one of the highest priorities in all campaigns against the evils of racism and related phenomena. Emphasis must also be placed upon the importance of teaching about racism as it has been practised historically and particularly as it manifests or has manifested itself within particular communities. Racist behaviour is not something engaged in only by “others”. It is therefore important to focus on the child’s own community when teaching human and children’s rights and the principle of non-discrimination. Such teaching can effectively contribute to the prevention and elimination of racism, ethnic discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance (CRC, 2001).

Romani Children and Their Educational Opportunities

“we let them go to school and off they go,
we don’t know what happens after that...”

(Romani Woman, illiterate, 28)

The main reason why Romani children’s school success is discussed in this study is that the overall educational level of the Romani community is very low, that they live in extreme poverty having to work in menial, low-paying jobs, and that they transfer this poverty to their offspring in a vicious circle in Turkey as well as in the rest of the world (Alves, 2017; Coste&Cavalli, 2015; Duminica&Ivasiuc, 2010; EU 2012; European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education 2011; Kirova & Prochner 2015; OFSTED, 2014; Ivanova 2013). In these multi-dimensional qualities of poverty, the subject matter of this study will especially focus on analyzing the sociological dynamics that influence Romani children’s academic success.

HDR, which has been published since 1990, aims to have people reach a “humane” level of life and sets forth the criteria of this. In this context, the main theme of the HDR, without a doubt, means much more than accessing healthy nutrition or healthy living conditions only. The three fundamental principles of humane living conditions are stated in the report as follows:

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical of these wide-ranging choices are to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect (HDR, 1990 :1).

Access to quality education and a comprehensive educational policy that guarantees social justice are also human rights as well as access to education. A comprehensive, quality education is a factor that will change the course of life of a person from their work life to accommodation conditions, from the possibilities of social mobility of future generations to citizenship consciousness that actively participates in social life. A comprehensive, quality education is a multi-dimensional, broad and complex issue that cannot be explained with economic variables only.

Increasing public expenditure alone cannot guarantee high-quality education. Investment must ensure that the education system is supported by skilled teachers and appropriate and good-quality facilities, including access to libraries, resource materials, and equipment. Education must also be guided by a well-balanced curriculum that fosters theoretical and practical application (UNDP, 2018:6).

Data regarding Romani children's schooling ratio, duration of remaining in school, dropout rate and its reasons, and the like, which are related to the educational process, are unavailable in Turkey. The academic and other problems Romani children face in educational institutions will be assessed with the qualitative data of this study. When we look at the general statistics of Turkey, the net schooling ratios in recent years are stated by TUIK as follows. According to the data supplied by TUIK, the net schooling ratios in Turkey on a yearly basis are as follows: 2012-2013 98.86%, 2013-2014 99.57%, 2014-2015 96.30%, and 2015-2016 94.87%. And the number of students per teacher per year are seen as 20-19-18-18 respectively (TUIK (2017)). However, what concerns this study in here from a sociological perspective is the overall average of these statistics in Turkey, which are not supposed to have any data regarding the accessibility to or quality of education in relation to different social groups.

According to the OECD's "Education at a glance 2017" report, with its one-third investment in public expenditures per student from elementary to higher education compared to the average of the OECD countries Turkey is in the second rank from the bottom (OECD 2017). Undoubtedly, these "average" statistics of the OECD are far from reflecting the problem of inequal distribution of funds. There are extreme cases of inequal distribution in terms of children's accessibility to education and the quality of education among the regions, cities, and neighborhoods depending on the socio-economic levels and the educational status and income levels of families. The most evident example of this reality is experienced by Romani children.

According to the Report of the European commission Working Committee, the assessment of the quality of education is done in four main categories. These four categories have many criteria from the student's academic success to the teachers' academic qualities, from the parents' cooperation with the school to the infrastructure of the school. The attainment levels are determined by taking into consideration the criteria regarding the development of mathematics, reading, science, information and communication technologies (ICT), foreign languages, learning to learn and civics skills of students. Educational success and transition examine the indications of dropping out, completion of upper secondary education and participation in tertiary education of students. Monitoring of school education comprises the indications of evaluation and steering of school education and parental participation, and heads of schools, teachers, students and parents are considered to be the most important stakeholders in the attainment of academic success.

The fourth category is resources and structures. Resources and structures comprise the indicators of 'educational expenditure per student', 'education and training of teachers', 'participation rates in pre-primary education' and 'number of students per computer'. Each indicator is a fundamental factor in the student's academic success and school performance

(EC, P.7). There are no data based on systematic research or research done by official institutions in the world and Turkey in the field of education as well as in the other fields regarding the Romani community. Nevertheless, the limited research that has been done so far proves that the Romani community all over the world faces extremely important accessibility problems in accessing fundamental humane living criteria such as employment, health, and education.

Multiple Vulnerabilities of Romani Children

“the child and his/her family don’t consider school obligatory, they don’t think it matters if the child goes to school or not.

They don’t expect anything from school...”(Non-Romani Teacher)

Child poverty is a phenomenon that has devastating effects especially on the physical, cognitive and social development of the child. Low educational level leads to a vicious cycle that will have a lifelong influence on the child and be transferred to future generations. First the child pays the high cost of poverty and later the effects of this cost are felt across the whole society. According to the UNICEF&WORLD BANK GROUP 2016 data, almost 385 million children live in extremely poor households and are thus more at the risk of having inadequate education, healthcare and nutrition, as well as being exploited and abused (UNICEF & WORLD BANK GROUP 2016 : 6).

Factors such as the socio-economic situation of the family, the educational status of the parents, family type (in other words, the number of people in the family, to live with the parents or in a separated family where there is only one parent or there are no parents, etc.), nutrition and accommodation conditions, school attendance, role models and sense of self all play a very important role in the child’s school success. Children who live under such conditions where these factors are negative have a significantly low ratio of remaining in school. In this context, it is possible to define the disadvantaged child as follows:

- low family socio-economic status;
- aggression and/or hostility on the part of the child towards the teacher or towards other children;
- broken or incomplete families for example, only one parent in the home due to marital problems, separation, desertion, etc.);
- emotional problems shown by the child;
- poor or inadequate living conditions;
- large family size;
- poor attendance at, or truancy from, school;
- less regard for ‘conscience’ on the part of the child (for example, failing to understand or to obey simple examples of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behaviour, lying, or cheating at school work)
- poor language ability of the child;
- low self-esteem or child (for example, showing an with school work, or in situations children) (Edwards 1974).

The disadvantaged situation of children, if precautions to improve this situation are not taken, has the very serious risk of causing them to be the poor of the future. In other words, disadvantaged children are a vulnerable group at the same time.

Disadvantaged group is a group of people that already faces “a problem or a situation”. On the other hand, a vulnerable group of people is a group that is in a risk of “the problem or the situation”, a group that “may” soon face such a problem or situation. Child vulnerability is a relative, not an absolute state. The degrees of child vulnerability can be seen as a downward spiral where each loop downward in the spiral leads to a situation where the child is more likely to experience a negative outcome as a result of a shock. The 'spiral' concept adds to the vulnerability definition by allowing for multiple stages of vulnerability (EDU-MONT 2009).

Factors such as if the parents are literate or not, their educational level, occupations, and income and if that income is regular or irregular, the value they give to the child, if the parents are divorced or not, their expectations from the child’s education, if the family is separated or not, who looks after the children, and marriage norms may be mentioned as family factors in the child’s school success.

In the schools where the children of high socio-economic level families attend the teacher says to the students “do this homework and come to class” and the parents help their child with the assignment; but it’s not that easy in here and we treat those receiving an education there and the ones receiving an education here in the same way. During the enrollment process in here the child is accompanied by a small child or a neighbor so that no registration fee is requested. In the other schools, there is an economic competition, in here there is a conscientious competition. (Non-Romani Teacher)

“Literate parents are more likely to send their children to school; literate people are better able to access continuing education opportunities; and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development challenges” (UNESCO, 2005). Despite the fact that scientific studies have been conducted regarding the educational problems and problems of accessibility to education/quality education of children and adults in the world and in Turkey, these studies are largely ignored and unfortunately the approach to the educational problems of Romani children is still far from being scientific and furthermore it even includes bias and discriminatory attitudes toward them, which makes the subject worth investigating for its own sake.

