

The History of Social Work Education in Turkey

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Abstract

Since the early years of the 20th century, following the educational studies carried out by Charity Organization in England and New York Philanthropy School in the USA, social work education has been introduced and this kind of education has spread to many other countries in the world. One of those countries including social work education is Turkey. For more than 50 years, thanks to the education act in Turkey, there have been many social workers and conductors. By cooperating with various disciplines and under the leadership of the United Nations, the first school of social work education "Social Services Academy" was launched in 1961 in Turkey. Offering 4-year occupational education following high school, Social Services Academy has been the foundation of social work education, especially Hacettepe University Department of Social Work and contributed to the foundation of other schools in Turkey. This study aims to discuss historical development of social work education in Turkey.

Keywords: *Social Work Education, Turkey, Social Work History, Social Work.*

Türkiye’de Sosyal Hizmet Eğitiminin Tarihi

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Öz

20. yüzyılın başlarında İngiltere’de kurulan Hayır Kurumu’nun yaptığı eğitim çalışmaları sonucunda Avrupa’da, 1904 yılında New York Hayırseverlik Okulu tarafından bir yıllık eğitimin başlatılması ile de Amerika Kıtası’nda sosyal hizmet eğitiminin ilk profesyonel örnekleri görülmüş ve süreç içerisinde bu mesleki eğitim alanı birçok ülkeye yayılmıştır. Bu kapsamda sosyal hizmet eğitiminin yayılmış olduğu ülkelerden bir tanesi de Türkiye’dir. Yarım asırdan daha fazla bir süre içerisinde Türkiye’de sunulan sosyal hizmet eğitimiyle sosyal hizmet müdahalelerini yürüten ve meslek elemanı olan sosyal çalışmacılar yetiştirilmektedir. Çeşitli disiplinlerle iş birliğine gidilerek sosyal hizmet eğitimi konusunda farklı okulların kurulduğu Türkiye’de Birleşmiş Milletler öncülüğünde 1961 yılında “Sosyal Hizmetler Akademisi” nin açılmasıyla ilk sosyal hizmet eğitimi başlamıştır. Liseden sonra dört yıllık mesleki eğitim sunan Sosyal Hizmetler Akademisi, Türkiye’de sosyal hizmet eğitiminin kurulmasının temelini oluşturmuş ve böylece ilk başta Hacettepe Üniversitesi Sosyal Hizmet Bölümü olmak üzere günümüz sosyal hizmet okullarının kurulmasında önemli bir görev üstlenmiştir. Dolayısıyla çalışmada Türkiye’de sosyal hizmet eğitiminin tarihi gelişimi süreci ele alınmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sosyal Hizmet Eğitimi, Türkiye, Sosyal Hizmet Tarihi, Sosyal Hizmet.

Introduction

By the end of the 19th century, social work education initially began in Europe and the USA as a result of volunteer activities of charities. As a profession, social work tries to solve problems that societies and individuals encounter. On account of wars, crises and economic problems, activities of these charities were not sufficient, causing the formation of social work as a profession and discipline. The first examples of central work and activities came into being during this period. Then, these studies led to social work education and became a discipline including academic and practical lessons. Through occupational implementations and gained experiences, social work education began in many countries. It's known that social work education began in England and the USA in the early 1900s.

Starting from the 1920s, though social work was accepted as a discipline of science and profession in many parts of the world, it began in Turkey in the late 1950s because the existence of strong and traditional cooperation and solidarity in Turkey had the role of social work to solve problems of the society. Nevertheless, industrialization, economic and administrative crises, urbanization, wars, global problems such as social, economic and political conflicts made social work be more mandatory and dependent on knowledge and experience (Kut, 2005, p.10). Thus, along with traditional and cultural idea of social cooperation and solidarity, professional social service education depending on occupational information, experience and skills started in Turkey in 1961. The school operated actively by the 1980s and was locked down in 1982. Then, in 2000 and onward, many new schools have been launched for social work education.

The Beginning Of Social Work Education in The World

Social service is a professional occupation and it developed through the years when the ideas related to society and government gained importance. It's not a sincere and emotional strive, but also an occupation requiring scientific knowledge, growing by the developments and changes in modern society. The lack or insufficient cooperation

chances of religious or helpful people and organizations to meet the demand of social problems soon after the “Industrial Revolution” caused the idea of social work as an occupation and a discipline (Kongar, 2007, p.147-148). In short, although the global formation and foundation of social work dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, it has been only 50 years since it began to be accepted as an occupation and a discipline in Turkey.

