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Social Forestry in Turkey: Twenty Years in Review

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Abstract: Social forestry entered the Turkish Forestry agenda in the mid 1980's. Initially, there were intense conceptual discussions. Later, examples that emerged in different parts of the country were considered as social forestry. Serious and planned practices started in the early 1990's. Initial results started to influence national forestation activities. Research in the field of social forestry proved to be insufficient. To remedy this deficiency, Departments of Forest-Public Relations and Social Forestry Research were established in the Forestry Research Institutes. In the forestry organization, training activities related to social forestry were intensified. In rural development projects, social forestry activities started to be successfully implemented. While these positive developments were rapidly taking place, the nation's foremost forestry faculty published a report that voiced negative views on social forestry concepts. For a certain period, this report caused the social forestry concept and related activities to be nationally regarded with suspicion. Despite this, some researchers continued to show interest in the subject. In the late 1990's agroforestry attracted attention and studies were initiated on this subject. These studies led to an analysis and description of examples of traditional national agroforestry. Furthermore, the potential of national agroforestry production was put into evidence. Nowadays the implementation of social forestry projects continues and new research on agroforestry is being initiated. Today the number of individuals doing research on social forestry and agroforestry is quite considerable. In addition, social forestry and agroforestry are being taught in forestry faculties at undergraduate as well as graduate levels. Considering that social forestry in Turkey has developed only in the last 20 years, the important achievements that have been made and that are continuing are quite formidable in view of the many obstacles that have been met.

Key words: Agroforestry, social forestry, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

The concept of Social Forestry entered the national agenda in 1986. In those years, it was stated that villagers living in or near forests were not taken into account in making forestry policies, that forestry was implemented in spite of the people, that it was therefore necessary to bring about changes in forestry policies^[1]. In particular, examples from India and South Korea were given, developments in World Forestry were stated and similar practices were recommended for Turkish Forestry^[2-4]. Along with these developments, the first examples of what was to be named social forestry began to take shape in the provinces of Mersin, Konya, Izmir, Manisa and Kastamonu^[5,6]. On the other hand, examples with different origins have taken their place in the national forestry agenda. One of these is the Umbrella Pine Stands project operated by villagers in the Bergama Kozak Plateau, which embodies the social forestry concept^[7,8]. Another striking example in the national agenda is the forestation activity

called "private forestation" undertaken by citizens in Çal District^[9-13]. The concept of social forestry has also been actively discussed with these examples^[14,15].

In addition to discussions on the theoretical aspects of social forestry, the General Directorate of Forests also initiated various activities on or related to social forestry. Some of these were: "The Research and Implementation Project on Edible Mushroom Species in Unproductive Forest Areas in Various Ecologies (1987-1999); The Turkish-German Forestry Project (1987-1997); The Poplar Improvement Project in Turkey (1987-1992); The World Food Program Project for Forestation, Erosion Control and Pasture Improvement in 6 Provinces (1987-1993). Despite their different purposes and practices, these projects were closely related to the development of social forestry, they were the first projects in applied social forestry and were not successful. The most important reason for their failure was the inability of the administrators of that time to understand the concept of social forestry and its practices and their opinion that

these practices were unnecessary. The failure was also influenced by factors such as short preparatory stages for the projects and an insufficient analysis of national forestry problems, which were the main reasons for social forestry practices.

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

Developments related to social forestry took place in 1992 in the Forestry Research Institute. In this institution, The Departments of Forest-Public Relations and Publication-Documentation were transformed into Chief Engineer's Offices for Forest-Public Relations and Social Forestry Research; the provincial units were also organized along these lines. These units have initiated various research activities on social forestry some of which have been finalized whilst others are in progress.

NEW PROJECTS

In view of the insufficient mindset of the individuals responsible for forestry administration and implementation regarding the success of social forestry projects, The Social Forestry Concept Training Project in Turkey was taken up in 1992. Furthermore, with the purpose of defining practice models related to social forestry, the project named The Development of Appropriate Methods for Community Forestry in Turkey (1992) has been initiated. After completion of The Social Forestry Concept Training Project in Turkey (1993) implemented in Konya, "The Forestry and Food Safety Project" was taken up in the same province.

