

SOCIAL CHANGE, EDUCATION AND TEACHER TRAINING POLICIES

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ABSTRACT

One of the highly problematic areas of education is teacher training and its process. Increasing the level of success and quality of teachers is among the most pressing and debated areas of education almost in every society. Education, teacher training, and teacher training process, the most important components of education, cannot be considered without due consideration to social developments and changes. With this reality in mind, this study focuses on the dynamic relationships between society, education, and teacher training policies from a sociological perspective, since it is a must to know the dynamic structure of society and the process of change in order to be able to fully understand and soundly evaluate teacher training policies.

Key Words: Education, education and society, societal change, teacher, teacher training policies.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid developments and changes both in industry and in communication technologies have made their impact deeply felt on various institutional structures, among which lies education. The changes in science and technology have caused radical changes in societal structures. Teacher training process, the core of education, has gained crucial importance within the sphere of the ever-increasing international competition together with globalization, since well-trained students and quality education could be provided by teachers, who occupy a very important role among the main strategic human resources. Also, the direct relationship between the development of individuals and societies and the type, content, and quality of education they receive cannot be denied. Given this crucially important role of teacher training running in parallel with the changes and developments across the globe, it has become a need to revise teacher training process both on a local and global scale. Quality education can be delivered only by well-trained teachers who can also be good role models.

Methodologically, any social event or phenomenon has to be subjected to scientific analysis and evaluation considering its own social reality. Any approach or attempt ignoring this reality amounts to nothing more than temporary solutions and evaluating the events superficially. Temporary policies cause new problems and deadlocks rather than offering solutions to problems. In this sense, the education system has to renew itself in terms of its goal, process, content, theory, and practice and adapt to changes both socially and globally. As long as phenomena like education and schooling/training are not dealt with within a society's structural dynamics, it cannot be fully grasped and serious and long lasting solutions to existing problems cannot be found.

Developments, especially in science, communication and technology have deeply affected social system and education. While influencing society on the one hand, the education system with human being as its input and output is affected by the changes in society. Therefore, any education system has to revise and renew itself in accordance with the changes and developments taking place in its own environment. The success of an education system is directly related to how well it understands and positions itself to developments happening in the world.

Increasing the capacity of teachers who educate the future generation of a society is always important. The issue to increase student success and teacher quality occupies an important place in almost every society.

Generally, people have the perception that teachers are responsible for the low level of student success and success disparity of students from different sub-groups (Özcan, 2011:17). Within this framework, we will try to seek answers to questions like; “What kind of changes in the teacher training system have taken place since the first teacher training schools were opened?”. “What factors have caused these changes?” “Have these changes met social needs and expectations?” In other words, we will discuss teacher training policy system in Turkey from a sociological perspective and will consider it from a wide perspective.

SOCIAL CHANGE AND EDUCATION

Society consists of people who come together for common grounds and goals; share the same rules and live in solidarity. Rather than having a static structure, society has a dynamic structure and is open to change. Regardless of where human beings live, their relationship with their environment is dynamic, which leads to change (Hunt, 1972:87). Therefore, no matter how traditional and conservative a culture or a society is, it is subject to constant change (Fichter, 1994:166). Societal structures, institutions and the network of relations between them do constantly change. Social change covers the basic transformations in social structure and norms (in patterns of feelings, ideas, and behaviors). These changes could be discerned in areas ranging from knowledge, values, technology, culture, material culture, family, education, religion, economy, art, social stratification, and inter-group relations to human beings’ acceptance of changes about perceptions of the relationship with themselves and with their world (Durugönül, 2003:598). Social change is a differentiation of quality and quality which appears at different time periods in societal structures (Erkal, 2006:227). This deserves consideration and appreciation, which is a must for a society to be able to continue its existence in a sound and reasonable way.

Human beings are the one and only creature that needs education. Society, which consists of human beings, has to equip its members with knowledge, value, attitude, and skills to survive. Given this, every society needs educational institutions to continue its existence. Educational institutions, which exist to meet this demand, are the patterns of a network (Bilgiseven, 1992:14).