The first social welfare charities began in the early 1800s in order to meet the demand of people living in cities and these charities were supported and founded by religious organizations and groups. These newly founded organizations were operated for almost a century by volunteer and helpful individuals rather than professional social workers or officers. These charities offered basic needs such as sheltering and food and tried to deal with emotional or personal burdens of people through religious suggestions. The first example of these charities is “New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism” established by John Griscom in 1820. The charity planned and realized visits to the houses of people in need so as to evaluate living conditions and habits of them and to suggest plans to help and simplify their lives (Zastrow, 2013, p.2). It might be said that social service education occurred to meet needs and expectations required in social welfare.

The first attempts of social work education started in Europe in the late 1800s (Campanini, 2010, p.687). The foundation of Charity Organization in England maintained various activities for people in need and played a critical role in the development of social service education. Along with volunteer individuals working for the community, there were also individuals called “social workers” and the idea of educating these people became the first step in the development of social service education. Thus, the academic and practical courses offered these social workers of Charity Organization founded in London in 1890 marked the beginning of social service education. At the same time, a summer school was launched in Germany by Alice Salomon. Charity Organization started to have branches in mega states of the USA after the 1950s. In 1898, the first occupational social work education course was suggested by New York Charity Organization and one-year-course on social service

began in 1904 by New York Philanthropy School (Kendall, 1987; Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.1-2; Zastrow, 2013, p.1-2).

The first clearly defined school of social work was founded by a group of social reformists in Amsterdam, Holland in 1899 (Payne, 2005, p.231). The social work education of the school lasted for two years and included practical and academic lessons for volunteers of charity. Soon after, there were 14 schools of social work in Europe and the USA by 1910 (Kendall, 1987; Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.1-2; Zastrow, 2013, p.1-2). These developments made other countries act and start social work education. Similar schools and education courses started in Latin America in 1920, in South Africa in 1924, in Egypt and Mumbai, India in 1936 (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.2; Karataş and Erkan, 2005, p.112) and in Australia in 1940 (Baikady, Pulla and Channaveer, 2014, p.311).

The Historical Development Of Social Work Education in Turkey

Social work education starting in Europe in the early 20th century developed at different rates in different countries till the end of the World War II (Campanini, 2010, p.687). After the war, the United Nations examined different education programs maintained by various countries and declared in 1951 that social work is a scientific discipline and a profession. Thus, social work education started in Turkey in the 1950s as well as other developing countries (Koşar and Tufan 1999, p.2 publishing from Kendall, 1987).

In 1957, by the United Nations Social Welfare Consultancy, various studies began to scientifically and occupationally examine social services in Turkey. As a result of studies and regulations conducted by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare and its related ministries and other state and private organizations, social work education was initiated. With the start of social work studies, it was aimed to have traditional social cooperation and services conducted by experts educated through professional education and scientific methods (Duyan and Özgür Bayır, 2016, p.23).

After the studies and regulations that started social work education in Turkey, the law numbered 7355 related to the organization of Social Services Institute was accepted in 1959. In accordance with the law, area

studies of social work and methods regarding social work education also began. The responsibilities of Social Services Institute are as follows as the related law implies,

- Introducing reasons and objectives of social work to the public
- Studying the reasons for poverty and detect required social services linked to it
- Supporting children, youth and adults socially and economically
- Keeping normal and disabled children and providing pre-and-after school education
- Collecting statistical data and information regarding social services
- Developing the cooperation among organizations of social work
- Coordinating social work activities of volunteer organizations

Depending on the law 7355 and its related items (1-h and 9), Social Services Academy was established in 1961. By this law, Social Services Academy was forced to conduct the duties and responsibilities of Social Services Institute and to follow the education of professional social workers. Therefore, it might be said that the first social work education started in Turkey soon after the establishment of Social Services Academy in 1961. After a 4-year-education after the high school, students were able to work as social workers (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.3-4). The fact that 34 students started education in Nov, 1961 in the academy marked the solution of individual and social problems and expectations in a professional occupational environment with scientific and effective methods (Kuntbay, 1962, p.12).

Social Services Academy, established in 1961 in order to social work education in Turkey for the first time (Özdemir, 1999, p.24), is an organization that offers 4-year university education and that conducts necessary studies in social work (Kut, 2005, p.10). A group of scientists and professors both from United Nations Social Welfare Consultancy and Ankara University worked together to form the syllabus of the academy (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.3).

As a result of the fact that there were only a few professional, expert and experienced lecturers during the early years of the social work education in Turkey, lecturers and scholars from different countries were appointed. To do so, Social Services Academy, Social Services Institute

and Directorate General for Social Services cooperated to support education with professional lecturers and sufficient funds, which contributed to the foundation of the social work education. Moreover, thanks to peer agreements of Turkish American Fulbright Commission and Holland Technical Help Commission, 6 lecturers from the USA, 1 lecturer from Holland, India and Pakistan were employed in Social Services Academy (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.5; Uluğtekin et al., 2002, p.24; Karataş and Erkan, 2005, p.115).

