

PHYSICAL EDUCATION COURSE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES IN VILLAGE INSTITUTES: A Case of Çifteler Village Institute

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ABSTRACT

When the first Turkish Government was founded during The War of Independence (1919-1922), education was one of the primary issues to receive attention. The renovation and modernization of Turkey's educational system was planned to be carried out by considering our own social and cultural features. The problems about education were not neglected even in most critical periods of the war. After the victory the founders of the new country were naturally able to make more energetic effects to improve Turkey's much neglected educational system. One of these enormous effects is exactly the experience of "Köy Enstitüleri" (The Village Institutes). This project has reflected the revolutionary character of the Republican Reforms. The teaching philosophy of these institutes has been described on the basis of "learning by doing".

It is understood that Village Institution System was the most genuine and successful education project as a result of the effects continuing throughout the generations and graduates and system data. Education system and philosophy of institutions haven't lost their validity today too, which is the evidence of their successes. The Model of Village Institution has been accepted as a great gift not only for this nation but also for the world education. UNESCO has proudly stated that Village Institution is an education system that should function as an example for all developing countries.

In this research the content, objects and applied dimension of Physical Education and Folk Dances Course, which is one of the courses in the Village Institution Curriculum and the effects of this course on students in that period, will be analyzed with the relationship of one another. For this purpose, an interview form was prepared and Village Institution graduates who still live in Eskişehir were interviewed.

Keywords: Turkey's educational system; The Village Institutes; Physical Education.

INTRODUCTION

In the early 1930s, 78 % of the 6 to12 year-old population in urban areas were illiterate, which almost reached to 90 % in villages. There was an increasing demand to educate the people living in villages especially on certain topics such as health, agriculture and handicraft and it was considered significant to help them improve their social and cultural skills. In addition to the education of the young population living in villages, it was also important to provide adults with necessary skills and knowledge to achieve a better life quality and working conditions. In order to achieve this goal, it was significant to train primary school teachers with special skills and knowledge who might contribute to social and economic development of people living in rural areas (Kartal, 2008). The first step taken to realize this goal was to launch "Village Institutes Program" by enacting Village Institute Law on April 17th 1940, which dealt with training teachers equipped with skills and knowledge necessary to keep up with the realities of rural life. These institutes adopted an education approach mainly based on production in which the students in rural areas were educated in such an effective way that they

would be aware of their own potential and contribute to the development of their hometowns and the regions. In addition to this educational reform within the framework of Village Institutes Movement, a new development model for villages was also implemented by İsmail Hakkı Tonguç. This model is received invaluable support and supervision by especially two statesmen; namely İsmet İnönü, the president, and Hasan Ali Yücel, the minister of education (Bilir, 2005).

Village Institutes were established in order to train teachers who were expected to contribute to the social and economic development of villages as well as to educate the students living in villages. A total of 21 institutes were available until 1954, when they all were closed by the government. The literature on Turkish history of teacher training programs reveals that it is commonly agreed that village institutes played an important role as a facilitator in the development of communities living in rural areas (Kartal, 2008).

Background of the Village Institutes

According to the statistics of 1935 census, only 23.3 % of males and 8.2 % of females and 14 % of rural area residents were literate (Semerci, 1989; 156). Of the total 1,920,000 children living in rural areas, only 347,071 were able to receive primary school education. 35,067 villages had no schools, where the total number of villages was 40,000. The average population of 16,000 villages was between 150-400 and 8,000 villages over 400. The number of teachers in urban areas was 8,099 and in rural areas 6,859. There was an urgent demand for 38,000 teachers for rural areas; however, considering the harsh conditions of the time, educators estimated that it needed almost 100 years to meet this demand (Balkır, 1998; 10)

According to Hakkı Tonguç, who was assigned by Saffet Arıkan the minister of education of the period, the solution was not only based on education. A new system should be implemented which would change and activate production practices and ensure the elimination of unfair practices regarding working life. He stated that this was the only way to guarantee a more active rural life and higher awareness in all issues. As a result, discussions started on a new road map which was suitable for the realities and available resources of the society and good for fast development and the adoption of modern thoughts (Başaran, 1999). Within the framework of this attempt, many villages were visited and a 20-year draft plan was prepared based on the figures and conditions. According to this plan, all the villages were planned to have sufficient number of teachers and agriculture technicians and quality preventive health services by 1954 (Başaran, 1974).