Education, a component of social system, interacts with family, politics, economy, and religion, which are some of the other components of the social system. As being one of the fundamental components of the social system, education is also one of the causes of social changes. Scientific and technological developments have deeply affected the education systems of many societies and led to changes (Talas, 2013:166). This deeply-felt impact has been such that during the transition from industrial society to information society, it affected the teaching profession extensively as well as it influenced formal training. In information society, knowledge is offered to the service of everyone; not a privilege offered only to a particular group. This widespread access to information has deeply affected learning and teaching processes. What counts in today’s information society is not having access to information and disseminating it; what is important is being able to detect information critically from the vast ocean of information and use the ‘right’ information. What is even more important is having the skills and creativity to produce ‘information’ itself (Özcan, 2011:19-20). It is impossible to secure a place among the modern societies and to compete with them in this ever-globalizing world without due importance to these processes.

EDUCATION AND TEACHER

The fundamental goal of education is to transmit culture; more importantly, it is to prepare the society for the future (Sağ, 2003:12). Every nation has its own peculiar education system, which is founded in accordance with the social, cultural, political, and economic features and it develops in line with the aforementioned features (Duman, 1991:19). This system is accepted and appreciated as much as it reflects the values of the society and as much as it meets its needs (Kaya, 1993:2). Given this, the education system of a country has to be shaped and structured/institutionalized in accordance with the social, economic and cultural features and needs of it. The importance of education in the development and shaping of individuals and societies is incontestable. Studies on the realization of education and its goals have pointed out that student success depends on genetics

50%, teacher quality 30%, and other factors 20%. This finding underlines the close relationship between the quality of schools and the quality of teachers.

In almost every society, school comes at the top of the list of institutions which society identifies with education. The basic feature which differentiates school from other educational institutions stems from the fact that education is on human beings and that it does change human beings. One of the integral parts of school is educationalists; that is, teachers (Özdemir, 2003:159).

The French philosopher Saint Simon, one of the founding fathers of the French Revolution, seeks an answer to the question; 'what happens if the king dies?' In fact, what he really meant to ask was; "what will the French people/France lose if the king dies?" He answers his own question simply, saying; 'If the king dies, a person from the royal family will be enthroned, in which case the French lose nothing.' He continues questioning, pinpointing to; "What if France loses 10 mathematicians, 10 historians, 10 physicists, and artists?" According to him, this huge loss will be deeply felt and it will certainly affect France profoundly, since raising these people is not easy and their gaps cannot be filled right away. In fact, what Saint Simon clearly underlined in his remarks was how important a place educationist, teacher, and researcher do have in society. Undoubtedly, the most important component of education is the teacher. The teacher is the leading actor in education. The teacher is the one who constructs and shapes both the mind and character of people. Education takes the human being as a raw material and then shapes it. In this sense, the teacher is an artist who molds the human being. Given this, the teacher is the architect of society as well as the architect of education (Ülken, 1967:11). The teacher designs and shapes a society's way of thinking. In this sense, how a teacher is trained and where s/he is employed is very important.

In an attempt to understand and explain today's Turkey, it would be useful to know the outlines of the periods of changes from a historical perspective, since every period bears the traces and influences of the preceding periods in one way or the other. Therefore, an endeavor to explain a period makes it compulsory to look at the preceding historical structure. As such, the relationship between education and society must be scrutinized in line with the viewpoints of various philosophers. We will not discuss education policies of the Ottoman Empire and The Turkish Republic completely, since such a scope will overstep the boundaries of this paper, neither will it be methodologically right. However, we would like to underline the fact that the student, teacher, and teacher training process, which constitute the three main dimensions of education, have been a very important issue of discussion for a long time.

