

TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM: PRINCIPLES, GENERAL APPEARANCE AND MAJOR PROBLEMS *

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ÖZET

Bu makalede, Türk Eğitim Sisteminin genel görünümü tartışılmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, Türk Eğitim Sistemini çerçeveleyen Anayasal ve yasal temeller, kalkınma planlarında öngörülen eğitimsel hedefler belirlenmekte, ortaya çıkan bazı önemli sorunlar tartışılmaktadır.

SUMMARY

In this paper, a general look at Turkish Educational System is going to be presented. Basic principles in laws, development plans going to be handled. In addition to these, some important problems of Turkish Educational System are going to be discussed.

TÜRK EĞİTİM SİSTEMİNİN TEMEL İLKELERİ

New policies and significant attempts in education are observed since establishment of Turkish Republic. Fundamental principles which direct these attempts

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and determine basic characteristics of Turkish Education are stated in Atatürk's various speeches. According to these principles Turkish Education,

1. is national,
2. is secular,
3. is functional,
4. depends on science,
5. considers equality of opportunity.

Starting with these principles many attempts have been made in 1920s such as: Latin letters, fostering education in rural areas, pass of Unity of Education Law which closed Medreses and secularised education, inviting foreign specialists such as Dewey.

Another important attempt is starting Şuras (from time to time education people such as scientists, selected teachers, administrators are gathered by Ministry of Education. They come together and discuss educational problems of the time and advise some solutions). First Şura was realised in 1933, and the last one (12) was realised in 1988.

With 1961 constitution approaches to educational problems changed. According to this constitution, development should be based on planning and education, should be organised according to development plans. In development plans, system of education is analysed some policies, principles and goals are put forward.

Basic principles in 1961 constitution were:

- a. Primary education should be free and obligatory for everybody.
- b. State is responsible for training poor but successful students.
- c. State should help those who need special education.

Some considerable changes were made by Basic Law of National Education, 1739, in 1973. What is important here is that this Law has cleared basic principles of Turkish education. These principles are listed below:

1. Generality and Equality: Everybody can make use of Educational Institutions with no regard to language, race, gender and religion. Nobody, no family or no group can have privilege.

2. Needs of Individuals and Society: Education is organised according to desire and ability of Turkish people and needs of Turkish Society.

3. Orienting: People are trained being oriented towards various programs or schools according to their interests, aptitude and abilities. In orientation guidance services and objective methods of measurement and evaluation are employed.

4. Education Right: Basic education is right every Turk. Citizens are accepted to institutions after primary schools according to their interests, aptitudes and abilities.

5. Equality of Opportunity: Everybody is provided with equal opportunity in education. By boarding schools, scholarships, credits and ways like these, students who are poor but successful are helped until the highest levels of education. Special precautions are provided to train children who need special education.

6. Continuity: General and vocational education continues lifelong. Adult education is a educational task.

7. Revolutions and Principles of Atatürk and Atatürk Nationalism: Revolutions and principles of Atatürk and Atatürk Nationalism as expressed in Constitution is considered as a framework in preparations of curricula in all levels of education.

8. Democracy Education: It's tried to develop democracy idea, knowledge, understanding and behaviours about government, sense of responsibility and respect to moral values in citizens for establishing a strong, stable, free and democratic society. But in schools, it is not allowed to discuss and to suggest political and ideological ideas which oppose to Atatürk nationalism.

9. Secularity: Secularity is the base of Turkish education. Courses on religion culture and moral are obligatory in primary, secondary and high schools.

10. Being Scientific: Curricula, instructional methods and media are continually developed in accordance with scientific and technological innovations, needs of environment and country.

11. Being Planned: Developments in education are planned and realised in harmony with goals of economic, cultural and social development and considering relationships among education, manpower, employment; so far as to emphasise vocational and technical education to provide technological development necessary for industrial and agricultural modernisation.

12. Coeducational School: Girls and boys go to school together. But according to kind possibilities and necessities of education some schools can enrol only girls or boys.