Despite the continuous objections by traditional educators, Tonguç, firstly, founded a training center in 1936 in Çifteler, Eskişehir. The aim of this center was to train some literate young people, who completed their military services, so that they would be employed for temporary teaching posts in villages. Secondly, two "Teacher Training Schools" were founded in Çifteler / Eskişehir and Kızıkçullu / İzmir during 1937-1938 academic year as pilot applications (Alıç, 1990; Bilir, 2005). Later, another school was founded in Kepirtepe / Lüleburgaz in 1938-39 academic year and another in Gölköy / Kastamonu during 1939-40 academic year, which increased the number to 4 (Altunya, 2002a; Altunya, 2002b; Doğan, 2005; Altunya, 2005). Following the positive outcomes of the pilot "teacher training school" in Çifteler, Village Institutes were officially acknowledged when the "Village Institutes Law" numbered 3803 was enacted on April 17th 1940. Other important dates in the process were 1935 when the plans were initiated and 1937 when the piloting were realized (Kirby, 1962; Kartal, 2008). During 1940-41 academic year, ten new institutes were founded and the number increased to 20 during 1945-46 academic year. Finally, the number reached to 21 when the staff in Ministry of Education founded another institute in Van – Ernis in 1948 (Altunya, 2002b; Altunya, 2005; Köy Enstitüleri ve Çağdaş Eğitim Vakfı, 2005).

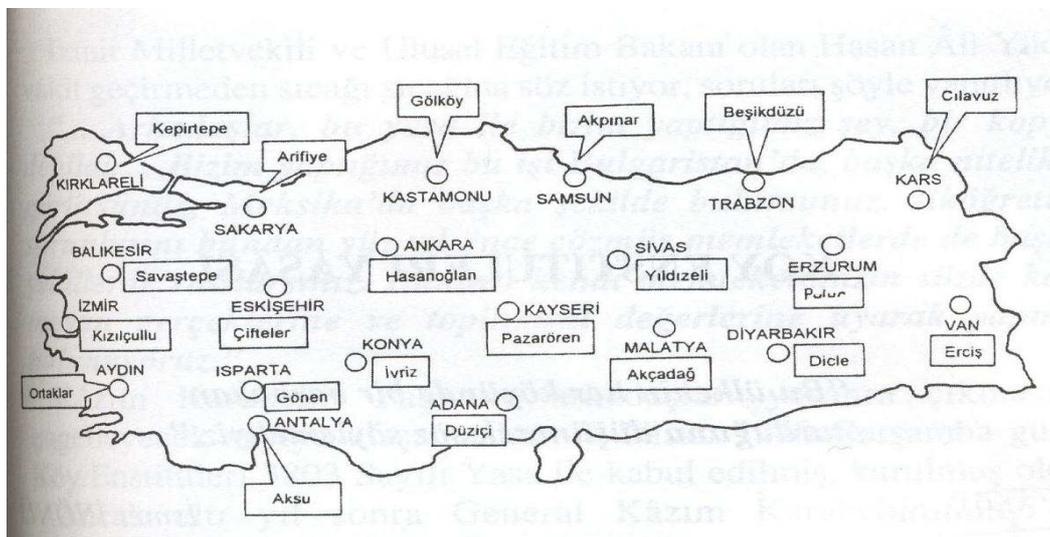


Figure 1. Map of Village Institutes' Places (Kaplan, 2002; 63).

Democrat Party, which came into power in 1946 when multi-party political system was adopted, closed the health departments of these institutes first and later the program was unified with Primary School Teachers Training School in 1951. Finally, the law numbered 6234 and enacted in 1954 brought an end to Village Institutes completely, by changing their names to "Primary School Teachers Training Schools" (Karaman, 2003).

