

The Social Work Perspective of Civil Society Organizations in Turkey

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Abstract: *Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) [i.e. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)] come out to be important entities due to the recent changes in the traditional perception about the state and the restriction of the power of the government. CSOs are known to play key roles in the determination of the political, cultural, economic and social boundaries of state and the political identities that are at the core of the liberal democratic system, and in forming of the social policies. The controversies and debates over the non-governmental or civil society issues seem to focus to a great extent on the relation between these organizations and state. Non-governmental or civil society refers to "apolitical society". This does not refer to a society that is aloof from politics rather envisions a society that has spaces that government cannot intervene. Moreover, this type of society is in a position to influence political authority, shape and articulate its existence and demands that are often social in nature independent of the political authority.*

CSOs that attained an important status in the liberal democratic system contribute to the development of the society; help the solutions of problems in a wide variety of areas ranging from economic development to struggling poverty, from environment protection to animal rights, from education to collaboration in the social cultural areas. In this study, CSOs that vary with respect to the functions they perform in social life are viewed from a social work perspective. To this end, the study begins with a brief mention of the historical course and legal foundations of civil society in Turkey. Subsequently, focusing on a sample of CSOs that deal with primarily charity work in Turkey in terms of their goals, operations and organizational structure the study attempts to develop a perspective regarding the current status and activities of these organizations in Turkey.

Keywords: *Civil Society, Civil Society Organizations, Social Work, Social Activity, Charity, Collaboration.*