Educational institutions (madrasa) in the Ottoman Society began to deteriorate gradually beginning from the mid 16th century. These deteriorations appeared in teaching style and methodology, recruitment, and disciplinary procedures (Akyüz, 2001:68-69). According to Mehmet Efendi (1858-1914), who held an important place in Turkish Education system when the deterioration and corruption began, primary education was the basis of education. The state should have the right to provide primary education, even using force when necessary. Teachers should be civil servants with a salary. According to him, one of the most important responsibilities of the state is to protect science. Science starts from the upper class. First elite class personnel who will educate and train primary and secondary school teachers should be raised. These primary and secondary education teachers should in turn educate and train children and teenagers. As is the case in the theory known as the "*Theory of the Tree of Heaven*", (according to which the tree has its roots above), Emrulla Efendi's model brought some new practices. According to this view, which holds that education can develop from the top to the bottom, it is necessary to establish and develop scientific mindset. This could only be realized through university (Akyüz, 2010:301).

On the other hand, one of the educationalists of the late Ottoman period, Satı Bey (1880-1968) formulated the thesis that "regulations in education should begin from the primary education", following "the Cheery Tree" model. According to him, society cannot develop and progress having a primary education system with a rotten basis. It was underlined that education with no solid footing would be doomed to fall apart in the way a building with no solid groundwork is doomed to (Sarioğlu, 2012:87-88). In short, we are witnessing that the

quest for a model in Turkish education system regarding how the education system should be structured and how teachers should be trained began long before and intensified during the republican era.

TEACHER TRAINING POLICIES FROM THE REPUBLICAN PERIOD TO PRESENT

When the history of teacher training system in Turkey is examined, it is seen that the first remarkable development in pre-republican Turkey begins with the foundation of Darülmualimin; the first teacher training school aiming to train teachers for junior high schools in 1848 (Baskan and Aydın, 2006:36). This school was mainly for male students and its purpose was to train teachers for primary schools. With an ordinance declared in 1848, studying was made compulsory for children in primary (4) and junior high schools (2); 6 years in total. The first essential steps regarding primary education were taken with *Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi* dated 1869. In order to train teachers for high schools (Sultani) that emerged with the socio-political reform in 1870, Teacher Training Institution (Darülmualimin-i Aliye) was established as a new type of school. This school comprised four-year education after junior high school. In the early 20th century, there were 17 teacher training schools and one teacher training faculty in the Ottoman Empire in 13 regions. In *Kanun-i Esasi*, dated 1876, a decree making primary education compulsory for “all the Ottoman Empire citizens” was issued.

Shortly after the proclamation of the Republic in Turkey, all schools were handed over to the Ministry of National Education (Maarif Vekâleti) under “The Law on Unification of Education” (Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu) dated March 1924, law no. 430. The name “Darülmualimin” became “Muallim Mektebi” in 1924-1925 school year and in 1935 it became “Öğretmen Okulu”; both translate Teacher Training School. In the 24th article of the law, dated March 22, 1926, law no. 789, regarding Education System (Maarif Teşkilatı), definition of teaching as a profession undertaking education which is a civil service of government and the priority and superiority of this profession over educational services were emphasized (Akyüz, 2001:344). Moreover, a regulation entailing two types of teacher schools being “First Teacher Schools” (İlk Muallim Mektepleri) and “Village Teacher Schools” (Köy Muallim Mektepleri) with the law validated in 1926, numbered 789, was introduced. In 1927-1928 school year, a teacher training implementation was set up which was directed to rural areas; two Village Teacher Schools were opened in Denizli and Kayseri with the aim of training teachers for village schools with three classrooms. In 1932-1933 school year, study period of teacher schools was increased from 5 to 6 years. By issuing a law, aiming to supply the needs of rural primary schools, dated April 17, 1940, law no. 3803, titled “The Law of Village Institute and Craftsmen Training” (Köy Enstitüsü ve Sanat Erbabı Yetiştirme Kanunu), Village Institutes were established; the education period of which was 5 years above primary school (Akyüz, 2010:393).