In here, they too listen to you, but they can’t do well because of impossibility. For example, the child’s parents are divorced, the child doesn’t live with the mother or the father, he/she lives with either the grandma or an aunt or uncle. Most of the parents, fathers are in jail. The mother has a miserable life. Now you come and keep telling them how to treat the child whose parents are divorced, they don’t have the means. These people are accustomed to this reality, I don’t think they’re heavily affected. I mean, that home is like this, the one next to it the same, the one next to that, and so on, I mean the parents of at least some of them are either in jail or have gone somewhere to work, they’re just absent... there is no family integrity and the children are accustomed to this, for instance the child says “I’ve got double dads”, his/her dad is in jail, the mother is married to someone else, or the child says “I’ve got two dads” for example, “father Mustafa is in jail, father Ahmet is at home”. For example, he/she says “mom went out to do the dishes somewhere last night”, but the teacher understands what the mother does for a living. I haven’t done any individual interviews for two years. But the children become accustomed to that situation. The psychology we studied does not cut it in here, it just doesn’t work. (Non-Romani Guidance Teacher)

There is sometimes domestic conflict. Sometimes the parents are separated, there is a second father or mother in some cases. I ask the child what the name of his/her father is and he/she replies “which one are you asking about?”, he/she means if I’m asking about

the new one or the old done. Our children are in fact pitiful ones. Some of them on the other hand come to school just for kicks, for the fun of it and they leave for good a week or so later. (Non-Romani Teacher)

An important project that needs to be disseminated in the neighborhoods and schools heavily populated by Romanis is run by ACEV (Mother and Child Education Foundation) especially aimed at fathers and it has been observed that this has had a huge positive effect not only on the communication between fathers and their children, but also on the communication between parents as well. It is very important that Romani families have access to this and similar projects. With the father assistance program that was initiated by ACEV in 1996, fathers are educated on the active paternity role by experts and the training sessions are continued for 10 to 13 weeks in the evening hours. The program, which is run in coordination with the Ministry of National Education, is said to aim to strengthen children and help re-organize the social gender relations in the family in an egalitarian way, and prevent domestic violence. The four main objectives of the program that are directed at fathers are:

Responsibility: The child develops when the father takes on the same responsibility in looking after him/her as the mother.

Correct Communication: If the father sets up a democratic relation with the child, he/she will learn how to express himself/herself.

Trust: If the father does not hurt the child, he/she will trust the father, and he/she will discover life when the father gives a chance.

Affection: So long as the father shows affection, the child will learn to love himself/herself (ACEV 2018).

It is very important that the father-child and mother-child education programs be maintained for all parents of schools on every socio-economic level, but especially for parents of the ones in disadvantageous places consistently and tenaciously, without hoping to achieve results in the short-term. However, it is equally important that teachers try to understand, without stigmatize them, that disadvantageous families need to develop strategies for survival. The most common type of stigmatize in Turkey as far as the Romani community, who work on simple, daily jobs and have no regular income, is concerned is that they “find food and eat it on a daily basis and don’t think about tomorrow”, unfortunately. Nonetheless, the data of the study indicate that the irregular and limited income of the household is far from feeding the family adequately for one day. Within the scope of this field research, interviews were conducted with shopkeepers in the neighborhoods and especially with grocers from whom Romanis buy staple food products. The data clearly disprove the “myths” about the spending patterns of Romani families, who have limited and irregular income:

...they shop for cheese and similar items, they get the smallest amount I give them, like for one lira...they say ‘we don’t have a fridge at home, we buy as much as we eat’, they shop on a daily basis... (Non-Romani neighborhood grocer)

There is a father-child education foundation called ACEV. That ACEV has a program “paternal assistance program”, briefly known as BADEP. Teachers are recruited to BADEP and they complete a three-week training program. They then serve in schools as paternal assistance educators. I’m one of them, we were involved in such a training in here, paternal assistance training, Romanis didn’t show any interest. They have this mindset, let’s eat and live today, we’ll see what happens tomorrow. (Non-Romani Teacher)

The number of divorced parents is very high. I'm not exaggerating, in some classes 40% of the students have divorced parents. This is one of the biggest problems we have. In such a case, the child has to stay with the grandparents. There is that problem. This is the biggest problem I have to deal with if you ask me. (Non-Romani Guidance Teacher)

The job of creating the conditions under which it will be possible to provide children with physical health and safety, and with emotional, behavioral, social and cognitive competence is not only the responsibility of families, it is also the responsibility of the educational institutions and the other related institutions of the state. It is imperative that all the dimensions from physical health to emotional, behavioral, social and cognitive competence be taken into consideration to enable the child to develop in a healthy and safe environment as a competent and self-sufficient individual.

Physical Health and Safety : Children need to be cared for in a way that promotes their ability to thrive and ensures their survival and protection from injury and physical and sexual maltreatment. While such safety needs are important for all children, they are especially critical for young children, who typically lack the individual resources required to avoid dangers. **Emotional and Behavioral Competence :** Children need care that promotes positive emotional health and well-being and that supports their overall mental health, including a positive sense of self, as well as the ability to cope with stressful situations, temper emotional arousal, overcome fears, and accept disappointments and frustrations. Parents and other caregivers are essential resources for children in managing emotional arousal, coping, and managing behavior. **Social Competence :** Children who possess basic social competence are able to develop and maintain positive relationships with peers and adults. Social competence, which is intertwined with other areas of development (e.g., cognitive, physical, emotional, and linguistic), also may include children's ability to get along with and respect others, such as those of a different race or ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or economic background. **Cognitive Competence:** Cognitive competence encompasses the skills and capacities needed at each age and stage of development to succeed in school and in the world at large. Children's cognitive competence is defined by skills in language and communication, as well as reading, writing, mathematics, and problem solving. Children benefit from stimulating, challenging, and supportive environments in which to develop these skills, which serve as a foundation for healthy self-regulatory practices and modes of persistence required for academic success (Gadsden&Ford&Breiner 2016: 46-47).

According to the data of this study, to be a Romani child means to be born into disadvantageous conditions with all its dimensions. The facts that the children's health and safety are at risk, they lack conditions under which they can develop their emotional and behavioral competence, and they do not have the means to support their social and cognitive competence in a positive way restrict the time they remain in school considerably, but they also cause them to have social and emotional problems. According to the data of the study, the accommodation conditions are unsuitable for both the physical health and academic success of the children.

It is imperative that the current applications in the educational institutions in which the children of families on a high socio-economic level will have social mobility whereas the children of impoverished and uneducated families will continue their life as the poor of the future be replaced by policies that are aimed at strengthening all children.

In this context, student empowerment means that the student is encouraged to take on responsibility in every field of life, school success, peer groups, etc. and his/her participation in the decision-making process is supported, that their right to benefit from all these opportunities is not taken away from them because of any social identity they carry, and that they are encouraged to have self-confidence and be successful in life. Therefore, student empowerment has five main elements. These are commitment, knowledge and skills, confidence, opportunities and responsibilities, active support.

Student empowerment means giving young people the opportunity to actively participate in school activities and decisions that will shape their lives, the lives of their families and the lives of their peers. Examples include:

- seeing young people as assets, valuing their experience, and adopting a positive view of their potential rather than focusing on problems,
- focusing on resilience and strengths instead of risk factors and deficits,
- providing opportunities for contribution and participation for all students, regardless of ability, location, status, background, culture or sexuality,
- active participation from students and support from leadership (MindMatters, n.d: 6).

