

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE TURKISH EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Abstract

Social Sciences introduces people to the society, region, country and the world they live in. Among the subject areas of Social Sciences are important sciences such as History, Geography, Civics, Sociology, Anthropology, Law and Psychology. Studies and examples related to Social Sciences in Turks date back to very old times. After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, revolutions and innovations began to be made in different areas as targeted. One of these innovations, Village Institutes, which have an important place in Turkish educational life, slowly started its educational life on April 17, 1940.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Education, social sciences, Hasanoğlu Village Institute.

Introduction

Social sciences are a systematic field of study aimed at understanding human behavior, social institutions and processes. Social sciences, which include disciplines such as history, geography, sociology, psychology and anthropology, are not only an academic field of interest but also have a critical role in the development of individuals and societies. In this paper, the role of social sciences in the Turkish education system, its importance and future expectations and suggestions will be evaluated in the light of literature.

Basic Functions of Social Sciences in the Education System

Development of Critical Thinking Skills: Social sciences provide students with the skills to look at events from different perspectives, analyze and evaluate information. In this way, students can produce more effective solutions to the problems they encounter (Özdemir, 2015).

Development of Social Consciousness: Disciplines such as history, geography and sociology provide students with a deeper understanding of their own society and the world. In this way, students learn to respect cultural differences, develop a sense of social responsibility and adopt democratic citizenship values (Akin, 2018).

Development of Communication Skills: Discussions, presentations and project work in social sciences courses enable students to communicate effectively. This skill is very important for success in both academic and business life (Yılmaz, 2017).

Development of Problem Solving Skills: Social sciences provide students with the skills to analyze complex problems and develop solutions. This skill is of vital importance in today's fast and constantly changing world (Çetin, 2016).

Social Sciences in Turkish Education History

Studies and examples related to Social Sciences in Turks date back to very old times. The oldest Turkish written documents known as the "Göktürk Inscriptions" are full of historical, cultural and sociological information and messages in terms of content. In this respect, it can be said that the first written documents related to Social Sciences in Turkish

history are the Göktürk Inscriptions. Two important works written during the Karakhanids, one of the first Muslim Turkish societies, "Divan-ı Lügatit-Türk and Kutadgu Bilig" are both literary works and examples of social science studies. Nizamiye Madrasahs, established during the Seljuk period in the 11th century, are among the most important institutions in Turkish education and training history. In addition to Islamic sciences, sciences such as Medicine, Mathematics and Philosophy were taught in Nizamiye Madrasahs. Although there is no information that History and Geography courses were taught in these madrasahs, very famous historians were trained and wrote valuable works during this period.

After the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, as targeted, revolutions and innovations began to be made in different areas. Turkish intellectuals, especially Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, wanted to take the country above the level of contemporary civilization. At this point, since it was known that educated and qualified staff would be needed for the development of the country, the priority in revolutions and innovations was education.

These revolutions aimed to increase the level of education of the people and to make the people adopt the new republican regime. Some foreign experts were invited for the changes and innovations that could be made in the field of education and their opinions were taken. They presented their reports in line with the examinations and observations they made in Turkey. It was seen that the education of the villagers was emphasized in the reports presented by the foreign experts.

The necessity of providing educational services to every individual of the country, that is, to all citizens without distinction between urban and villagers, began to be emphasized by the Republic authorities. The aim was to close the gap between these two groups in order to ensure that the villagers and city dwellers support the state as a whole in solving the problems in the country and to mobilize them.

The basis of the education policies in the early years of the Republic was secularization, citizenship and educating the villagers as a requirement of the existing agricultural economy and providing them with jobs and professions. The idea of training teachers, especially for the village, constitutes the basis of the education policies of the Republic period.

During the Mustafa Necati period, with the Law on Education Organization numbered 789 and dated 22 March 1926, "Village Teachers' Schools" were opened, and during Saffet Arıkan's term as Minister of Education (1936), "Training Courses" were opened upon Atatürk's suggestion to meet the teacher needs of the villages. These attempts and experiences prepared the ground for the Village Institutes. İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, who was appointed as the General Director of Primary Education during Saffet Arıkan's term and continued his duty during Hasan Âli Yücel's term as Minister of Education, brought a new dimension to village education. According to Tonguç, it was not possible for a nation where the village was not developed and cared for to progress. Therefore, it was necessary to start education and development movements from the villages. The basis for a country's development could be possible by reviving the village and the villagers.

