

TURKISH EXPERIENCE IN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT*

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1. Community Development activities introduced by the First Five Year Development Plan is not the first attempt towards rural development in Turkey. It is possible to trace efforts directed to the village as far back as a hundred years ago, but these schemes came into their own during the Republican period (starting from 1923 onwards).

2. The activities undertaken during the Republican period were not improved, nor evaluated in a systematic fashion. The project and services directed to the villages were isolated from one another and carried out without cross - information.

3. Projects such as those calling for land distribution to farmers and those providing for agricultural credit were not successful.

4. Projects were carried out either in the form of individual efforts for village development, or according to the whims of the administrators.

5. Especially with the development of a realistic literacy, artistic, and intellectual life, (to which the village institute** move-

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** During the Republican period, the most systematic approach to village problems was in the field of education, specifically through the Village Institutes Movement. Important results were obtained from the Village Institute experience, which may be considered an educational experiment of world-wide importance.

The Village Institute Movement has not yet been evaluated in an impartial and scientific manner. Both the positive and negative views expressed remain more on an emotional and political plane. But some general points are still apparent. The results obtained by the Village Institutes can be summarised as follows :

ment contributed to a great extent) after 1950 village problems came to the surface. Consequently a suitable atmosphere in public opinion, both for the discussion of rural problems and for the search for solutions.

6. Past experiences indicate that the two opposite stands, i. e., either leaving the villager alone with fate or having the state do everything, have both been unsuccessful for village development. Thus, in the light of this experience, community development has appeared as a method which relies on the principle of combining the forces of the village and the government.

7. In first Development Plan, Community Development was considered as "one of the best methods of achieving long term planned development, to create conditions which are conducive to the growth of community structure and help in promoting cor-

1. The Institutes provided equality of opportunity for village children and decreased the high cost of education.

2. Educating people who came from within a village without their relationship with the village being out of, then sending them back to the village, resulted in giving the village over to the hands of those most familiar with village problems.

3. The local leadership necessary for village development passed to the village youth who had recognized leadership skills.

4. Our knowledge about the Turkish village expanded through research in the village and its vicinity. The Institutes became centers which started village research and publicized the results.

5. The Institutes made a big contribution in the creation of national culture and in the discovery of folklore.

6. Authors and poets graduated the Village Institutes played a leading part in the creation of a realistic village literature.

7. A new enlightened intellectual appeared who knew the reality of the villager, who loved the village, and who was raised in the village.

8. The Institutes served as development centers which influenced the economic and cultural life of the region.

9. Again it was the Institutes that provided an example for the region in the form of economic understanding.

The most interesting criticism directed at Village Institutes came from political circles, and even included the agreement of the conservatives. It was claimed that the Institutes opened the way to the strengthening of the extreme leftist currents, and complaints were made that boys and girls were being educated together.

Because it was not able to complete establishment of cooperatives and similar economic measures, the Village Institute Movement, despite all its successful aspects, remained a one-sided approach for rural development.

rect values in the people". Plan expected the villagers to recognise their needs, to organise themselves to satisfy them and induce the government to their help. No nationwide programme was envisaged by the plan. On the contrary, it was suggested that the principles, methods and type of organisation for a national community development programme would be developed on the basis of results of the experimental projects to be launched in different parts of the country. The plan did not make provision for special extraordinary administrative arrangements and financial facilities in addition to the existing situation, but the reinforcement of provincial administration and training of the personnel at different levels.

8. Following were among the targets of community development programme which will help "to mobilise the present energy potential for socio-economic development :

- (a) to develop the local initiative for solving their problems;
- (b) to raise productivity and production in agriculture;
- (c) to increase the efficiency of the administration in village services, to decrease their cost through voluntary contributions of the local people;
- (d) to fully utilise the excess labour by special programmes with labour intensive projects;
- (e) to eliminate the problems inherent in the distribution to villages scattered in small units.

9. Experimental C. D. work started in 1963, in six districts chosen in various parts of the country. In 1964, other six districts were added. In 1968, the number of these projects reached to 37. The steps taken in these pilot areas were as follows :

- (1) Seminar for personnel at provincial level.
- (2) Surveying the villages of the selected district.
- (3) Seminar for district personnel.
- (4) Seminar for village level personnel.
- (5) Selecting and training village leaders.
- (6) Programme planning at village level.
- (7) Setting up village level organizations.
- (8) Implementation of the programmes.
- (9) Evaluation.

10. In 1964, for political reasons a new Ministry of Village Affairs was established to take over certain rural services (road, water supply, electricity, land improvements and irrigation, resettlement, adult education etc.). The responsibility of carrying out community development projects was also transferred to this newly established Ministry.

11. Establishment of such a Ministry was not suggested by neither the Plan, nor by the report on the reorganisation of Central Government. This Ministry increased the number of pilot projects without due regard to the possibilities of personnel and training, and also paid more attention on the investment side of the work.

12. Coordination of C. D. work at national level has not been achieved so far. Neither it was expected that such a Ministry having executive-technical functions and same status with other ministries have, those ministries which are concerned with the community development work, could realise the necessary coordination. At the end of First Five Year period, it was understood that the responsibility of coordination must be transferred from Village Affairs Ministry to another Ministry which has no executive functions (so called neutral ministries) at all, or to the office of the Prime Ministers. 1968 Annual Programme made some provisions that the Ministry of Interior take over certain responsibilities (including coordination) in community development.

13. In reality, the experimental work in C. D. stopped without regarding the evaluations made. Although, the Second Five Year Development Plan has two chapters related to village problems, and made references to community development only as a technique to be used in developing the initiative of local people, Second Plan is very realistic in describing the village problems, but lacking the means and tools to solve them.

14. As a method, community development proved to be effective in creating better relations with the rural communities in order to make them move to deal with their problems and to organise themselves for mobilising their sources. There were so many cases that the experimental activities failed due to the following reasons :

(1) The villagers have been ready to cooperate with the government officials and to contribute substantially to the projects which would improve their conditions. But necessary governmen-

tal support has not been provided sufficiently. The district (ilçe) the main administrative unit for C. D. work, lacks necessary funds, personnel and equipments. Village Administration is not development oriented. Coordination achieved at district level, paralysed by the disorganisation at upper levels. Therefore, if the C. D. is going to be effective, the administration must be reorganised to meet the needs of development work.

(2) It was understood that Community Development could be used as an effective method in dealing with rural problems, but has its shortcomings to reach the targets laid down by the First Plan. Changes envisaged in the structure of village communities did not take place, due to limitations emerging from the very nature of conditions prevailing in the villages, and its economy. For example, community development has had no appeal to the landless peasant or to those who have no sufficient land. On the contrary, voluntary contribution meant an additional burden to those who have no food to eat. In countries where the land is not distributed among villagers on a justice basis, and where the percentage of families without land is greater, community development could not be successful.

The same observations can be made as regards to other problems which are created by the existing socio-economic structure of the village as well as the administration.

(3) Community Development can only be used as a developmental method, when the basic reforms and reorganizations made in the structure of the village as well as the administration. Therefore, structural improvements such as land reform, improvement of agricultural credit system, educational reforms, administrative reorganisation at all levels, tax reform, encouragement of cooperative societies etc. are the preconditions of social change at village as well as national level. On the other hand, C. D. should not be considered or used as a substitute for basic reforms needed for development.

SUGGESTED READINGS :

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