How empowerment benefits individuals can be explained as follows:

- **Improved awareness of mental health issues:** By participating in self-directed mental health initiatives, students develop a better understanding of relevant issues.
- **Better decision making** Young people make better decisions when they have been involved in the decisionmaking process. This improved decision-making flows on to improved mental health.
- **Enhanced resilience:** Student participation in decision-making strengthens resilience factors such as supportive relationships, sense of personal choice, problem solving skills, opportunities for success and mastery, and peer support and help seeking.
- **Sense of being valued** When students participate in a respectful and meaningful context they are more likely to feel that their views, knowledge and involvement are valued. This then leads to increased confidence, self-belief, knowledge, skills and educational attainment.
- **Improved capacity to help** Involving students as partners in mental health promotion increases their motivation and skills for supporting their peers (MindMatters, undated: 6).

The Absenteeism Trick

“Doesn’t quit. Graduates...”

(Non-Romani Teacher)

“Do absentees quit school?” This question is one of the most fundamental educational problems of Romani children. Unfortunately, the education system allows absentees to pass as well and thus absenteeism, which is the main problem of Romani children, is swept under the rug in an indirect way and there is no systematic struggle against it. This system in fact discriminates in an indirect way. Thus, allowing absent children to pass instead of looking into the reasons why they are absent from school, taking precautions aimed at solving their problems, and developing educational policies to keep them at school means nothing but a de facto exclusion of them from school, something which cannot be done de jure.

As the “fruits” of this system, it was seen that many children who were granted an eight-year diploma lacked basic reading and writing skills in the interviews done with children and youths during this study. As Duminica&Ivasiuc have put it, dropping out is considered to be the main form of exclusion from compulsory schooling, which also generates social exclusion (Duminica&Ivasiuc, 2010: 23).

Assessment of the student’s success Article 31 Students who never attend school and students whose points are not entered in all of the subjects in the weekly course schedule of primary school, and students who do not attend school for at least one semester except for the excuses that are stated in the fifth paragraph of Article 27 of this Directive will repeat the grade they could not pass. (2) In secondary schools and imam-hatip secondary schools; a) The student receives education with his/her pers and is assessed as a whole. b) Whether those who are absent from school for 20 days without any excuse in an academic year and those who receive less than 45 points from any subject at the end of the year will pass or repeat the grade or not will be decided by a council of their teachers in the last week of the second semester. c) The points of students who pass with the decision of a council of their teachers are not changed. The following phrases are recorded in the school’s registry: “Passed with the decision of a council of class teachers” or “It has been decided that the student will repeat the grade”. This situation is also stated in the student’s annual school report (Ministry of National Education – 2014).

Doesn’t quit. Graduates. Now there is something like this in our directives, if the child never comes to school, he/she fails. The system doesn’t let them pass. But if he or she comes to school for 3 or 5 days, or 1 or 2 months, that’s already a pass. I mean, they can pass easily up until the fourth grade... we teach them as much as they can be taught, we let them graduate, they finish eight... (Non-Romani Teacher)

Whether or not the student will fail because of attendance is left to the decision of a council, and a similar procedure is followed in case of academic failure. The Directives of the Ministry of National Education regarding preschool and primary education institutions leaves the decision of repeating the grade for unsuccessful students up to their guardian. For reasons such as the economic cost of education, a possible stigmatize of the child as incompetent among classmates and peers due to his/her failure, and the like the family almost never wishes the unsuccessful child to repeat the grade he/she could not pass.

Assessment of the student’s success Article 31 Students are not normally supposed to repeat a grade in primary schools. Nonetheless, primary school students who are not at a desired competency level may be allowed to repeat a grade for only once during their primary education provided that their legal guardian makes a written request in regard to this” MEB (2014).

Not much. They don’t participate in the lessons a lot. Some of them are indifferent to the lessons. They just come to school for the sake of coming. Some of them come to school because they don’t want their families fined. Because after some time of nonattendance the Directorate of National Education sends them a fine through legal ways. If they can’t pay this, they may be arrested and put in jail afterwards, if they don’t send the child to school. So, some of them come to school because of this, but some of them do try to do something. (Non-Romani Teacher)

The concept of success no longer exists, we just do our job like security guards, nothing else. Most of them leave without even knowing how to read and write, you can’t fail

them according to the system. You can fail them only if they never show up at school...
(Non-Romani Teacher)

The Cost of Opportunity in Education

“The child stays away from school because of hunger...

There is great poverty...” (Non-Romani Teacher)

The more the cost of opportunity in education, the lower the possibility of participation in education. One of the main reasons for leaving school early is that there is no hope of staying in school and the child has to work and bring money to the household. In the short term, the problem is that the labor quality request of the labor market and the school curriculum do not match. The cost of opportunity is when you give up something to be able to increase the production of a product for one unit, the amount of goods and/or gain that needs to be waived. In other words, when you are making an economic choice, it is the second best alternative you have to let go. The alternative with the highest cost that is given up as a result of an economic choice is the cost of opportunity (Alkin, 2005:36). The cost of opportunity is the financial value that is expected to be gained with the most profitable employment of the funds. The cost of opportunity in education is, when poverty and the cost of education are thought together, the family's projections regarding the child's acquisition of a trade and the possibilities of making a living through this trade are immensely weakened, in fact because of the conditions they live under making such projections becomes almost impossible. In other words, the projection that the child will abort his/her education because of the multi-dimensional reasons that are discussed in this text cannot be afforded by the parents because of the investment made in the education in this period and the labor loss of the child in the meantime. That is to say, this should be taken as a problem of cost-opportunity calculated under conditions of poverty rather than a problem of subculture. Therefore, instead of stigmatize the poor, social policies that will change the balance of cost-opportunity in favor of the child should be developed. So long as the cost of opportunity in education is not considered for disadvantageous groups, the family and children will continue to be worried about their survival in the short term. In other words, when a Romani family sends their child to school, they do not only lose the money the child can bring home by working, but they also lose money because of expenses related to school (clothes, uniform, stationery, books, etc.).

They don't expect much from school. They don't have great expectations. They just want to graduate as soon as possible and then begin to work right away. Make music, dance or pick up trash. Picking up trash is a very normal thing for them. The child says for example, I ask him 'Why didn't you come yesterday?', the child says 'I went out with my dad to pick up trash'. What that means is that he/she goes out with his/her dad and they go through trash containers, dumpsters in the city together to try to find things that may be worth some money. (Non-Romani Teacher)

I talk to those who don't come. Sometimes we threaten them as well. For each day you stay away from school there is a fine of 25 liras. If the child doesn't come for ten days, that makes 250 liras, for a hundred days, it's 2500 liras, how will you be able to pay this? They say 'Gosh, I hope you didn't issue a fine yet, OK I will send him/her tomorrow'. Then they say he/she was sick, so I couldn't send him/her. Education is provided, but education is of no importance to them. If you give them a bag of pasta, that's more important to them. (Non-Romani Teacher)

There is a lot of nonattendance. They're after making easy money in the future. The children don't have any goals. They reflect their domestic problems at school and they

share them with the teachers. When they're away from school, they're working with their families. The child stays away from school because of hunger. Romani students don't cause trouble. They're not smart enough to cause trouble. They're not aware of what they do. They don't take school seriously. They're not like 'Oh, I should go to school and study'. There is great poverty. They don't spend their money in a balanced way. When I ask them what they want to be in the future, they don't say anything. (Non-Romani Teacher)

Romani Children in Private Educational Institutions: "Center for Stigmatize Romani Children"

"Poor neighborhoods are chosen for screening...

They think the poor are closer to retardation."

(Non-Romani specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

Gender, disability, AIDS, household poverty, broken families, ethnicity, minority status, orphanhood and child labour, the attitude of the teacher to the student etc. are interrelated and they cause the child to leave school early or determine the quality of the education he/she receives. As a fundamental human right every child's right to access education is an important problem related to clearing the obstacles in front of children. According to the study done by Edwards, the creativity of the child, his/her power of abstract thought, his/her self-respect, the existence of the books at home and the teacher's predictions about his/her school development are shown to be related to one another. Moreover, there is a close relationship between the value given to education in the family, the existence of books at home, the general atmosphere in the home, the socio-economic situation of the family and their physical living conditions, and the child's school success.