Village Institutes were considered as an important model not only for Turkish Nation but also for education systems all over the world. They attracted the attention of many foreign educators and experts and inspired numerous education programs in many countries. UNESCO made compliments about the institutions by saying that "it is an education system that might be a model for all developing countries" (Güvercin, et al.; 97-103).

Çifteler Village Institute

All the first applications aiming at making education available to rural areas and all levels of society were initiated by Çifteler Village Institute in nearby areas. The first teaching training program (1936) was started in Mahmudiye, and similarly one of the first two teacher training schools was also founded in Mahmudiye, the other being in Kızıllıçullu / İzmir (Küçükcan, 2008; Kaya, 2000). On April 17th 1940, Çifteler Village Institute, as one of the two projected pilot institutes, was established when the related law was enacted (Küçükcan, 2008). Küçükcan (2008) claims that Çifteler Village Institute and its role in the system should be analyzed thoroughly if one wants to understand the system completely since its importance as the center of these institutes is mostly ignored. He further states that this institute is a milestone and facilitator in the efforts to make this movement more effective.

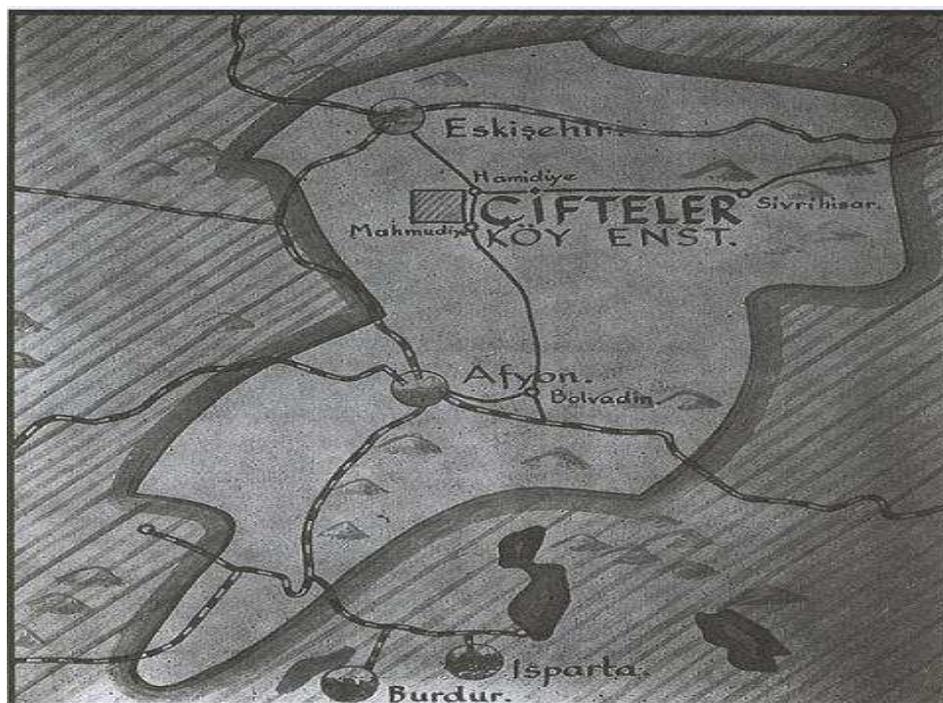


Figure 2. Map of Çifteler Village Institute (Köy Enstitüleri ve Çağdaş Eğitim Vakfı, 2003; 12).

The Purpose of the Study

This study aims at examining the physical activities in daily life routine of village institutes as well as the content and the objectives of the course titled "Physical Education and National Folklore Games" as one of the culture courses available in the curriculum (Türkoğlu, 2000; 260). The research questions of this study are as follows:

1. What are the opinions of Çifteler Village Institute graduates on physical activities and sports games carried out in the institutes during the times when Physical Education course was not available in the curriculum of Village Institute Program?
2. What are the opinions of Çifteler Village Institute graduates about the period when Physical Education Course was included in the curriculum?