In addition to these, another project observed to have solid foundations in terms of project definition, project design and planning techniques, modes of execution and practice, tracking and evaluation procedures, has been implemented. The Eastern Anatolia Water Basins Rehabilitation Project is an important project, which takes up serious problems related to rural poverty and loss of quality of natural resources in the Euphrates Basin and utilizes techniques for the participative management of natural resources. The project aims to increase the participation of village dwellers and farmers in the management of natural resources in Eastern Anatolia by applying the technique for the participative planning of natural resources^[16].

A REPORT ON SOCIAL FORESTRY

A commission established in 1994 by "The Istanbul University Faculty of Forestry" decided to determine "The Faculty View" on social forestry and made it public

with its report dated 02 May 1994. The report states that the purpose of social forestry practices is to allot some forest areas to agricultural and livestock production and to coordinate agricultural, forestry and livestock activities in these areas. The report states further that social forestry practices are widespread in developing countries with a high population density and high birthrate, where forestry activities are not yet based on solid technical and legal concepts of forest ownership. This statement places Turkey among the countries pertinent for social forestry activities. The report appropriately remarks that social forestry has widely differing aims that change from country to country.

The report divides social forestry activities into the following two categories; (1) Outside the forest régime, to change production techniques in agricultural areas and pastures, to teach these techniques to forest dwellers thereby increasing production efficiency, to provide new means of livelihood to forest dwellers by developing some simple technologies such as cloth weaving, rug weaving, silk production, apiculture, etc., and (2) In areas inside the forest régime, to improve the living standards of forest dwellers by providing work and the controlled possibility to benefit from the forest without damaging it. The report states that both categories are being applied in Turkey since a long time, it continues as follows; if some new approaches are considered beyond what is stated in the second category, these must never be based on haphazard decisions in view particularly of the ecological and topographic properties of our country. These remarks, while partly correct, infer that social forestry is totally engaged in such activities. The report further states; "when one realizes that our forests which are considered to be in good condition, with a crown closure of 0.7 and above, amount to only 1.6 million hectares one understands how poor our country is in terms of forestation. It is sheer madness to even think of further reducing the canopy in order to grow agricultural produce underneath. This remark has raised doubts about issues concerning social forestry.

This report was presented by the Istanbul University Faculty of Forestry to the Ministry of Forestry in 1994, it was sent by the Ministry to all members of its organization as well as to General Directorate of Forest Village Affairs which it considered closely interested and to its attached units. In conclusion, the forestry organization and its personnel which were not sufficiently informed on the concept of social forestry, started for a period of covers many subjects related to agroforestry and makes time to detach themselves from social forestry activities because of what was said in the report^[17].

A NEW PRODUCTION TECHNIQUE BASED ON THE SOIL: AGROFORESTRY

In the 1970's, the restrictions and problems typical of the underdeveloped countries gave birth to the production technique known as agroforestry. Thereby an intermediate production technique took its place between agriculture and forestry^[18]. These developments were noticed in Turkey in the 1980's and the first study on agroforestry was carried out in Turkey by Geray and Görcelioğlu^[19]. In this work, agroforestry was analyzed as a mixture of systems for the utilization of agricultural and forestry land. Following this work, one notices in the 1980's mostly translations based on examples of agroforestry activities in various countries^[20]. Among these, a study by Sağkaya and Kamiloğlu entitled Mixed Production Systems in Forestry covers various themes related to agroforestry and makes pretentious remarks. The study begins with basic analyses of Turkish Forests and Forestry and later states that great changes are taking place in World forestry policies and similar changes must also happen in our country. Further on, the subject is analyzed under the heading of mixed systems in forestry. However, under the same heading the subject is rendered synonymous with social forestry, this has created confusion. The reason is that social forestry is by concept a type of forestry whereas agroforestry is a technology utilized in social forestry practices^[21]. The study then continues with a section in which agroforestry systems are analyzed. However the translated expressions have not been converted to specifically local terms, this has rendered them incomprehensible.