In addition to all this, this study has shown that there is a close relationship between the teacher's guesses about the child's emotional problems and the general atmosphere in his/her home (Edwards 1974). In other words, the cause of a student's failure should not make us think that the student's capacity is insufficient; because in reality the student could not find the conditions under which he or she would be able to make enough effort or he or she did not receive as much assistance as required. In this context, the fact that Romani children are sent to RAMs (Guidance Investigation Centers) with the idea that their school failure is connected to "low intelligence" although they are exposed to almost all kinds of disadvantageous conditions not only brands the children negatively, but it also causes them to lose their self-confidence and self-esteem. Special educational policies that have been developed regarding Romani children and are specifically aimed at assessing their living conditions are not devised. The lack of such policies results in stigmatize children, who have difficulty in learning only because they were born into disadvantageous conditions, as "retarded". The data of this study show that the guidance units in the schools are far from providing effective service in this respect. This phenomenon is proof that the schools in Romani neighborhoods are subjected to de facto segregation, not de jure, and in a similar fashion Romani children are subjected to de facto discrimination, not de jure. In the field research, an interview was conducted with a psychologist who works in a state hospital and issues reports after he/she has applied an intelligence test on the children sent from the schools. As the specialist psychologist put it, although intelligence tests, considered on their own, are applications that may be beneficial to the retarded child when suitable conditions are created, things work out quite differently in practice:

There is a problem called ‘learning disability’, those who come to the institutions with this problem don’t have a single problem. Some of them come without any condition, there are children who really suffer from retardation, the most general assessment here is that the procedure is not followed properly. Once the child who has a learning disability applies and is given a special education report, various improvements may be made in his/her academic life, so it wouldn’t be absolutely right to denounce all the applications that are carried out right off the bat, but this has to do with the scope within which the applications have been carried out. I mean, in fact, the interaction in the hospitals is not very healthy because there is a hierarchical relationship. I mean poor families who come to the hospital are already worried and scared. Because they see you as part of the institution that gives the money. Why do they come, to make money. The institutions receive money from the state per each child, these are private education schools that are affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, they receive between 500 and 800/900 liras per child. Because an education is provided and the state pays them in exchange for this education. That is to say, private education institutions seek customers. They give small bribes to the family to facilitate the child’s school attendance. Sometimes these are very small things, for example paying for a telephone bill of theirs, giving them a small allowance, and so on. If the child is furnished with this document he/she goes to a private education institution for a certain time, and the family receives small allowances from the institution. This is completely informal, it’s even an offense actually. Therefore, the document is not to be given on every occasion. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

The data of the field research have shown that it is essential that the educators, school counselors, class teachers or psychologists at every stage of children’s education give value to the child and try to win him/her instead of treating poor children as expendable beings.

The child is first sent to the school counselor, who then refers him/her to a psychologist. In every step of the way in every institution, there is the passing the buck approach, ‘let me refer him/her to the next level, so he/she becomes somebody else’s problem’. In fact, the first stop is the school counselor. And the psychologist refers the child to RAM, so RAM becomes the third stop, the final decision for private education institutions lies with RAM. RAM, the guidance research center, is affiliated with the MNE. For the report to be able to send the child to a private education institution there must be RAM’s approval. And RAM refers the child to hospitals for a decision to be made, orders a medical board report be received. This is one of the main reasons why private education institutions are corrupted. This is what happens in reality... (specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

The fact that private education centers regard children as customers and they go on a “child hunt” as it were in especially poor neighborhoods causes a serious rift between poor children and children of a high socio-economic level during the process of obtaining a report from the institution.

The private education institution follows the procedure closely to enable the family to receive this document. They reach the family, especially by going to poor neighborhoods, this is called screening, they do screening in poor neighborhoods, they go there and say “we’ll get a report for you”, they think that the poor are closer to retardation. Secondly, there is no awareness about this. They predict that if they go to a rich family and say “we’ll provide you with a special education” they will be rejected. But it’s possible to manipulate the poor family more quickly.”we’ll take you in our

institution”, and the second step is, almost commonplace, “we’ll apply for a monthly pay”, a monthly pay for the disabled. They deceive with small things by saying we’ll do this first, and then we’ll do that, etc. Even if no money is involved in this, for one thing they take the child in their institution, so in fact the burden on the family decreases. These are problematic children who don’t go to school and have behavioral problems, even if they’re not mentally retarded. The fact that the child is away from home means less burden on the shoulders of the parents. Therefore it may not be enough to explain all this with economic reasons. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

When children who experience school failure because of their negative conditions and children with mental challenges are schooled together, this has quite negative effects on the already disadvantageous children. Unfortunately, private education centers exploit the children of poor families, who lack the education to be able to form an idea on the consequences of their children’s attendance in those schools, not only economically but also emotionally.

They take the children in a rehabilitation center, children who aren’t mentally disabled, and when they stay with mentally-challenged ones, they’re negatively affected. Later on the family is annoyed by this, they see that there is a negative behavioral change in the child. Therefore, they don’t send the child to the institution any longer, but officially the child seems to be attending the school. And the institution receives money over this, this is very common. MNE is trying to prevent this with its inspectors. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

Children who are sent to private education institutions despite being mentally normal are very badly affected in multi-dimensional ways. The fact that children are manipulated before an interview with a specialist psychologist, they are forced to tell lies, and they are branded as “retarded” in their social environment all show that these institutions malfunction in practice. The damage these institutions whose purpose of foundation is to be beneficial and to provide assistance to children cause during their operation is of crucial importance that it must be investigated in another study.

How does this damage children? First of all, they’re branded. Secondly, being exposed to those informal processes corrupts them as well. I mean, the child is made to tell lies, this is corruption if you ask me. You’re made to tell lies to derive some benefit for yourself. You establish a hierarchical relationship between institutions, money giver-taker, you establish an authoritarian relationship. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

Because they come with the worry that they’re going to be branded, this is reinforced. In fact, mostly poor families with a low level educational background come. The children are taken with a service bus, which makes the child more visible by getting into that street and taking the child from that house, all of this is stigmatize. Families whose awareness and educational background are on a higher level are concerned, if these people think the child needs this, that is to say if they didn’t come to be manipulated, if the teacher at school told them about this, they are worried thinking “will the child be branded for life if he/she gets this report”. This anxiety is relatively a good thing when you look at it, in fact it shows that there is a need there, if there’s not such an anxiety, it’s completely bad. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

While it is required to create funds and develop social policies to improve the living conditions of poor and disadvantageous children, policies aimed at finding out the cause and

effect relations are not being implemented, and unfortunately this causes us to waste our funds and lose our children in a vicious cycle.

Disadvantageous children are mostly those who don't go to school, but why don't they go to school, when you look at there, there's lots of problems in the family. In Romani families, the father is in jail, the mother has left, broken families are very common. What is the cause and what is the effect, these are entangled. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

Nonetheless, it should be stated at this point that private education institutions are extremely beneficial to children who really need them, but what we want to draw attention on is that these institutions may be exploited.

Private education institutions are largely corrupted. Because there are informal processes, but it wouldn't be completely right to say "bad, nonfunctional, useless" etc. from head to toe regarding them. Because they're corrupted the risk is much too high. Frankly, I know many children in need of special education and therefore have to go to such schools and they benefit from them when they do. (Specialist psychologist in a state hospital)

The family has no expectations about the future of the child, that is to say since the family does not think the child is likely to be in an institution in the future, stigmatize is no problem. However, since the child of a family on a high educational level may be worried about his/her future career and education, being branded is important for him/her.

The Romani child will be picking up trash at five, fifteen or fifty years of age, he or she is not likely to work in an official institution, so for the family there is no possibility of being branded. The main point that should be taken into consideration in terms of education is "Is there a will to integrate disadvantageous children into the system?". Will we turn a blind eye on the problems faced by poor children under risk, and even ignore those children and their families altogether and try to maintain the system with middle-class children who have the possibility of social mobility, or will we develop social policies aimed at integrating disadvantageous children into the system under humane conditions? The answer to this question is very important.