13. School-Parents Cooperation: To realise educational goals schools and parents cooperate.

14. Education Everywhere: Goals of education are tried to be realised not only in private and public schools but also everywhere and every time at home, in the surrounding and at work.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS IN DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Development Plans have a special importance because they determine goals, principles and policies of Turkish education. Until now, five development plans have been prepared between the years 1963-1989. Educational goals in development plans can be summarised as follows:

- A. Students should be educated as to have:
 - 1. knowledge applicable in their future lives.
 - 2. ability to think independently.
 - 3. ability to solve problems.
 - 4. ability to make researches independently
 - 5. self-confidence
 - 6. sense of solidarity
 - 7. ability to behave rationally
 - 8. creativity and ability to synthesise
 - 9. ability to adapt changes in the world
 - 10. ability to use their skills and knowledge achieved through education for the advantages of themselves and society.
 - 11. habit of reading and desire to learn.
- B. System of education should be organised as to
 - 1. offer applicable knowledge.
 - 2. maintain cultural values.
 - 3. train manpower adequate development.
 - 4. promote surrounding and to establish relationships between school and life.
 - 5. give primary education to all of the citizens.

6. give change to those who has ability by making richer people contribute financially and by providing scholarships, boarding opportunities and credit for poorer ones.
7. establish equity between and among women and men, regions, urban and rural areas.
8. orient students towards vocational and technical education.
9. expand informal, in-service and on the job education.
10. develop curricula according to age, modern technology and country.
11. have private institutions of education contribute to educational services under the control of the state.
12. increase local contributions to educational expanses and to decrease cost of education until the lowest without sacrificing quality.
13. make teaching profession preferable by offering better conditions of employment.
14. train teachers through higher education.
15. prevent opening unplanned vocational-technical schools.
16. guide education according to principles of Atatürk.
17. modernise curricula, instructional methods and aids.
18. reorganise organisation of national education.
19. increase ratio of schooling.
20. train intellectual religion people.

As it can be seen above educational goals stated in development plans are very modern. Despite this, it is observed that most of the goals haven't been reached yet. It is not possible to give only one reason for this failure. But, some of the major reasons are limited financial resources, misuse of finical resources, political decisions, problems in teacher training.

GENERAL APPEARANCE OF TURKISH EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND SOME CURRENT PROBLEMS

Literacy: At the beginning of the century number of literate people is very low. Rate of literacy is 19% in 1933, 35% in 1950, 48% in 1965 and 67% in 1980. With a

literacy campaign in 1982, ratio of literacy has increased to 87%. This means 13% of Turkish people are still illiterate. Most of them are old people. Villages without schools and some traditions such as keeping girls at home are the basic causes of this situation.

Pre-school Education: In 1986-1987 there are 103143 pre-schoolers and 6312 pre-school teachers in Turkey. Major problems in this area are :

1. ratio of schooling is very low.
2. there aren't enough specialists.
3. there aren't enough aids.

Primary Education: Primary education includes 5 years compulsory and 3 years selective schools. Unfortunately this is realised in a few schools. In general, middle (secondary) schools are working independently or as a part of a high school.

Duration of 5 years in compulsory education may be seen as a problem. Because compulsory education lasts 6-12 years in many countries in the world except 12 countries.

Middle schools work independently or as a part of high schools although they are "primary education institution" legally. There are 5.731 middle schools, 2.091.078 middle school students and 42.404 middle school teachers in Turkey. One teacher should teach 49 students.

Further, there are vocational-technical middle schools. In school year 1986-1987 number of these schools is 672 (376 imam-hatip middle schools). In these schools total number of students is 199.824. 80.2% of the students go to Imam-Hatip Middle Schools and rest of the students 19.8% (39.628) go to other schools.

Major problems of Primary Education are:

1. Compulsory education last 5 years although it is supposed to last 8 years.
2. There aren't any schools in some rural settlements.
3. The age of bringing primary school isn't clear (6 or 7).
4. There are inequalities between rural and urban areas, between girls and boys, among districts.

5. In 74% of schools in cities 2 periods of instruction take place. In rural parts this ratio is 20%.
6. Some workers' and nomadic communities have school problems.
7. 41.607 classrooms are needed for those who can't go to school and 40.675 classrooms are needed for normal (one period) education.
8. Pre-service and in-service teacher training is ineffective.
9. Most of the middle schools work at temporary buildings.
10. Plan goals aren't considered in opening middle schools. Some middle schools in rural areas are closed because of lack of enough students.
11. Contribution of private sector is very low, 2%.

High Schools: Number of high schools in school year 1986-87 is 2.656, 1.110.400 students among 3.356.000 young people can go to these schools. That is ratio of schooling at this level is 33%.