What do Çifteler Village Institute graduates think about;

- a) the physical activities and sports games within the syllabus of the course?
- b) the places where the course "Physical Education and National Folklore Games" are carried out?
- c) equipment or materials used in physical activities or the course "Physical Education and National Folklore Games"?
- d) national folklore games as one component of daily life routines in the Institute?
- e) the festivals or celebrations held in the region?
- f) the regional folklore games they were taught?
- g) the teaching of national folklore games and the role of students in this activity?

METHOD

This study is a qualitative phenomenology which aims at examining the physical activities in the daily routines in Çifteler Village Institute and the course titled "Physical Education and National Folklore Games". The goal of qualitative phenomenological research is to describe a "lived experience" of a phenomenon. As this is a qualitative analysis of narrative data, methods to analyze its data must be quite different from more traditional or quantitative methods of research. Phenomenology involves, in depth, experiences or texts to clarify their essences (Grbich, 2007).

The subjects of the study are determined through snowball sampling method, which is quite effective in determining individuals and cases that are likely to provide rich and invaluable data. This sampling method starts with the following questions: "Who might have the most comprehensive information about this topic? "Who do you suggest me to talk about the issue? As the search progresses, the names or cases accumulate just as the snow accumulates around a snowball (Yıldırım & Şimşek 2006; 111). Accordingly, as the first step in the process, the Çifteler Village Institute graduates living in Eskişehir were contacted and possible participants were determined considering their health status and willingness. Later, the appointments were arranged with 6 graduates who accepted to be interviewed voluntarily. The participants, the school they graduated from and the years they had their education are given in Table 1 below. In addition, Kayhan Tümer, who worked as Physical Education teacher in Kars Cilavuz Village Institutes between 1948-1953, was also interviewed because he was suggested as a person who might provide valuable information for the study by İlyas Küçükcan, who helped the researchers a lot to contact the graduates.

Table 1
 Interviewees, the institutes they graduated from and years of education

Interviewees	Years of Education	The Institutes graduated from
İsmail H. Erkli (Graduate)	1939 – 1945	Çifteler Village Institute
İsmail Özel (Graduate)	1942 - 1947	Çifteler Village Institute
Osman Lökçü (Graduate)	1943 - 1948	Çifteler Village Institute
Melahat Süder (Graduate)	1943 - 1948	Çifteler Village Institute
İlyas Küçükcan (Graduate)	1945 - 1949	Çifteler Village Institute
İsmail H. Ünal (Graduate)	1950- 1957 Çifteler Village Institute (four years) and 3 years of education in Teacher Training School	Çifteler Village Institute

Interview technique, which is conducted through verbal communication, is often used in qualitative studies as a data collection method. This data collection technique has various structure levels (unstructured, semi-structured and structured) and is used to obtain detailed and in-depth data from the participants (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006, Yüksel et al., 2009). Patton (1990) also categorizes interviews into three general types; the informal conversational interview, the general interview guide approach, and the standardized open-ended interview. Interviews have particular strengths. An interview is a useful way to get large amounts of data quickly. When more than one person participates, the interview process gathers a wide variety of information across a large number of subjects than if there were fewer participants- the familiar trade-off between breadth

and depth. Immediate follow up and clarifications are possible (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; 108-109). This study uses semi-structured interviews prepared by the researcher as data collection method. In this technique, the researcher prepares open ended questions to ask to the participants (Bogdan & Biklen; 1998). The questions are asked in predetermined order; however, the interviewer may include some explanations when necessary and he may prefer not to ask a question if he thinks that it has been already answered in an another question (Yıldırım & Şimşek; 2006).

Mills (2003) suggests that photographs, videos, films, letters, diaries, clinical records and life stories might be used as supplementary data for participatory observation and interview techniques in qualitative studies. In order to prepare the questions asked during the interviews conducted within the framework in the study, the researchers examined many documents related to Village Institutes which were available in the archives. Also documentary films which were about Village Institute and Çifteler Village Institute were watched by researchers. As a result, a total of 22 questions were prepared and piloted with one of the graduates in a pilot interview. The number of the questions was reduced to 17 following this piloting and the opinions stated by the experts in the field. The interviews were conducted by using the final version of the interview form and the interviews were recorded by a digital voice recording device. The necessary information (date, time, place and duration) about the interviews conducted with Çifteler Village Institute graduates and a Physical Training Education teacher working in Cılavuz Village Institute are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
The Places and the Calendar of the Interviews