Based on these ideas, Tonguç shaped his understanding of education and with the support of Hasan Âli Yücel, "Village Institutes" were established on April 17, 1940. Village Institutes aimed for a working environment in unity with their students, teachers, and master instructors and based their education on the principle of production-oriented work. The

expressions “education within work, through work, and within work” that characterize the education in Village Institutes reflect the educational philosophy of these schools.

İsmail Hakkı Tonguç made a name for himself with the “education within work” philosophy that he developed within the framework of the widespread educational understanding of that period. His “education within work” principle is an understanding that is realized through the coordinated use of mental and manual skills and does not contribute to production and economy when either is used alone. In fact, Tonguç argued that society can develop thanks to work education that is carried out with knowledge, reason, and logic, starting from rural areas.

The education within work method emphasizes two elements in education. These are “student activity” and “production”. Students who participated in production with real work tools and work areas received a versatile education. Students who were personally involved in the education, acted out the production together with the teacher, fully involved in the work and taking responsibility for the implementation of the lesson. Village Institutes are institutions that give importance to work and production and are founded on a foundation that supports the active participation of students with the guidance of teachers in all activities, and provides education by doing-living and integrating with real life.

Village Institutes, which have an important place in Turkish education life, started their education life gradually after the Village Institutes Law passed by the parliament on April 17, 1940, and since this date, Village Institutes have been opened in 21 different regions of the country. One of these Village Institutes that were opened is the Hasanoğlu Village Institute, whose campus was provided in the Hasanoğlu village of Ankara, and the Hasanoğlu Higher Village Institute, which was opened in 1942.

Applied Learning: Hasanoğlu Village Institute

Hasanoğlu Village Institute has an important place in the roles of Social Sciences in preparing for professional life, contributing to individual development, and learning by applying. Hasanoğlu Village Institute was opened in Ankara in 1941 and is a Village Institute covering Ankara and several surrounding provinces. Hasanoğlu Village Institute has an important place among the 21 Village Institutes in total located throughout the country. It has an important place among Village Institutes due to its establishment in the capital of the country, its being shown as an example to political figures coming from abroad, its easy accessibility in terms of geography and location, and its becoming the High Village Institute in 1943.

The most important contribution of the Hasanoğlu and other Village Institutes system to our educational life was perhaps the implementation of principles and methods that could not enter schools and classes into life in nature. Thousands of teacher candidates learned by experiencing them in these institutions and carried them to the schools they were assigned to. Village children had the opportunity to transfer to higher education more easily. Knowledge was used as a tool, not an aim. These institutions showed the invalidity of putting forward financial inadequacy as an obstacle and paved the way for talented children of the people to study up to the upper levels in education.

The education here was based on the concept of education for work, and most of the students passed the course practically. Students who were trained as teachers and professionals in the villages attended classes here according to their interests, and this was achieved by separating students according to their wishes and abilities after the first time they came to the

institute. Unlike other Village Institutes, health education was also provided in Hasanoğlu Village Institutes, and personnel such as health officers and village midwives who would meet the needs of the village in the field of health were also trained. Thanks to the culture lessons given to each student, students also developed in terms of general culture and knowledge. After 1942, a Higher Village Institute section was opened in Hasanoğlu. This was a higher education institution opened with the aim of providing more academic and specialized education to the students who graduated from Hasanoğlu and other Village Institutes in the normal Village Institute, and to train teachers, inspectors, head teachers and mobile head teachers for the Village Institutes. While there was no higher education institution in the field of village education, Hasanoğlu Higher Village Institute was a primary place of education in this field. Here, students coming from secondary education Village Institutes were trained to become experts in their fields or to become teachers for Village Institutes and Higher Village Institutes.

Education in the institutes was provided by dividing students into groups. This method, in which students were divided into groups and conducted their lessons and studies, was the cluster work method. Students and cluster head teachers fulfilled their duties in their work areas and were directed to different areas. Students continued their development in their work and all kinds of artistic and cultural activities with the on-the-job training and cluster work method. With the cluster work method applied in the institutes, a work environment was created where students could be active in all activities in cooperation.