Due course of law 7355, with the protocol signed by the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare, the Ministry of Public Education and Ankara University, Social Services Academy based on Social Services Institute started social work education in 1961. Then in 1963, the Academy was related to Directorate General of Social Services serving under the Ministry of the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare. Social Services Academy maintained its activities under this status for 20 years (Çengelci, 1998, p.10; Uluğtekin et al., 2002, p.24).

To meet the demand of lecturers to conduct studies in social work education, a group of Turkish lecturers got education abroad thanks to the scholarship given by the United Nations, the republic of Turkey, the Ministry of Public Education, Ankara University, Holland Technical Help Commission, Turkish American Fulbright Commission and Cento and other organizations (Karataş and Erkan, 2005, p.122). Also in 1965, the during the first few years, the graduates of Social Services Academy were tested academically and successful ones were appointed in the academy to be educated as assistant lecturers (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.5).

Social Services Academy, offering the first social work education in Turkey, became an official member of International Association of Schools of Social Work in 1967 (Kut, 2011, p.11). This proved that the education provided by the academy complies with international standards. Meantime, social work experts graduated from the academy had the chance of getting higher education and occupational opportunities in other countries apart from Turkey (Özdemir, 1999, p.25). During the early years when Social Services Academy started, the first student organization called "Student Community of Social Services Academy" was established by the students of the academy. The

community not only aimed to provide unity and solidarity, but it also aimed to conduct studies in the field of social work and social work education. Being the first student organization in the field of professional social work education in Turkey, the community declared its fundamental objectives as follows: The community keeps all rights and needs of the students, provides love, respect and help among students, increases social work knowledge of students by organizing meeting, trips and entertainment activities, publishes magazines, books, newspapers and booklets, organizes conferences and meets basic demands of students like feeding, sheltering, health and clothing (Karataş and Erkan, 2005, p.123).

The second important step in social work education in Turkey was the foundation of Social Work School in Hacettepe University in 1967, which conducted 4-year undergraduate education. Then, the school was turned into a department offering 5-year education and called "The Department of Social Services" in the same university under the authority of the Faculty of Social and Administrative Sciences and maintained its educational objectives in social work education (Karakuş, 2015, p.171). Moreover, the department is also the first to start postgraduate and doctorate education programs in social work education in Turkey (Alptekin, 2016, p.13).

Socio-economic and political problems in the 1970s in Turkey adversely affected social work education in Turkey. Especially, various negative impacts of the political conflict in 1980 were deeply felt in the field of education and a new period for social work education began. Due to the law named Higher Education Law numbered 2547 enforced in 1981, Social Services Academy was named as Social Services School and incorporated with the Department of Social Work and Social Services in Hacettepe University in 1982. This change from Social Services Academy to Social Services School in Hacettepe University meant a single school of social work education in Turkey. Then in 1983, postgraduate and doctorate programs of social work were taken over and maintained by the school (Özdemir, 1999, p.24-25; Uluğtekin et al., 2002, p.24-25; Kut, 2005, p.10; Karataş and Erkan, 2005, p.128; Tufan, 2011, p.28; Duyan and Özgür Bayır, 2016, p.26; Alptekin, 2016, p.14). The

objectives of the School of Social Services in Hacettepe University are as follows (Özdemir, 1999, p.25):

“1- Educating social work experts that have fundamental knowledge to figure out the conditions and problems of Turkey and have sufficient knowledge and skills in social work methods, and that are able to be employed as practitioners in state, private or volunteer organizations in rural or urban areas, and that can participate in social welfare policy or planning and work as organizer, planner, practitioner, educator and researcher”

“2- Conducting scientific studies and research in social work and publish articles”

“3- Organizing various courses, seminars and conferences to develop the knowledge and skills of individuals employed in social work”

Current Status Of Social Work Education in Turkey

In the 1960s, social work education started in Turkey and various schools were launched. However, political conflicts and unsteady and tense student acts starting in the late 1960s adversely affected social work education and new schools and departments of social work education didn't appear by the 1970s (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.19). Then, the conflict in 1980 deeply affected education as it did many other facilities of the country and two different schools of social work were combined into one. Therefore, the spread and redevelopment of a total education in social work education, social work profession and discipline took years till the end of 1990s.

Due to politic and economic interference in the 1980s, the hesitance in education continued and this caused new regulations and forced schools to reform (Koşar and Tufan, 1999, p.19). Deep effects of this period in the 1990s made new insights and approaches arise late in the early 2000s. As the leading organization of social work studies, Social Services School of Hacettepe University organized an international symposium with the theme of “New Approaches in Social Work Education” on the 18th and 19th of October, 2002. Prof. Dr. Arthur Ronald Feldman from the USA, Prof. Dr. Horst Unehau from Germany and Dr. Ferit Berk from Australia participated in the symposium and conducted sessions and

conferences on current social work education in other countries and on occupational experiences (Tufan, 2005, p.3).