The Inclusive Education of Romani Children

“...They're not conscious at all.

There is no conscious about this subject...” (Non-Romani Teacher)

Dworkin says that true equality is the equality of the sources people are able to use, not their accomplishments (Dworkin, 2002). In this context, without discriminating children by using categories like good/bad, successful/unsuccessful, etc. we need to take a look at the problem of distribution of sources, which is the primary concern of social justice. In this respect, the concept of comprehensive education is also very important for this study as well. Although comprehensive education is a long-term application which requires labor and effort, it has a content that aims to support all children. “Involvement” does not only mean to place disabled students in general education classes. This process includes fundamental change in the way a school supports each child's individual needs. Therefore, effective models of comprehensive education do not only let disabled students benefit, but it also creates an atmosphere in which every other student is able to develop as well. Some of the ways in which comprehensive

education applications will provide all students with quality education are expressed by UNICEF as follows: ‘introduce child-centred teaching methodologies’, ‘use cooperative learning strategies’ and ‘give children opportunities to learn’(UNICEF, 2000a).

In another report UNICEF discusses educational quality with its different dimensions. The first of these draws attention to students’ basic living needs and the relation this has with learning. According to this, the importance of the facts that students are healthy, well-nourished, and ready to learn and learning is supported by families and communities is discussed. The second dimension is about drawing attention to students’ being in an environment which is safe, protective and gender-sensitive and which provides adequate resources and facilities. Another dimension is about aiming to provide students with access to curricula and materials with which they can acquire skills especially in fields such as literacy, numeracy, and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and peace. It is of vital importance that teachers develop processes to facilitate learning and decrease inequality in skillfully administered classes and schools by using child-centered teaching approaches (UNICEF, 2000b).

Unfortunately, teachers’ evaluations regarding children’s success seem to be so far away from the comprehensive education approach.

...I mean they take their families as a role model. Whatever they see in them, they continue to do the same. They’re not really open to development and learning. They like to live on a daily basis, this is the truth. Their families too live on a daily basis. They follow them. The children follow in their footsteps. If I find food today, I’ll eat it today, they say I don’t care what happens tomorrow. (Non-Romani Teacher)

This problem can only be prevented with the development of inclusive education. In this context, inclusive education may be defined as follows: inclusive education ‘focuses on the full and effective participation, accessibility, attendance and achievement of all students, especially those who, for different reasons, are excluded or at risk of being marginalized’. Inclusive education is a process, not an endpoint (UNESCO, 2018). These principles were upheld by the Dakar Framework for Action in 2000, which emphasized Education for All as an ‘inclusive concept’, which “must take account of the needs of the poor and the most disadvantaged, including working children, remote rural dwellers and nomads, and ethnic and linguistic minorities, children, young people and adults affected by conflict, HIV/AIDS, hunger and poor health; and those with special learning needs” (UNICEF 2000c).

As it can be understood from this definition, inclusive education means to apply an education system in which the different individual needs of all children are taken into consideration. The following factors are very important in creating the conditions for inclusive education: supporting children academically, taking into consideration children’s needs when preparing the curriculum, ensuring that children are integrated into school, respecting children’s differences in terms of economy or ethnicity, creating a school atmosphere in which children are able to express their thoughts and feelings without being exposed to discriminatory and oppressive attitude (Anderson, 2018).

In the context of comprehensive education, the most serious problems regarding teachers is that despite knowing about Romani children’s poverty, their obligation to work, and the educational and occupational problems of their parents, their handling of these issues is problematic. The teacher expects a miracle from the parents and children under such conditions and thinks that the source of the problem lies in the “behavioral poverty” of Romanis. The fact that a teacher who knows that his student collects discarded materials from dumpsters all night

long and he ties the child's situation in class and his failure to the "conscious of Romanis" indicates that teachers should urgently receive in-service training on the education of disadvantaged children.

"...For example Barış came the other day like 15 days or so ago. He slept there until the last hours. He slept for five class hours, he goes out to collect trash..." (Non-Romani Teacher)

"... The female student who never showed up in the second semester... she goes out with her mother to do cleaning in homes." (Non-Romani Teacher)

After the teacher made this explanation about the student's nonattendance in school, the talk we had about education went on like this: "...They're not conscious at all. There's no conscious about this matter." (Non-Romani Teacher)

According to Wells&Fox&Cordova-Cobo, inclusive classroom settings lead to beneficial academic outcomes and better interpersonal relations for students of all backgrounds. Giving children the opportunity to interact with people of different races and socio-economic status reduces stereotypes and intolerance. They also references data showing integrated schooling closes the achievement gap, and allows more equal access to facilities, resources and highly-trained teachers (Wells&Fox&Cordova-Cob, 2016).

The child-friendly school model of UNICEF includes elements such as a safe, healthy and protective environment, having been staffed with trained teachers, equipped with adequate resources and offering conditions appropriate for learning. In the child-friendly school model, the objective is to ensure that every child can access education, which is their fundamental right. According to this, the child-friendly school model is based on the principles of access, gender equity, empowerment and learning achievement (UNICEF 2009:1). In the human rights-based education approach put forth by the UNESCO, the philosophy is based on the right of every child to quality education and having respect for the universal human rights of the child.

• **The right of access to education** – the right of every child to education on the basis of equality of opportunity and without discrimination on any grounds. To achieve this goal, education must be available for, accessible to and inclusive of all children.

• **The right to quality education** – the right of every child to a quality education that enables him or her to fulfil his or her potential, realize opportunities for employment and develop life skills. To achieve this goal, education needs to be child-centred, relevant and embrace a broad curriculum, and be appropriately resourced and monitored.

• **The right to respect within the learning environment** – the right of every child to respect for her or his inherent dignity and to have her or his universal human rights respected within the education system. To achieve this goal, education must be provided in a way that is consistent with human rights, including equal respect for every child, opportunities for meaningful participation, freedom from all forms of violence, and respect for language, culture and religion (UNESCO, 2007:4).

Preschool Education

"Pre-school education is the first button of the shirt,
it will go on how you did it the first time." (Non-Romani Preschool Teacher)

The effect of receiving a preschool education on the future school success of the child plays a very important role in preventing the reproduction of social inequalities. Research shows that children who receive a preschool education and who do not differ considerably in terms of

future academic success. Again according to research, the higher the socio-economic and educational level of the family, the more likely their children will receive a preschool education. In other words, the family transfers their advantageous or disadvantageous situation over to the child. In this sense, children's access to education plays a vital role in ensuring social equality.

Preschool education has great importance in terms of lessening the differences of success among children and dealing with inequality indirectly. Despite the objectives stated in high policy documents, the spending made on this stage is insufficient and this leads to a low ration of schooling and the fact that children of especially socio-economically disadvantageous families remain devoid of preschool education. In addition to investments aimed at increasing the access to preschool education, it is also necessary to make investments in the quality. Participating in preschool education in Turkey is largely affected by the wealth of the family, the educational level of the mother and the employment situation of the mother, and this effect becomes visible after the 44th month. At the age of one, the likelihood of participating in preschool education of the children from the highest wealth group of 20% is 26% higher in comparison to the children from the lowest wealth group of 40%. The fact that the mother has received education for one more year increases the possibility of the child's participation in preschool by 3%. At the same age, the possibility of benefiting from preschool education services of the children mothers working in the industrial or services sector is 16% higher than those whose mothers do not (ERG 2017a: 28-29). It is known that in Turkey there are no statistics regarding the Romani population's situation in preschool or in higher stages of education. Nonetheless, it is clear that when the educational level and occupations of the families are taken into account, the possibility of the children of the Romani people participating in preschool will be at a very low level.