Ice, a method applied in the institutes, ensured that the work was completed in a short time through cooperation, while at the same time making serious contributions to the learning of individuals within the institute community and strengthening their relationships with each other. The participation of students in all work through cooperation had a positive effect on each of them becoming knowledgeable on every subject and on the establishment of an environment of unity and sharing within the institute. Starting with the leadership of Hasan Âli Yücel and İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, Ice spread to all institutes and from the institutes to the public. It can be said that students are active in cultural, sports and artistic activities as well as in construction, carpentry, blacksmithing, sewing and agriculture. In theater plays, music studies, folk dances and book readings, students and teachers planned their lessons and works with cooperation and acted with joint works. This joint work greatly benefited the students in gaining solidarity, cooperation and also moral values. The joint work that the students showed in every lesson and work positively affected the development of community awareness in the Institutes.

The spirit of cooperation of the Institutes grew over time and ensured the development of cooperation and solidarity between the Institutes. Similarly, cooperation was also reflected in the people around the Institutes. With cooperation, the Institutes did their own work, continued their cooperation with other Institutes and helped each other by keeping their communication with the public strong. Everything in the Institutes was done with community awareness. The Institute community, waking up early in the morning, started the day by playing folk dances together, doing sports, singing songs and folk songs. The sense of unity and solidarity that began in the early hours of the day was evident in everything they did throughout the day, and every task was accomplished through cooperation.

The Status of Social Sciences in the Turkish Education System

The importance of social sciences in the Turkish education system is increasing. Especially with the educational reforms made in recent years, more social scientific content has been added to the curriculum. However, some problems need to be overcome in order for social sciences to reveal their full potential. We can list these problems as follows:

Trend towards Rote Learning: An exam-oriented education system can prevent students from developing critical thinking and analysis skills (Demir, 2019).

Shortage of Teachers: The lack of qualified teachers in the field of social sciences can negatively affect the quality of education (Yılmaz, 2017).

Inadequate Use of Technology: Inadequate use of technological tools in social sciences courses can limit students' learning experiences (Akın, 2018).

Expectations

In the future, it is anticipated that the role of social sciences in the Turkish education system will increase. In particular, globalization, technological developments and social changes further emphasize the importance of social sciences. In this context, the following developments can be expected in the education system:

Proliferation of Project-Based Learning: More widespread use of project-based learning methods that enable students to actively produce knowledge and develop problem-solving skills (Çetin, 2016).

Integration of Technology into Education: Enrichment of learning experiences by using virtual reality, augmented reality and other technological tools in social sciences courses (Akın, 2018).

Gaining Importance of Interdisciplinary Studies: Students gain a more holistic perspective by encouraging interdisciplinary studies that bring different disciplines together (Özdemir, 2015).

Suggestions

Achievements that include social science disciplines can be included equally at all grade levels.

The number of achievements in learning areas related to social science disciplines that are not included or included in the program can be increased.

Importance can be given to other social science disciplines along with the disciplines of history and geography that constitute the density (Demir, Haçat, 2018).

Studies on common language, religion and cultural unity can be increased.

There are many valuable scientists of Turkish origin who have shed light on the history of sciences raised by the Turkish geography. The ideas and thoughts of great figures such as Biruni, İbni Hazm, Kashgarlı Mahmud, Yusuf Has Hacı, Gazzali etc. who pioneered the field of social sciences and grew up in the heart of the Turkistan geography that encompasses especially Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and the entire Turkish geography should be brought to the world agenda with publications to be made in SSCI and Scopus comprehensive journals. In addition, we should ensure that this information reaches a wide audience by supporting the existing journals with quality publications, which will be jointly established by scientists of this geography with such a rich scientific history, and by increasing our own journals with SSCI and SCOPUS coverage.

Conclusion

Social sciences have a vital role in the development of individuals and societies. The more effective use of social sciences in the Turkish education system will enable students to become better citizens, better employees and better individuals. For this purpose, more importance should be given to issues such as reviewing education policies, training teachers and strengthening the equipment of schools.

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