Major Problems of high schools are :

1. Policy of teacher employment is inadequate. Teachers aren't employed rationally. Teacher salaries are low.
2. Graduates of high schools aren't employed.
3. Especially is vocational-technical education ratio of schooling is lower than the level development plan goals suppose.
4. Capacity of school buildings is inadequate and cannot fulfil the increasing demand.
5. Methods of measurement and evaluation and passing a class are inadequate. Failure is evaluated rather than success.
6. Curricula which are supposed to prepare for life and work aren't functional.
7. There is a great demand for higher education. But only 30% of students can enter Higher Education Institutions.

Higher Education: In school year of 1986-87 number of students including formal and non formal schools is 502.888, ratio of schooling is 11.6%.

There are 29 Universities, 210 Faculties and 167 Higher Education Schools. Some of them are old Universities in big cities. They have better facilities such as building, aids, research resources and staff. Besides this, Universities in small cities do not have the same advantages. Total number of staff members in Universities (professors, associate professors, assistant professors, instructors and research assistants) is 27.648.

Major Problems of Higher Education are:

1. Inadequate of staff members at universities is a major problem. In many universities research assistants or people without any academic career training are teaching.
2. Because of high number of class hours per week; Staff members can't have time to make researches.
3. Training staff members aren't well done. Those who finishes M.A. or Ph.D. programs work with private sector in foreign countries because of negative conditions of employment and low salaries.

Teacher Training: In school year 1986-87,

- 5.608 teachers work in pre-primary schools,
- 220.790 teachers work in primary schools,
- 43.724 teachers work in secondary schools,
- 96.391 teachers work in high schools,
- 12.969 teachers work in private schools,
- 44.075 teachers work in institutions of apprenticeship and informal education. In sum 423.560 teachers are working in Turkey. 379.482 of them are employed in formal education, 44.075 of them are employed in institutions of apprenticeship and informal education.

Primary school teachers are trained at 2 year colleges. There are 24 Teacher Training Colleges and 15.307 students are being trained there. 2 Associate Professors,

35 Assistant Professors and 312 Instructors and Research Assistants are working these schools.

Teachers for middle and high schools are being trained at 21 Faculty of Education. In these faculties, 61 Professors, 106 Associate Professors, 163 Assistant Professors and 1653 Instructors and Research Assistants are working. Graduates of Faculty of Science and Literature are also employed as teachers if they have teaching certificates.

Teachers for kindergartens are trained in 3 of two year colleges. In these colleges there are 1607 students, 1 Associate Professor and 84 teaching members.

Major Problems of teacher training are :

1. Policy of teacher training is continuously changing. A stable construction hasn't been established yet.
2. Lack of coordination and cooperation between Ministry of Education Teacher Training Institutions is a problem.
3. Inadequate number of staff members in Teacher Training Institutions. Instruction is realised by Research Assistants greatly.
4. Students with low success in high schools enter Teacher Training Institutions.

Educational Budget: In Turkey, educational budget is mainly undertake responsibility of the state. Portions of Ministry of Education in State's Budget are given in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1 amount and ratio of educational budget are very low, and another important point is the fact that this amount and ratio are decreasing year by year. For instance, it was 13.9% in 1976 and 8.4% in 1987.

Table 1: Portions of Ministry of National Education in State Budget (000,000)TL.

| Years | State Budget | Ministry of National Education Budget | % |
|-------|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| 1975 | 109,252.7 | 14,510.7 | 13.3% |
| 1976 | 156,210.1 | 21,661.9 | 13.9% |
| 1977 | 232,675.0 | 25,655.0 | 11.0% |
| 1978 | 279,943.6 | 27,262.9 | 9.7% |
| 1979 | 406,877.0 | 46,196.6 | 11.4% |
| 1980 | 770,040.2 | 88,255.4 | 11.5% |
| 1981 | 1,558,743.0 | 147,261.9 | 9.4% |
| 1982 | 1,804,708.9 | 187,657.7 | 10.4% |
| 1983 | 2,600,000.0 | 286,618.9 | 11.0% |
| 1984 | 3,284,999.9 | 341,555.5 | 10.4% |
| 1985 | 5,542,182.0 | 465,982.1 | 8.4% |
| 1986 | 7,254,111.0 | 618,523.5 | 8.5% |
| 1987 | 11,050,686.0 | 928,604.0 | 8.4% |
| Total | 35,050,429.4 | 3,199,746.1 | 9.1% |

Source: Yahya Kemal Kaya, **Yapı ve Programlar Açısından Eğitim Sistemimizin Bugünü ve Yarını**, Ankara: 1988.

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