Village Institute Graduate / Employee	The Place of Interview	Date	Time	Duration Min / sec
İlyas Küçükcan (K1)	The Cafeteria of Seyit Battal Gazi Foundation	05.01.2008	14:10	37'32"
İsmail Hakkı Ünal (K2)	The Cafeteria of Seyit Battal Gazi Foundation	05.01.2008	15:20	58'36"
İsmail Hakkı Erkli (K3)	The Cafeteria in Alaaddin Park	28.02.2008	14:50	16'51"
Osman Lökçü (K4)	The Cafeteria in Alaaddin Park	28.02.2008	15:25	56'32"
İsmail Özel (K5)	A Pharmacy in Odunpazarı	07.03.2008	13:20	36'28"
Kayıhan Tümer (K6-PE teacher)	The Cafeteria of Atatürk Vocational High School	14.04.2008	10:30	46'16"
Melahat Süder (K7)	CHP Library Hall	06.11.2008	15:00	24'13"

Data were analyzed according to the principles of qualitative data analysis. First of all, the interviews were transcribed in dialogues as they were stated. The researcher relistened to the recordings and compared them with transcripts to ensure the consistency. The transcripts were coded and categorized by using NVivo 8 Qualitative Analysis Software. NVivo is designed for multimedia data and it allows researchers to import and export data to and from statistical packages and merge projects. It facilitates rich text, analysis, flexible interpretations, memos, development of matrices, modeling and framing (Grbich, 2007; 228). Saillard (2009) also states that such software programs have significant functions in supporting hypothesis generating and theory building processes.

FINDINGS

This section presents the analysis of the answers provided for the questions asked during the interviews conducted with Çifteler Village Institutes graduates:

Physical education course and physical education teachers in çifteler village institutes

The subjects provided the following opinions about Physical Education course and the teachers as follows:

“We did not have a physical education course and there was not grade for this course in our transcripts. (K5)

“The Physical Education teacher started to work in 1947 and his name was İrfan Örolay (K4)

“Two hours a week and it was given by a physical education teacher. His name was Hasan Altan. He passed away and his wife was his painting teacher (K2)

The activities carried out before and after the inclusion of physical education course in Çifteler Village Institute curriculum

According to what the subjects stated about the physical education course in the institute, it can be observed that there are two distinct periods. The activities carried out in İsmail Özel Çifteler Village Institute before physical education course started are mentioned as follows:

“There were no volleyball and football teams. They formed these teams later on, after we graduated (K5)

The activities available after the inclusion of physical education teacher in the curriculum are stated as follows:

“We realized the presence of physical education teacher only when he gave orders while we were singing our national anthem or when we played basketball and volleyball in the garden with the physical education teacher during our free times or (K1).

“We continued to perform and rehearse national folklore games. We performed all kinds of physical activities and athleticism but national folklore games were a part of the activities in the institute anyway” (K7).

Teaching of national folklore games in the institute

The subjects of the study stated that the teaching of national folklore games was carried out in different ways, namely by senior students to newcomers, by the guest students from other institutes and by visiting professionals.

“Elder ones used to teach folklore games to younger ones (K 7)

“We visited Hasanoğlu institute and there were also students from Savaştepe/Balıkesir and Kızılcıllu/Edirne. Oh no not from Kızılcıllu. From Kepirtepe/Edirne. Also from Ortaklar/Aydın. It meant four regions of Turkey were represented. We were all together. Each group taught its local game to each other. We taught ours and they taught theirs (K5).

“When Beşikdüzü Teacher Training School is closed for boys, they were sent to different institutes and some of these friends from Black Sea Region enrolled in our institute. So we learned Black Sea Region Folklore Games from them. Similarly, a man called Mehmet Efe visited us to teach Balıkesir Pamuk Yüğü Bengi (K 2).