Positive effects of studies in social work education have appeared since 2002. The department of social work was launched in the Faculty of Health Sciences by Başkent University, which offers 4-year education. Thus, the second school conducting social work education is the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Health Sciences in Başkent University. The department began social work education in 2002 and 2003 (Alptekin, 2016, p.14; Tanıtım, 2020). The establishment of the second school in social work education formed a social, cultural and political basis for other social work departments (Alptekin, 2016, p.14) because for years only one school had conducted social work education, which was inadequate and caused a slower spread of the education all over the country (Tufan, 2011, p.28).

The establishment of the second school also played a vital role in the spread of social work education, in a short time, many universities started departments of social work. In 2006, departments of social work education were initiated in Selçuk University (in Konya), Sakarya University (in Sakarya), Adnan Menderes University (in Aydın) and Süleyman Demirel University (in Isparta), and they all started education in the same year apart from Süleyman Demirel University (Alptekin, 2016, p.14), so there were social work education departments in six universities of Turkey and five of which started education in 2006. The establishment of social work education departments offering 4-year academic education in six different universities caused new regulations in the social work School of Hacettepe University. The school was completely closed down and formed as the Department of Social Work related to the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Hacettepe University, which is also current status of the department in Turkey (Tufan, 2011, p.29; Alptekin, 2016, p.14; Duyan and Özgür Bayır, 2016, p.27).

The development period of social work education continued with the establishment of new departments in different universities: Ankara University, 2007, Giresun University, 2008, Yalova University, Düzce University, Gümüşhane University, 2009 and Kocaeli University and Maltepe University in 2010. Then, the growth of the social work studies

continued in 8 universities in 2013 and 4 universities in 2014. Finally, there were 36 departments of social work education in Turkey in 2015 (Alptekin, 2016, p.15). With the addition of new departments in 2018 and 2019, now, there are 62 departments of social work education in different universities which actively offer 4-year education (2020- Higher Education Programs and Quota Leaflet, Table-4, 2020a). The numbers prove that after 2015 the number of departments have increased dramatically and almost doubled in the last five years.

In social work education, the universities in Turkey offer undergraduate, postgraduate and doctorate levels. Due to the insufficient number of expert staff in social service activities and social problem areas, two-year undergraduate education is offered in order to educate intermediate staff called social co-worker, aiming to contribute to dealing with social problems as these social co-workers help social work staff and social workers (Şeker, 2012, p.17). Now, there are two-year undergraduate social work education in 52 universities in Turkey (2020- Higher Education Programs and Quota Leaflet, Table-3, 2020b). The number of universities offering 4-year education in Turkey is 62, however, the number of universities offering postgraduate and doctorate programs has not been high. For now in Turkey, 17 universities offer postgraduate education in social work, whereas 8 universities offer doctorate programs (Uysal, 2019, p.31).

To have the chance of postgraduate education and to graduate from the department, there are a few terms such as having undergraduate education, having a certain diploma score, having successfully accomplished the lessons, seminars, proficiency exams and research thesis.

Conclusion

Social work education started in Turkey in the 1960s. The studies conducted by the United Nations in 1957 to launch social work education turned into a positive step soon after the foundation of Social Services Academy of the Ministry of Public Health and Welfare in 1961. During the first years of social work education act, there were few expert and experienced lecturers in the field of social work, so it was financially

funded and academically supported by extra lecturers from different countries like the USA, Holland, India.

The second school of social work was Social Work School of Hacettepe University which was established in 1967 and offering 4-year education. The school was also the first in Turkey to start postgraduate and doctorate programs in the field of social work. These two schools were combined into one in the 1980s and continued its educational activities till the 2000s. The early years of the 2000s marked a new period in Turkey for social work education. Especially, after 2002, schools all over the country started social work education and the number increased up to ten in 2010. All these positive developments from the beginning of the 2000s to 2010 made social work education get more common. After 2014, the number of schools offering social work education increased so rapidly that there are 62 schools of social work in Turkey now (2020).

While the number of schools offering 4-year undergraduate education increased steadily by 2010, it went up soon after 2015. Specifically, the increase in the number of schools after 2015 was remarkable, however, it was not the same when it comes to postgraduate education. Indeed, when the number of universities offering doctorate education in social work is considered and compared to the number of universities offering undergraduate education, it's very low. Consequently, during the first years of social work education in Turkey, there were only two universities and they were combined into one during the 1980s as a result of political and social problems occurred in the country, however, the number of schools in social work education increased considerably soon after 2000.

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