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## THE SOCIO-CULTURAL SITUATION OF ADOLESCENTS IN THE RESEARCH AREA

The purpose of this research is to analyse the socio-cultural situation of a certain group of village adolescents. In order to fill the vacuum in this sphere of knowledge the adolescent population was selected as the subject matter of this research. 16 villages were chosen from Antalya, Burdur, Isparta, Karaman and Mersin, provinces in Mediterranean Region forming the research area. In the study the questionnaires were filled out for five adolescents, girls and young men, from each village and so the size of the sample is 80.

### THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS

In the adolescent research, first of all it is necessary to define the adolescent age. For instance, according to UNESCO adolescence is the age group of 15–25. However, in Turkey the 14–15 years old village girls are accepted reaching the age of marriage, while in the cities these girls are accepted as children. For this reason in the research the 14–35 age group is accepted as representing adolescence. 32 (40%) of the adolescents in the study were girls, while 48 (60%) were young men. 15% of these adolescents were 14–16 years old, 26.25% were 17–19 years old, 25% — 20–22 years old, 33.75% — 23–25 years old.

The 70% of adolescents included in the study are graduates of primary school, among girls this rate is 84.38%, while it is at 60.42% among young men. The percentage of the ones who continued education after primary school is 30%. The rate of young men who completed education after primary school is 39.6%, while the same rate for girls is 15.6%. That is to say that among girls the number of primary school graduates is higher, while education after primary school is less frequent when compared to young men. The most important reason for this is the fact that the number of high and secondary schools in villages of Turkey is very low. So, those girls who want to go to secondary school are not allowed to go outside of the village because of social pressure or they can not go for economic reasons.

In the sample, 66.25% of the adolescents answered positively the question on the desire to continue education after primary school, while 21.25% stated that they did achieve this aim. Besides this, the percentage of girls who are not satisfied with the level of education attained, is higher than among young men.

As it is well known, professional structure is quite limited in the villages in terms of diversity. This structure is predominantly agricultural.

68.75% of young men work in agriculture (either as a farmer-owner or a worker). On the other hand 56.25% of girls stated that they were housewives. The unemployment rate among adolescents is 18.75%. The unemployment rate among girls goes up to 40.63%. According to the impressions during the research while it is widespread among girls to work as a daily agricultural worker, none of the girls stated that she was an agricultural worker. The reason for the low unemployment rate is that young men can also work outside of the village. Only 30.3% (33 respondents) of the young men who do agricultural work stated that they choose this profession willingly, and most of these stated that if it were possible they would change their jobs.

## THE SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ADOLESCENTS

### ADOLESCENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR PROFESSIONS

The fact of the low level of income provided by the sale of agricultural crops and the difficulty of agricultural work discourage from working in agriculture. In addition to this, the fact that small agricultural producers are placed on the lower levels of hierarchical order of the social hierarchy, strengthens the desire of adolescents to change their social status. But this can not go beyond a desire because the possibility of achieving the hoped for vertical social movement is very low.

In the eyes of the adolescents farming lost its validity in the villages because of the reasons stated above. Only two (2.5%) of the adolescents examined wanted to be farmers. In terms of professions other than farming, among young men dealing with commerce, trade and being a civil servant that was popular, while among girls — being a teacher and a civil servant was preferred. As it is seen here in the villages, farming and agricultural work are not very important for adolescents today. Adolescents stated that urban jobs, with higher income and higher social status, have more importance for them when compared to agriculture.

According to the impressions in the research adolescents' desire to work in agriculture has decreased to such a degree that 55.07% of adolescents who have land stated that they would not want to deal with agriculture even when they inherit land in the future.

## THE RELIGIOUS TENDENCIES OF ADOLESCENTS

Religion has an important position in the organisation of village life, in the moral lives of individuals, in making clear the problems related to this and the next world. For this reason in the study the religious tendencies of adolescents were given special importance.

In Islam, prayer is the most important one of the ritual worships. For this reason, individuals usually express their judgements about others by referring to prayer. In the village societies regularity in worship rituals is one of the most important factors increasing the level of social status of individuals. Let us note that this kind of worship constitutes an open and materialised form of religious beliefs. For this reason the situation of adolescents with respect to prayer was specially dealt with in the study..

According to the result established in the research only 3.75% of adolescents do pray regularly, 48.75% sometimes, 30% only during Fridays and religious holidays (the entire latter group is composed of young men), 3.75% pray only on religious holidays. 13.75% of the adolescents never pray.

In the villages which were included in the study there is no religious education institution other than Koran courses. For this reason 41.25% of adolescents are educated at Koran courses, while the elders in the family educate 13.75%. Two of the adolescents graduated from Imam-preacher Schools. On the other hand 42.5% of the adolescents stated that they had neither type of religious education.