In our country, agroforestry was first researched by the Izmit-Poplars and Fast Growing Forest Trees Research Institute. The project authored by Alanay^[22] and named "The Researches on the Economics of Black Poplar Forestation and Agricultural Intercropping" was the first research activity undertaken by this institute. Subsequently, the following new studies have been carried out by the same institute; "The Definition and Importance of Agroforestry, Examples of Practices and Research"^[23], The Investigation on the Applications of Agroforestry Techniques in Some Forestation Areas and Coppice Forests^[24] and The Investigation on Agroforestry Techniques in Hybrid and Black Poplar Plantations^[25]. In these studies, experiments with various agricultural produce (beans, corn, beets, soy beans, chickpeas, watermelons, carrots, cotton) were made by growing them in plantations of poplar trees planted at various spacing and the yields were analyzed over the years. Furthermore, in addition to technical and biological research conducted on the possibilities of growing poplar

and various plants together, research was also made to evaluate the economic aspect of the studies. The research paper by Diner and Koçar^[26] entitled The Effect of Agricultural Intercropping on I-214 Poplar Plantation Economics is one of the first with an economic dimension. Similar research made by the Institution has been taken up by the Eastern Mediterranean Forestry Research Institute utilizing other tree types (eucalyptus in place of poplar), some of this research is continuing^[27].

Şefik^[28] has prepared a basic handbook of agroforestry, following the work of Sağkaya and Kamiloğlu^[20]. This handbook entitled "Agroforestry" covers theoretical items related to agroforestry such as definitions and the classification of production systems. Later research includes regional analyses and evaluations of some agroforestry practices^[29].

Research on agroforestry which has been mainly carried out in the Marmara region has also initiated in the Black Sea Region. Among these, the study entitled The place and importance of rural household gardens of the Eastern Black Sea region in agroforestry practices is important in view of the fact that it covers a different agroforestry production technique and evaluates its results, whereas research has up to now concentrated on poplar in conjunction with various agricultural produce^[30]. In another study, the agroforestry production potential of the Eastern Black Sea Region has been analyzed^[31].

Agroforestry is still a new subject in our country and needs to be researched. In this context, the analysis of agroforestry samples produced by forest dwellers is of primary importance. For this reason, the Suleyman Demirel University, Faculty of Forestry has undertaken two research projects and has brought them to conclusion. These projects are; Determination of the Agroforestry Potential of the West Mediterranean Region and Suitable Species for Agroforestry Practices in the West Mediterranean Region^[32,33]. The first of the above mentioned projects has led to a study entitled Classification of Traditional Agroforestry Practices in the West Mediterranean Region of Turkey which was presented as a paper to The First World Agroforestry Congress held in Florida, in 2004^[34].

A CURRENT PROJECT

The Social Risks Abatement Project includes in its title the word social but not forestry, despite this it is one of the most recent projects dealing with social forestry. The implementation of the project is coordinated by The Prime Ministry Social Assistance and Solidarity Support Fund and is supported by the General Directorate of Forestation and Erosion

Control established in Ministry of Environment and Forestry.

The Social Risks Abatement Project includes the following activities; procurement of timber for heating purposes, forestation projects aimed at protecting the natural environment, forestation projects for supplying wood to artisans and for utilizing the fruit and secondary products to provide income, forestation projects to develop apiculture and to improve stream beds, forestation projects to rehabilitate former garbage dumps, projects that include avalanche control structures and preventive measures, projects for improving pastures, projects for producing saplings, forestation projects intended as wind breakers for agricultural areas, roadside forestation projects. The species of trees recommended for utilization in these projects are: walnut, chestnut, rose hip, oleaster, almond, carob, mahaleb, caperbush, linden tree, pistachio, mulberry, boxtree, pine, olive, daphne, rosemary, thyme and the like. This project is active on the agenda, which shows that social forestation activities are continuing on the basis of projects.

NEW SUBJECTS TAUGHT IN THE FACULTIES: SOCIAL FORESTRY AND AGROFORESTRY

Today the social forestry concept is a known and defined entity with clear boundaries. This is in large part due to the Masters and Doctoral theses that have been completed in the faculties. The emergence of social forestry as a branch of forestry and its practice in Turkey has made it necessary to teach this subject in the Faculties of Forestry. In addition, agroforestry has been accepted by forest faculties as it has been worldwide and is now being taught as part of the curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

The levels reached after 20 years are substantial. We are not dependent on foreign project specialists in order to implement foreign aided projects. We possess a group of individuals who are specialized in rural development, social forestry and agroforestry. These individuals are well versed in the planning of target oriented projects, in the rapid improvement of rural conditions, in the participative improvement of the same as well as in participative resource planning techniques involving inquiring-determining-solving. They are capable of preparing and implementing projects. In addition, these individuals are teaching students who learn social forestry in the faculties of forestry; they are also being invited to social forestry research and practice centers outside the country to contribute their knowledge and experience. In conclusion, we have reached a good level.

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