...there is a very serious case of poverty, in addition to this the child comes to us in a bad condition, there's also a lack of nutrition, a child who just eats a piece of dry bread every day and a child who takes in a good amount of proteins and carbohydrates are not the same... for example, due to nutrition, the fact that the child lacks sufficient and balanced nutrition affects his/her development also. For example, the children come on the first day, you look at them and may think most of them have a mental challenge. And then when the atmosphere has settled, the child begins to make rapid progress. I mean, at first they look so different, because their nutrition is insufficient, another important point is environmental deprivation. For instance, the child doesn't have any toys, has no toys to play with, when there is environmental deprivation, the lack of stimulus affects the cognitive development of the child. If the child doesn't have a doll, a toy car, the cognitive skills of him/her are affected unavoidably. Let's say the child is now six years old and lacks stimulus in his/her environment. But at the same age another child, let's say living in Yenisehir has all kinds of stimulus, plays with puzzles, has all sorts of toys, etc., the more stimulus the child is exposed to, the better his/her cognitive skills will develop. This shows that the problem child is not mentally-challenged, but he/she can't use his/her potential, they can't learn how to use it... (Non-Romani Preschool Teacher)

Preschool is a like long bridge to the child's further academic life. The maxim I like best, a saying I hold as a principle. Preschool education is the first button of the shirt, it will go on how you did it the first time. This is how I look at the profession, if we do the shirt like this, it will go on in the same way for the rest of his/her life, it depends on how you do up the shirt. If you do up the shirt correctly, their lives will be in order, we as teachers want them to be in schools like this where they socialize in the best way and

are able to express themselves and their feelings within a particular scope of civilization.
(Non-Romani Preschool Teacher)

The European Union Minorities and Discrimination Survey in nine countries showed that only one in two Romani children attended preschool. Only 15% of young Romanis completed upper secondary or vocational education. About 20% of Romani respondents could not read, compared to 1% of non-Romani respondents (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). In Turkey, as in the other fields, there are no statistics regarding Romani children in preschools. However, when we consider the facts that access to preschool is less than access to primary education in terms of proportion and it is also optional, we can safely arrive at the conclusion that the possibility of Romani children participating in preschool education should be very low. This prediction which is based on the statistical data are also supported by the quantitative data of this study. Factors such as the cost of preschool to the family, seasonal agricultural labor done by the whole family, trash collection, the educational level of the family, etc. prevent Roma children from preschool. According to the data of the MNE, the net schooling ratio for ages 3-5 in preschool in Turkey are as follows: 2012-2013 26.63%, 2013-2014 27.71% , 2014-2015 32.68% , 2015-2016 33.26%, 2016-2017 35.52% (MEB (2017)).

However, what needs attention in here is that these data show the average in Turkey and the lower the socio-economic level of the families, the less likely the children will have access to preschool education. In this context, participation in preschool in Turkey increases as the age of the child is older and the wealth of the family is larger. Although the schooling ratio is low for ages 3-5 across Turkey, this ratio is even lower among the poor. The ratio of participation in preschool education for children aged 3 from the poorest 20% of society is 2%, and for children at 4 it is 17%. The total ratio of participation in preschool and primary at age 5 is 69%. The ratio of participation in preschool education for children aged 3 from the wealthiest 20% is 33%, at age 4 it is 71%. The total ratio of participation in preschool and primary at age 5 is 92% (MEB (2017)).

Among the 17 sustainable development goals published by the UN, the fourth one is “to guarantee that by 2030 all female and male children will have access to quality preschool education which will prepare them for primary education”. Various researches have proven that participation in preschool education plays an important role in the mental, verbal and social-emotional development of children, has a positive effect on academic performance in educational processes, and helps them prepare for their adult lives.

They come to us in 48 months. When these children have come to us, they're glued to TV in the garden and home most of the time, something I disapprove of, a child who spends all his/her day in front of the TV. The TV causes lack of attention, I think it affects their attention very negatively, when the child focuses on TV, he or she is closed to all other stimuli. Let me give you an example from one of the homes I visited; I went to this home, there's a room, a kitchen and a toilet, a home on the ground floor. I tell the parents, I'm not coming to check out your home, I just want to see where the children live, I give the assignment accordingly. In the room the parents sleep in a double-sized bed, there's a convertible sofa next to it, both of the children sleep in this next to the parents and there's only a TV in the room. The child is in a single room, I'd schooled his elder sister, he came to me, he's like living in a different world because there aren't any toys, he can't play with anything, he doesn't have a balanced and regular diet, and the families stay up all night and they go to sleep during the day, the nighttime is when the growth hormone is active, the child is up through the night, thus his development is

badly affected. Yes, he grows taller, but that's the only thing, the body is not healthy, these are huge problems. A lack of materials badly affects the children's cognitive development. (Non-Romani Preschool Teacher)

Early child education is still not obligatory for children aged 3 and below in Turkey. Only 9% of children aged 3 are enrolled for early childhood and pre-primary education in Turkey and this ratio is far below the OECD average which is 78%. When compared to the OECD average of 39%, almost none of our two-year-olds receive early childhood education OECD (2017). "Regardless of a family's income, children whose parents read to them when they were just starting school develop a greater sense of enjoyment of reading than those whose parents did not read to them or read to them infrequently (OECD 2012 : 18).

According to ACEV, the mothers of the children who attend preschool programs have three more years of education compared to the other mothers and the possibility of them being illiterate is lower than the other mothers. The fathers of the children who attend preschool education have about 2.5 more years of education compared to the other fathers and the possibility of them working in the agricultural sector is lower. While the five-year-old children of the wealthy families and educated mothers attend a preschool education institution, the children of the poorest families are much more likely to directly enroll at a primary school. The difference seen among the socio-economic status in the demand for preschool and primary school options for age 5 causes social inequality to be ingrained as of this early age and the socio-economic status seems to be the factor that stands out by being the strongest effect on the participation in preschool education by outweighing factors such as the residential area, ethnic and cultural differences and gender. This and similar studies indicate that the existing demand for preschool education for five-year-olds is largely met in Turkey, however the financial situation and socio-economic status of the families are obstructing the existing demand for four-year-olds. The socio-economic status of the families determines if they can afford to pay the fees of preschool education or not either in the public or private sector, thereby the participation of their children. The increase in quality, accessible, low cost early childhood care and preschool education services provided by the state may help the families among especially the poorest 40% benefit more from these services. The development and dissemination of the centrally-based early childhood care and preschool services provided by the state may support the development of children and provide them with equal opportunities. It has been observed that the demand for especially four-year-olds, the group which is most affected by the socio-economic situation, has increased as well. Moreover, the increase in preschool educational services may enable all women to participate more in the labor market independent of the socio-economic situation (ERG 2017b).

The Teacher Issue in the Inclusive Education of Romani Children

“...they become a bad lot, thugs, thieves, beggars, etc. in the end...” (Non-Romani Guidance Teacher)

Especially the preschool and primary school periods are very important because that is when the child develops a character and a sense of self. In this period, the trust the teacher builds with the child plays an important role in the child's ability to express himself/herself and focusing on achievements rather than making mistakes. The communication the teacher establishes with the student is a determining factor in the student's school success as well as his or her teaching qualities and methods, and all of these have an influence on not only the student's school success, but also on the time he or she spends in educational institutions and

his or her future plans. According to the PISA report on Turkey, the teacher's intervention in the curriculum is 0%. The report shows that the success of a class increases as much as the teacher makes a contribution to the curriculum in accordance with the needs of the students and is able to render them as active and participating as possible in class (ERG 2017a).

To be able to provide a comprehensive education in class the teacher must believe that all children are worth an education, they can all learn, they all have the capacity to make a difference in their lives, and that working for these objectives is not only the responsibility of experts or specialists, but at the same time it is also their responsibility as teachers (Rouse, 2008). Nonetheless, the general inclination of teachers is far from caring about the individual needs of children; they either want to hand out diplomas to "pass the buck" before children attain a sufficient level of success, or they just want to teach them "how to wash their hands and gain basic reading and writing skills" like so-called "teachers with best intentions". However, it is of course not realistic to expect teachers to deal with such a huge problem on their own. According to the outcomes of the study, teachers are suffering from a serious feeling of occupational exhaustion.