Physical activities and games available in the institute

The opinions of the subjects regarding the physical activities and games available in Çifteler Village Institute can be categorized under the following titles: military training, basketball, wrestling, volleyball, athleticism, football, leisure time games, jogging and running. These opinions are stated as follows:

"I had an interest in sports. I was a member of basketball, volleyball, football and athleticism teams at school" (K2)

I am an ironsmith. I go to the smithery. I use my sledge hammer and blower, which are pure physical activities (K5)

There were activities to help us have a healthy body. Sometimes games or running activities or jogging and visits to nearby areas. Especially field trips were an important part of such activities. (K1)

Local festivals and celebrations organized among the institutes

The results of the interviews show that there are two main categories for these festivals and celebrations organized among the institutions: namely charity organizations and sports tournaments. These sports activities included volleyball, wrestling, athleticism and basketball, and the opinions of the participants about such activities are as follows:

"There used to be some organizations among institutes. For instance 6 or 7 institutes used to come together in certain locations. I remember going to Hasanoğlan where we met students from Ladik /Samsun, İvriz/Konya, Isparta etc. In short, students from Mid Anatolia and Black Sea regions used to gather and tournaments used to be organized for volleyball, basketball and wrestling. Later awards used to be given to the winners and champions (K2)"

The places where physical education course and other physical activities were performed in çifteler village institute

The responses provided by the participants regarding this topic revealed that the places where Physical Education Course and other physical activities were performed are a nearby meadow, the garden of the institute, classrooms and the cafeteria. Below are the responses given by the subjects about these places:

"We did not have a sports hall. There was a broad meadow, which also used to be the ceremony area, surrounded by willow trees and two streams. It was also near the main road connecting Eskişehir to Konya. It was so large that two or three volleyball and basketball fields would fit in." (K1).

"There was not a sports hall, and the garden used to be the place for sports activities (K2)."

"We used to perform year-end theater plays and other activities in our large cafeteria, which was quite suitable for such activities. (K7)

The equipment and tools used in physical education course and physical activities

The participants stated that there were insufficient materials and equipment for Physical Education Course and other physical activities due to the difficult economic conditions of the period. In addition, most of them were provided by the institutions themselves. This situation changed a little bit for better in the late 1940s. The responses given regarding this issue are as follows:

"I remember it very clearly that we did not have a notion called "Sportswear" in our minds. The students used to participate in the course or activities by wearing anything they wish. The reason for this was that newcomers did not have enough money to afford such things. There were no sports shoes, but we were allowed to run

with shorts and flannels to make the activities comfortably, which was the common practice in the institute” (K1)

“I know new generation might not understand this situation. A new dance hall or a handball field in the institute... They were quite luxurious for us!!” (K5)

Local folklore games performed in Çifteler Village Institute

The responds provided by the subjects clearly show that folklore games from all over Turkey were performed in Çifteler Village Institute. Among these games were Harmandalı, Zeybeks of Aegean Region, Halays of Sivas Region, Horons of Black Sea Region, Bars of East Anatolia Region, Bengi of Balıkesir, Teke Zortlatması, Zeybek of Ankara Region, Zeybek of Talas Region, Zeybek of Kırka Region and Trakya Sallaması. The opinions of the subjects about these games are as follows:

“Zeybeks of Aegean Region, Halays of Sivas Region. There was a mermaid and arpazlı in one of these zeybeks. They were what I still remember today” (K1)

“For instance, we even used to try to perform folklore games of Black Sea Region. We used to perform these energetic folklore games (K7)

The place of national folklore games in the daily routines of the institute

When the opinions of the subjects regarding this issue are analysed, it can be concluded that national folklore games had a significant place in the institute. The opinions of the subjects regarding these activities, which substitute for physical education course, are as follows:

“It was an indispensable part of our school life (K1)”

“Teaching of national folklore games was a chance to develop patriotic feelings for us. It was a kind of idealism (K5)”

“I really admired the energy of folklore games of Black Sea Region. They used to perform very well. It is the perfection of Black Sea people. It is a good opportunity to learn about Turkey and its people. (K2)

“In my opinion, one loves his country and its people through songs and folklore games. They help the individual to develop patriotism. That is what I believe (K7).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