## THE SPOUSE CHOOSING BY THE ADOLESCENTS. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SPOUSES AND THE FLIRTING BEFORE MARRIAGE

20% of adolescents are married, 2.5% are engaged, while 77.5% are single. The rate of the married or engaged ones is higher for girls. Nine of the 16 married adolescents live in a separate house, seven of them live with the family of her husband. The ones living together with family claim that the reason is tradition and the obligation to look after their families.

The adolescents are highly interested in the city and in going to the city. This desire also comes to the forefront in the declared marriage choices of adolescents. They constitute, at the same time, an extension of the desire for urban life. Thus, 50% of adolescents want to marry someone from the outside of the village. This rate goes up to 60% for girls. The rate of the ones who want to marry somebody from the same or another village is 17.74%. According to the impressions acquired during the research, it is especially girls who choose their spouses from outside of the villages, because of the difficult work in the countryside, easier life conditions in the city, and since they do not want to deal with agricultural work.

Among adolescents (especially girls), in terms of the characteristics of the spouse, there is preference for urban professions. 68.2% of single girls

want their husband candidates to be civil servants, teachers, and tradesmen, or to deal with commerce. On the other hand 67.5% of single young men want their spouses to be housewives, while 12.5% want them to be civil servants or teachers.

Table 1

The Marriage Situation of Adolescents

Civil Status	Girls		Boys		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Married	8	25.00	8	16.67	16	20.0
Engaged	2	6.25	–	–	2	2.5
Single	22	68.75	40	83.33	62	77.5
Total	32	100.0	48	100.0	80	100.0

One of the important subjects for the spouse choosing is the individual personality structure. Among the adolescents, honesty and reliability comes first with 69.35% citing these characteristics. 11.29% of adolescents want their spouse to be handsome and beautiful, while 9.68% want helpful spouse, and 9.68% want a honest, sensible and wise person.

It is observed that girls and young men flirt and they accept this, because, 85% of adolescents stated that the spouses should know each other before marriage, 8.75% stated that on this subject traditions should be followed, while according to 3.75% of adolescents flirt is of no importance.

#### THE RELATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS WITH THE URBAN SECTOR

In the villages included in the study the mode of production, the nature of products and the closeness of the village to the city affect the relations of adolescents with urban life. The relation with urban life is also important in terms of adaption of urban life in villages, the changes in human relations and their directions.

17.5% of adolescents go to the city almost every day, 15% 2–3 times a week, 21.25% once a week, 31.25% once or twice a month, 10% 3–4 times a year, while 5% goes to the city when it is necessary. Here the important point is that the ones who go to the city almost every day are all men, the ones who go when it is necessary are all girls. The most important reason for this is that in the villages the men can go to city alone, while a woman can go on the condition that there is a family member together with her.

The most important reason to go to the city for adolescents is to buy family's necessities and/or to sell crops in the bazaar (42.5%). The consecutive ranks are occupied by: visiting the relatives, 26.25%, going to work (17.5%), education (7.5%), health reasons (6.25%). Men dominate in the group of those who go to the city to buy family's necessities and/or to sell

crops in the bazaar (these are accepted as men's jobs generally); girls mostly go to visit relatives or for sightseeing.

#### USE OF FREE TIMES

The understanding of free time is directly related to the social structure and culture. For this reason, it is necessary to see free time in villages in a manner different from the cities. Work, seasons, cultural structure and traditional village life play important roles in determination of free time in villages. Because in the village life the work is mostly seasonal, this results in the free time of adolescents during winter.

Thus, 50% of young men talk to their friends in their spare time, and/or play games in coffee-houses, 10.42% go to the city for sightseeing, 10.42% read books, the students study their lessons, others listen to the radio, watch television, pray, do hunting or sports. On the other hand, 75% of girls talk to their friends and/or prepare dowry, 9.38% listen to the radio, and others go to the city for sightseeing or read books. It can therefore be seen that girls spend their free time mostly at home, while young men spend it outside, even, though not very frequently, they would go to the city. Besides, it can be seen that 8.75% of adolescents go to cinema, and 7.5% go to theatre, although very rarely.

#### FUTURE EXPECTATIONS OF ADOLESCENTS

Every individual wants to have greater possibilities and to fulfil his/her plans, and lives with an expectation of achieving this. Taking this into consideration, adolescents were asked what they will do when they have greater possibilities.

The answers given to this question are interesting in terms of reflecting the social values of adolescents life in villages. The most desired things, such as investment, opening new businesses, buying a house and a car, reflected the desire to be rich and the inadequacy of economic conditions in the villages. And adolescents believe that these desires can be fulfilled in the cities. Due to this 67.5% of adolescents want to live in the city in the future. Among the reasons to move to the city they also mentioned the difficulty of village life, limited work possibilities, urban life being better, and uncertainty of village life. On the other hand 27.5% of adolescents stated that they prefer village life because of the difficulty of urban life, the high prices, and village life being better and calmer.