Until 1948, 21 village institutes had been opened in different regions of Turkey. Biennial education institutes were opened in 1974 to teach primary teachers for higher education as well. The number of primary teacher schools rose to 89 in 1973 which were 27 in 1940. In 1969, the education period of primary teacher schools were changed, as it was increased by 1 year, in short, 7 years above primary school, 4 years above junior high school in 1970-1971 school year by ministerial consent. Thereby, standard high school program was applied; the number and content of lessons as regards the teaching profession were expanded. Also, the trainees that were trained by the new program were given the chance to enter all kinds of high school and university by equating them to the high school graduates. Primary teacher schools were closed by adjudging all teachers’s receiving higher education at the level of associate degree to a legal provision with Basic Law of National Education (Milli Eğitim Temel Kanunu) which was legislated in 1973 in an effort to enhance qualification and instead biennial education institutes were established. In teacher training, apart from standard training method, various implementations were also applied in specific periods. Although being different in terms of content and practice, some of these implementations are still processed. These implementations have been; reserve officer teacher (1960-), substitute teacher (1961-), initial teacher training (1970-), *epistolary* teacher training (1974-), teacher training in *expedited program* (1975-1980) (Akyüz, 2001: 353).

In 1973, the *compulsion* for teachers to receive higher education was legislated with “Basic Law of National Education”, law no. 1739. Biennial higher education was introduced by the resolution of Council of Training and Education (Talim ve Terbiye Kurulu), dated 1974, law no. 191, to become a primary school teacher. For this

purpose, biennial "Education Institutes" were established. Teacher schools were also transformed into teacher high schools. The number of biennial Education Institutes, being 50 in 1976, was decreased to 17 in 1980-1981 school year and in July 20, 1982, its name was changed as "Education Academy" (Eğitim Yüksek Okulu), the duty of teacher training was handed over to universities. The study periods of Education Academies were increased to 4 years from 1989-1990 school year onwards, and these schools were transformed into "Faculties of Education" (Eğitim Fakültesi) by a legislation introduced in July 3, 1992, law no. 3837 (Küçükahmet, 1993:17). Education Institutes played the biggest role in junior high school teacher training in the Republican period. Initially, in 1926-1927 school year, "Secondary Teacher School" (Orta Muallim Mektebi), which was first opened in Konya, was established to train Turkish teachers. In 1927, Pedagogy Department was added and it was moved to Ankara. Mathematics, Physics and Natural Sciences, History, Geography departments were added in 1928-1929 school year. In 1929-1930 school year, this school was named "Gazi Secondary Teacher School and Discipline Institute" (Gazi Orta Muallim Mektebi ve Terbiye Enstitüsü). By making Job Training, Painting Class and Body Discipline classes as part of the curriculum in 1932-1933 school year, Music, French, English and German classes between 1937-1948, this teacher school was transformed into an establishment that trained teachers for all the general lessons in secondary schools (Büyükkaragöz, 1987: 345). In 1967-1968 school year, study period of all departments in Gazi Education Institute was identified as 3 years, increased to 4 years in 1978-1979 school year and its name was changed to "Gazi Higher Teacher School" (Gazi Yüksek Öğretmen Okulu). When the development of secondary school teacher training in the history of the Republic is examined, it is seen that high school teachers were trained in Higher Teacher Schools and Faculty of Science and Literature department of universities, whereas secondary school teachers were generally trained in Education Institutes (Dursunoğlu, 2003).

Until 1982, teachers in Turkey were trained in schools that were associated to Ministry of National Education. The teacher training duty was handed over to universities with the Statutory Decree regarding Higher Education Establishment Organization, law no. 41. Accordingly, Higher Teacher Schools, which trained teachers until 1982, were incorporated by universities by being transformed to Faculties of Education (MEB, 2006: 4). Thereby, teacher training system was attained a new status and structure. Henceforth, the duty of teacher training was handed over to universities and employment to the Ministry of National Education (Azar, 2011:36).

Although there were efforts of cooperation between the Ministry of National Education and YÖK under the same roof of National Committee Teacher Training in the process of restructuring the faculties of education that began in the second half of 1990s, no result was achieved. A radical restructuring of faculties of education was also commenced with the Project of Advancing National Education that was actualized with the cooperation of YÖK and World Bank. Concordantly, secondary education was run together with programs training teachers for social studies, science and math along with related programs of faculties of science and literature. Later on, graduates of these faculties were decided upon to carry on with their non-thesis master's program and be given initial teacher training. Faculties of Education, until the restructuring process in 1998, fell short of supplying both qualification and quantity needs of the country. (Öztürk, 2005:314).