Teachers should exchange their locations once every two years, the others should come here, too. Let us go to good schools, too, we're stuck in here, I want to be assigned elsewhere but can't go. Class teachers are in a worse situation because they're deeply involved with the children. We're in a heartbreaking situation. The other day I was walking to school too slowly, one of my colleagues said "You're not willing to come to school at all", it was the first week of the year. I swear my feet go backwards. We often make jokes saying that 179 days left, workdays are 180 you know, we count them... You see that's how we are. Being an administrator is another trouble here, everyone has a problem of some sort... Don't expect any academic success from here... (Non-Romani Guidance Teacher school)

Another serious outcome of the study is that although it is seen that children are foreseeably at a risk, no improvement or inclusive policies for children specifically aimed at disadvantaged children either on a micro level in classes or on a macro level have been developed.

"...How much support will be given, you have to furnish them with a diploma, they experience the same things in secondary education, then they become a bad lot, thugs, thieves, beggars, etc. in the end..." (Non-Romani Guidance Teacher)

A teacher who makes his student feel that he is valued lets him express himself. The teacher who determines the student's emotional, physical and academic needs, and takes an approach aimed at developing these needs has assisted the student's academic development as well. A student who knows that he is supported by his teacher and trusts him becomes open to developing skills to ask questions in class, express himself and communicate with his peers. In other words, the teacher's supportive attitude positively affects the child's social relations as well as his school success. Especially preschool and primary periods are the most important periods in which the child's sense of self in his school life develops. In this period, the constructive attitude of the teacher toward the child and his making the child focus on the things he can do rather than the things he cannot allow the child to think that he is approved and accepted. This situation creates motivation in the child who begins to believe that he will make it, and he develops a positive perception regarding himself and his mates. Nonetheless, the general inclination in the teachers who work in the schools in disadvantaged neighborhoods is that academic success and pedagogical education of the children is a problem that exceeds their capabilities.

Romani students have no intention of studying. The main reason is indifference, the parents are no role models. They're not aware of the advantages of education. They can't see the things education brings. The only reason why they send their children to school is literacy. The child thinks that his/her first duty is to help the parents. The families work in other towns in seasonal jobs. The children have an attendance problem, they don't take on responsibility. Since they don't see school as beneficial, attendance is no problem for the families. The families can't help the children become successful. (Non Romani Teacher)

In here the fact that the teachers both draw attention to the disadvantageous conditions of the children and they interpret this as "*Romani children have no intention of studying.*" is a completely tragic situation from a pedagogical perspective. According to the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child, providing the child with a protective environment is within the rights of the child. According to this, a protective environment for the child means that he or she is raised in such a way that he or she is physically healthy, has self-confidence and self-respect, and is able to live without any threat of abuse or exploitation. Therefore, a child who is branded because of his/her ethnicity cannot fully benefit from his/her right to education (UNICEF, 2005:7).

The School Environment for Romani Children

"I'm the porter, cleaner, repairperson and administrator of the school..."(Non-Romani School Manager)

According to the data of the 2017 Global Education Monitoring Report Turkey, especially the schools in disadvantageous places are seriously deprived of adequate physical infrastructure, heating-cooling, and workers/employees at school. According to the PISA Report of 2015, physical infrastructure problems affect the schools in which disadvantageous children receive education more negatively. It is essential that educational institutions have strong physical infrastructure. In the PISA 2015 Report, about 40% of the school administrators in Colombia, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Jordan and Mexico state that infrastructure problems considerably affect education. In Turkey, 69% of the school administrators of the schools that have disadvantageous students state that education is affected by physical infrastructure problems. More than 60% of the managers of the primary schools in Turkey state that there is not enough educational space in their schools and that this prevents education. More than half of the managers state that the heating and cooling system in the school prevents education (ERG 2017a).

In Turkey, there is no support for state schools in terms of physical infrastructure, so school administrators try to fix the problems with donations from parents. It is evident that this situation brings about physical shortcomings in the schools especially in poor neighborhoods.

I'm the porter, cleaner, repairperson and administrator of the school, the state doesn't allocate any funds to the school, we try to meet the needs of the school with our own means, it is also illegal to receive donations from the parents, so our hands are tied. (Non-Romani School Manager)

This place is very difficult for a working teacher, but it's easy if you don't care... If you say that you want to struggle with your children, it's a very difficult place. All our teachers are struggling in their own way. Some say "these kids will never be any good. (Non-Romani Teacher)

There are no legal obstructions in front of Romani children in the sense of equal opportunities; however, in practice the schools Romani children attend are in the poorest

neighborhoods of the city they live in and the physical conditions of the schools are extremely inadequate. One of the most important indicators of this is although the schools are not socio-economically or ethnically segregated from a legal perspective, in reality the children are quite homogenous in them in accordance with the ethnic identities and socio-economic roots of their families.

According to the data of 2017, there are 833.039 Syrian children at school age in Turkey (ERG 2017a). These children who were previously educated at temporary educational centers by Syrian teachers who are native Arabic speakers have been transferred to Turkish state schools after the closure of the temporary educational centers in the 2018/19 academic year. However, the data of this study show that this transfer, which has been done without any social, psychological, lingual and academic preparation, has left the teachers, native children and school administrators with many academic and nonacademic problems.

...Right now our average number is 650-700. We have three times more Syrian students, the teachers are struggling, if we think of the 250 Romani children of ours, we have almost three times more Syrian students now, 60-70% of our students are Syrian, many Turkish parents are withdrawing their children by saying “there are no more Turkish students here”, they take them to other schools. Because in general they have economic difficulties, and the Bahçe neighborhood is where this kind of families live... (non-Romani Teacher)

...One of the first grade classes is made up of 54 students of which 50 are Syrian, 4 Turkish. 90% of the school is made up of Syrian students. 80% of the Syrian families are not willing to learn Turkish, the children don't know, either, they know this much “come, go, sit”, this is not enough for academic study. The teachers here are under unbelievable stress. The teacher can't express himself/herself, can't convey the things he/she wants to convey, transfers the information to the child but the child doesn't get it, there's no feedback, we're flogging a dead horse, so to speak. (Non-Romani Teacher)

In addition to this problem, especially in the primary schools in poor regions, a dense population of Syrian children has been detected. In the schools in poor regions, the families that are relatively in a better situation have had their children transferred to other school because of the dense presence of Syrian students. Especially in the preschools and primary schools of the Romani neighborhoods in which we did research, at least 60% or more of the student population is comprised of Syrians. Romani children who are already extremely disadvantaged have become double disadvantaged with the addition of Syrian children to the classes without any preparation. According to the data of the study, Syrian children either do not speak Turkish at all or they have a very limited knowledge and comprehension of Turkish. The fact that the teachers do not speak Arabic and the students do not speak Turkish has seriously hindered the academic operation of the class. In every school two Syrian teachers are assigned as translators for communication between the teachers and students, but this study has shown that Turkish comprehension and speaking skills of these people are also very limited.

The efforts the teachers make in class to develop the language and academic skills of the Syrian students have almost rendered the Romani children invisible. According to the data, the Syrian students who make up the majority in the school, have displayed such behavior that they tend to establish a closed communicative environment among themselves in class and outside class. Besides, the psychological/emotional problems of the Syrian children, especially of those who have witnessed the war, have forced the teachers to struggle with other problems in addition to attaining academic success.

...The children here are now having academic difficulties, problems of communication, unbelievably there are especially children who have seen war, they have lost relatives, there are those who have a traumatic life, the teachers discipline all these students together, they try to solve the problems and meanwhile they try to do the academic studies, I mean they try to continue the education and schooling. (Non-Romani Teacher)

Another important effect on the Romani children of the addition of the Syrian children to the state schools in an eclectic way without developing educational policies regarding them is the degradation it has created in their minds, and in an identity who has already been exposed to exclusion and humiliation it has resulted in the consolidation of that feeling. The most striking example of this is seen in the international aid delivered to the Syrian children. For instance, the Unicef aid delivered to the Syrian children through the schools, satchels, crayons, stationery, boots, parkas, etc. is being done without considering the children in the schools in disadvantageous neighborhoods.