Table 2

## Adolescents' future choices if they had possibility

The things wanted to be done	Girls		Boys		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Will settle in the city and invest	9	28.12	20	41.17	29	36.25
Will establish new business in the village or farm on a bigger scale	3	9.38	9	18.75	12	15.0
Will buy a house and/or a car	6	18.75	4	8.33	10	12.5
Will help the poor	4	12.5	4	8.33	8	10.0
Will invest in the city and help the poor	3	9.38	4	8.33	7	8.75
Will build a school	1	3.12	3	6.25	4	5.0
Will build a health centre	2	6.25	1	2.08	3	3.75
Will make a pilgrimage or built a mosque	1	3.12	2	4.17	3	3.75
No answer or thought never before	3	9.38	1	2.08	4	5.0
Total	32	100.0	48	100.0	80	100.0

## ADOLESCENTS' PROBLEMS

The solution of the adolescents' problems is important in terms of the strong ties to life and more efficient work for them. For this reason, problems have to be determined by the adolescents themselves first of all. In this context, 33.75% of the adolescents answered the question on the problems by indicating unemployment, 23.75% the difficult conditions of village life, 11.25% the uncertainty of future in villages, 8.75% the limited possibility of education, 3.75% the discontent in the village, 3.75% the low level of communication with the city, and 12.5% of the adolescents stated that they did not have any problems. Among the young men the most important problem was unemployment, while among girls it was the difficult conditions of life in villages. The most important reason for this is in case of young men that men have to meet the needs of the family economy despite the low level of income from agriculture, while for girls the main reason is that women have to contribute to the agricultural production as a worker, while doing housework at the same time.

## CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research is primarily to put forward the existing situation, and to determine the thoughts, behaviours, and perceptions of the future as well as the worldviews of adolescents living in villages of the Mediterranean Region.

As generally in Turkey, education level in the villages included in the study is limited to primary school. The most important factor in this is that the insufficient possibilities and besides there is no secondary schools in almost all villages. The education desires of adolescents are limited by the possibilities available. Educating children in the cities after primary school is an economic burden and, especially for girls, it is also a social burden. For this reason the rate of adolescents who attend secondary school is higher among men.

The professional structure in the villages is heavily agricultural. For this reason professional structure does not result in significant class differentiation. Since there is no professional differentiation nor professional distribution among the adolescents, there is no class-consciousness. Among the village adolescents the share of qualified workers is not very high. The limited land despite the increase in population and the low level of agricultural income led to the search for employment outside of the village. Besides this, since farming is seen as a low status job in the society, adolescents are not interested in farming, which is the traditional job in villages; they want to find a job in the city, which will provide a better life standard. In the village girls do not have a profession. They are not farmers in the classical sense. Although village girls work in the farm together with men, they answer the question on their profession by saying that they are housewives. In fact, girls work as unpaid family workers.

Religion is an important factor in identifying individuals' status and social values. The study revealed that adolescents do not practice worships regularly despite the fact that they stated that they believe. In villages, individuals are not well educated in basic religious knowledge, this knowledge being provided by Koran courses or by the elderly family members.

Spouse choice and marriage are a turning point for every individual. For this reason individuals want to choose spouses themselves and they want to see the future spouse before marriage. In Turkish villages spouse choosing is now losing its traditional rigidity and adolescents develop the idea of marrying on their own desire. Parents also behave in accordance with the wishes of their children. It was also concluded in the study that adolescents want to decide and choose their spouse by themselves. Another change with regard to the spouse choosing concerns the origin of the spouse. Both girls and young men want to choose spouse from outside of the village. The most important in this is that urban life is rich in terms of job diversity and its easy conditions as well as general attractiveness. According to the adolescents, the adolescents in cities develop themselves better, they are more talented, and they live in better condition in terms of economy.

Because the agricultural work is seasonal and since the possibility of doing a non-agricultural work is limited, there is not much free time in the villages. According to observations from the study, valid especially for girls, the concept of free time is not very much developed. This is related to the fact that girls generally do housework and this periodical work limits the

leisure and fills the most part of the day. Handicraft is the most frequent method of spending free time for girls; it is done both at home and outside of it. According to girls handicraft can be accepted as free time activity although it is also done for the house. Men have developed spare time concept more than girls have because agricultural work is seasonal and the possibility for non-agricultural works is limited. For this reason young men use free time more freely, meet friends easily, can spend their time in the coffee-house or can go to the city for sightseeing.

As a result, the research has shown that village adolescents are losing the characteristic of being members of the closed village society tied to traditional culture. As in all changes, the signs of change in the adolescents are the behaviour and thought differences with respect to the elders and acceptance of novelties. Here also the special adolescents' desire of going to city and their acceptance of the city as a novelty come first, because this phenomenon brings together the attitude, behaviour and thought differences.



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