Running parallel to transition to 8 years of continuing education in 1977, teacher training programs for primary education in faculties of education were rearranged. In faculties of education, a primary education department was established apiece to provide for the need of teachers in primary schools. In restructuring process, standardization was made among programs training teachers for faculties of education and teacher practice was given importance to (Erdoğan, 2005:337). Ministry of National Education made alterations in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools. Yet, these alterations could not be reflected into teacher training programs in universities. Furthermore, faculties of education were understaffed with regards to instructors and instructors could not handle school experience and teacher practice sufficiently. The fact that alterations in teacher training policies were actualized as political impositions without executing comprehensive research, preparatory work and planning in the integrity of educational system can be indicated among the reasons to why the qualification aspect of teaching profession declined gradually (Azar, 2011:36-37).

One of the biggest deficiencies in educational policies and model striving in Turkey is the fact that expertness based upon professional competence was largely neglected. Besides, it could not be foreseen that implementations aiming to supply the demand for teachers (e.g. initial teacher training and *epistolary* education) would cause a problem reducing quality of education. In teacher training policies, frequent alterations were made without executing sufficient research and practice concerning goals and programs. While quantity prioritized under the influence of political concerns and opinions, quality was neglected. All these, along with other factors resulted in an erosion in the social status of teaching profession. In sum, a success could not be achieved in transition to the role of educational leadership in industrial and information society that can handle global challenges from the role indigenous to traditional agricultural societies where teachers are viewed as the only source of knowledge. A dynamic network of relation could not be formed among teacher, student, school and alteration in the integrity of system. Policies of various establishments that were non-coordinative and based upon different aim and strategies affected education and teacher training process in Turkey negatively. It was pointed out in the report declared by World Bank in 2005 that apart from teacher redundancy in many fields, teachers were insufficient in applying student-centered approaches and methods standing out especially in the new education programs (Aydın, 2013). However, we see that teacher training system is integrally evaluated with quality, quantity, employment, operating conditions and motivation in education policies of developed countries.

CONCLUSION

It is a must to prepare and implement both educational policies and teaching programs in accordance with the needs of both individuals and society. In addition to these needs, it is also equally important to know the changing social conditions and global developments and develop strategies accordingly.

In almost every society, educational systems are used/manipulated as a vehicle/tool by governments and administrative mechanisms. It is a reality that political powers have a determining and molding role in knowledge transmission and implementation processes. However, Turkish governments cannot be said to implement educational policies taking social realities and needs into account. Many governments have interfered with the education system without due conservation to the needs of the society. The three fundamental units of education; student, teacher, and the program which have to be in constant interaction with one another, have been designed and implemented with ideological concerns. Excessive politicization has dominated educational policies, as a result of which, education has been unable to play its role in making changes in a positive way. This clearly shows that education should be planned, designed and implemented in accordance with the needs and expectations of society; not shaped as governments wish.

In fact, educational policies in Turkey have been put into action not adequately considering individual and social needs that emerge as a result of social changes. Besides, new educational plans and policies have subjectively been implemented without due discussion of their necessity. These policies, the social and economic dimensions have not adequately been thought thoroughly have inevitably brought about some problems and difficulties.

Undoubtedly, education is subject to change itself and brings about change. Education, which changes and transforms the social structure positively, is at the same time, not a static but a dynamic phenomenon. From a historical perspective, it is a reality that education has changed in accordance with historical conditions and needs and restructured accordingly. In today's information age, the need of both the developing and developed countries for qualified work force has been increasing. In order for the education system to meet this need, it has to be updated and designed considering scientific and technological developments and social and economic expectations. Meeting the expectations of the society and changing it positively depends primarily on training teachers well.

We should bear in mind that the downfall of society is highly linked with raising its future generations well. For a long time in Turkey, a policy placing inadequate importance to quality in teacher training process has been followed. However, quality in education is essential, since a good teacher is a prerequisite of quality education.

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