The UNICEF sends a lot of equipment, clothes, etc. to the Syrians, our children cry when they go, our children don't receive anything. Stationery has come, summer bags and winter bags have come separately, track suits have come for summer and winter, sneakers, etc. First grade child, what a pity, the other one says "I want one, too", "they're not for you, they're for the Syrians"...Ours look on and go away crying. It's sad, the child hasn't seen such things. (Non-Romani Teacher)

During the interviews, one of the most important issues the school counselors and teachers pointed out was that during these aid deliveries the feelings of deprivation and disappointment in the Romani children grew considerably and they developed a mood in which they regarded themselves as unimportant/unworthy. At this point the outcome, which has been shown by the data of the study and is extremely interesting and just as tragic, is the fact that the Romani children are rendered invisible and neglecting them is made to look normal in any conjuncture.

The Segregation of Romani Children in The City, Neighborhood, School, and Class

"...they told us: "Dirty gypsies why are you playing ball?"

they said "This can't be your place..."

(13 year-old Romani primary school student)

Segregation takes place in the Romani neighborhood on a number of levels. First, the stigmatize of the neighborhood as "Gypsy Neighborhood" in the sense of both poverty and ethnicity and the fact that it has a relatively homogenous structure according to these features comprise the first cycle of segregation. In the context of our subject matter, the second cycle of segregation takes place when the families of the neighborhood that are relatively better off in the economic sense send their children to the schools outside of the neighborhood because the ones in their place are branded as "Gypsy College". The third cycle of segregation takes place because in classes the children are separated as "gypsy children" and "non-gypsy children" and the families explicitly or inexplicitly tell the teachers not to seat their children next to the "gypsy children" and they also tell their children not to hang out with them outside the class. In other words, segregation takes place with its different dimensions, which are residential, social and academic attainment.

Word Origin for segregate; past participle of segregare "set apart, lay aside; isolate; divide," literally "separate from the flock," from *se gregare , from se "apart from" + grege ,

ablative of grex "herd, flock"(onlineetymologydictionary). Residential segregation may result from the facts that people want to live together because of ethnicity and other similarities, they have limited choices on the housing market because of their income level or they are exposed to institutional applications, ethnic or cultural discrimination (Alves, 2017). In other words, residential segregation may happen "voluntarily" or due to acts of God. It is possible to see that Romanis are exposed to residential segregation and isolation on each level of different fields of life in Turkey. According to the data of this study, particular neighborhoods of the city that are surrounded by invisible walls are known to be "gypsy neighborhoods" by all the residents. Residents do not normally go to the Gypsy neighborhoods because they are unsafe, eerie places where you do not know who you might run into. In the same way, "gypsy children" are prevented by invisible walls from going out of their neighborhoods.

...To the astro pitch with my brother. Some other kids were playing...They said to us: "Dirty Gypsies why are you playing ball" they said "This can't be your place, you can't pay the price of this place". But I told them "We don't have rich families like you do...Can you relate to the poor?" "No" they said."We don't want to relate to them actually."and I told them "I would want to if I were you". (13 year-old Romani Primary School Student)

A similar segregation is seen in education institutions as well. The primary and secondary schools located in the Romani neighborhoods are schools which are predominantly attended by the poor and largely Romani children of the place. These schools, which are ironically called "gypsy college" by the residents of the city outside of the Romani neighborhoods, are like temporary shelters for unwanted guests because they host their students for a short time and cannot prepare them for the next level educational institutions. The educational system in Turkey places students into primary, secondary and high schools based on their residential address. Because residential areas are determined predominantly by the socio-economic level of their residents children are placed in different schools through automatic segregation according to their socio-economic situation. In addition to this, because families that live in the same neighborhood and are "relatively" on a higher socio-economic level send their children to schools or private schools in other places, the already existing segregation becomes even much sharper.

There are children that are said to be Romani at school, there are also families that send their children to other schools although they are not Romanis and live near us. There are other families, too, which do not want to do the same just because there are Romanis in here. (Non-Romani Teacher)

This school wasn't built for Romanis only, this is a school built for every student in this neighborhood. If a service bus stops in front of that apartment building over there and takes the student to another school, this leads me to think that some things are disconnected in here. (Non-Romani Teacher)

According to the OECD Report, there are still huge inequalities between the learning environment of state and private schools. Small classes enable teachers to allocate more time to their students and their needs, and help them make more effort. The average student number in a class in private institutions was below the OECD average in 2015, but this ratio in state schools was among the highest among the OECD countries. Turkey is the country that has the biggest difference between its state and private schools in terms of the number of students per class among the OECD countries (OECD 2017).

In in-class relations the fact that non-Romani parents have discriminatory attitude toward Romani children and that they transfer this attitude to their children as a social value result in the marginalization of Romani children in class as well:

... For example a parent tells me “sir, please don’t seat my child with a Romani child”. Why is it not possible? Somebody says this. Or in class a student develops the discriminatory language he has acquired from his family and says this about a Romani classmate of his: “teacher, they’re peddlers. (Non Romani Teacher)

In-class segregation is basically done over the distinction of good student vs. bad student. This discrimination is applied to Romani children by teachers, non-Romani parents and non-Romani students. In this context, Romani children have always been the ones who are instantly pointed at as first “suspects” when something goes missing in class. Another type of segregation is, unfortunately many teachers who work in the schools predominantly attended by Romani children brand them as “mentally retarded” and create a serious case of discrimination in class. In the interviews done with the teachers during this study, very few teachers did not accentuate the “mental retardation” of the children and did not state that this was a “genetic feature that pertains to gypsies”.

Conclusion

Romani children are the thieves, lazybones, retards, dirtbags, negroes, in short as being the small representatives of the “Romani” brand in society, they are the unwanted, short-term guests of the school who are exposed to all this discriminatory rhetoric and stigmatize in the short time they remained in school.

In this context, it is imperative that teachers receive in-service training on ethnic discrimination, marginalization, pedagogy, and the child and family. The teachers who said they were not developing a discriminatory attitude or there was no discrimination among the peers in class during the interviews often said that the Romani children were “retarded” or the Romani families were “carefree people living on a daily basis” later on.

A pedagogical perspective that is based on the positive development of children has to uncover and help develop the physical and mental potential of children primarily. All kinds of precautions must be taken to protect the child rights of Romani children. Pedagogical approaches must be applied aimed at developing egalitarian and fair relations far from developing a discriminatory rhetoric among Romani and non-Romani children who attend the same school together. Solutions must be found without normalizing Romani children’s leaving school early through the principle of every child’s right of access to inclusive and quality education. The trick of regulatory compliance is, although some children do not attend school, they are still allowed to graduate without even learning how to read and write, which results in their exclusion from social life. Not even a single teacher has the right to restrict the expectations from a Romani child to “reading-writing and learning how to wash one’s hands”; expectations turn into outcomes, they become a self-fulfilling prophecy. At this point, it is essential that the good of children be given the highest priority with the help of family school cooperation and social policies. Children must be provided with easy and free access to areas where they can express themselves through sports, arts, and entertainment in their spare time. The existing educational policy is dismissive toward children and tries to put them out of sight; in other words, it is aimed at sweeping the problem under the rug instead of developing policies to strengthen vulnerable children. Thus, accessing quality education is heavily dependent on the advantageous or disadvantageous heritage inherited from the family and vulnerable children are very likely to live as the poor of the future, doing the dirtiest, riskiest and lowest-paying

jobs as their families in a vicious cycle they will never be able to break. The most important answer that needs to be given by the policy-makers to the question of the educational problems of Romani children is whether they are willing to develop policies that will include disadvantaged children in the system or not.

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