According to the data obtained from Village Institute graduates and other documents, it can be concluded that students had a very active education and social life in a natural environment despite the bad economic and social conditions of the period. In addition, national folk dances seem to have been the most important physical activity carried out in Village Institutes. Rauf İnan (1986) who worked as the principal of Çifteler Village Institute, writes in his book his opinions about national folk dances played every morning. According to İnan; the students, the teachers and the administrators used to gather every morning in front of the main buildings of two departments provided that there was no rain or snow. They used to play local songs with the accordions and the mandolins, which used to give everybody enthusiasm, energy and liveliness. Later, they would get into groups according to the program of the day, such as working groups, classrooms, workshops, agriculture, construction and other fields of work (İnan, 1986; 59).

The results of the study clearly show that senior students played a significant role in popularizing national folklore games in the institutes during a period characterized with shortage of well-trained teachers in main courses. Kaplan (2002) states that still ballads were sung and folklore games were performed in the institutes despite the lack of qualified teachers in certain branches such as physical education, foreign language teaching

and music. The visits organized among the institutes were quite effective in ensuring national unity through cultural exchanges, which are highly supported by the performances of ballads, folklore games which represented seven main regions of Turkey.

Regarding national folklore games performances, Apaydın (1978) gives the following as an example: "Every morning, the students used to gather in front of the flag pole in circles and later used to perform various folklore games from different parts of Turkey such as zeybeks, halays and horons accompanied by drums and accordions. Burgaç (2004), in his study on Çifteler Village Institutes, claims that the students used to wake up at 6:30 in the mornings and moved from the dormitory to the main building in order to perform physical education activities. Later, they used to continue to play various national folklore games after the breakfast.

The students in Village Institutes introduced their local folklore games to other institutes through performances by their special teams during their visits. Similarly, they also learned about the games of other regions during such visits. This situation made it possible to perform zeybek not only in Aegean region but also in various parts of Turkey such as Hasanoğlan, Cılavuz and Ernis. Similarly, Horon of Black Sea Region reached to areas such as Beşikdüzü, Aksu, Kapırtepe and Düziçi (Apaydın, 1978; 67).

The results also showed a consistency between the activities mentioned by the participants in the interviews and the ones stated in the report submitted by Çifteler Village Institute Games and Sports Committee in 1948-1949 academic year on the activities carried out in the institute (The report submitted by Education Directorate of Mahmudiye Branch of Çifteler Village Institutes for The Institute Administration: 1950; p.2). The participants stated that some physical activities and sports were done in the Institute such as national folk dances, wrestling, trekking, volleyball, basketball, swimming, games, athletics, military training, workshop activities and working in the fields. The activities mentioned in the report and those stated by the participants perfectly match.

Kızık (2008), in his study on Village Institutes, states that sports had a special and important place in Village Institutes. It is claimed that in these institutes social and individual health is emphasized more than global sports culture. In addition, the mentality behind the competitions is based on fair play and sharing and they are free from violence and terror. The mentality "be a champion at the expenses of everything" was not valid anymore. Kirby (1962) claims that sports activities were given more importance in the institutes when compared to educational institutes in urban areas. Her study lists available sports in the institutes suitable for the geographical features of the region such as water sports, skiing and technical mountaineering as well as volleyball, football and basketball. In addition, she further states that fair play was more prevalent compared to British and American Educational Institutions.

The content of physical education courses includes national folk dances, gymnastics and sports and its goals are defined as "to raise strong, disciplined, active, brave individuals who can easily adapt surrounding conditions and can actively take part in the defense of the country." Another goal of this course is stated as "to help student to strengthen their body structure, to rehabilitate some physical problems if there are and to integrate aesthetical dimension into body structure development through national folk dances and other sport activities such as running, jumping etc. (Türkoğlu, 2000; 311-317 –Turkish Republic, Ministry of Education Village Institutes Education Program, 1943; 117). According to the information obtained from the interviews with Çifteler Village Institute graduates and other documents, it can be concluded that goals aimed by "Physical Education" course were achieved to a great extent.

ICHPERSD (International Council for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sport, and Dance) firmly believes that every child and adult has the right to get physical education as stated in United Nations Convention. According to ICHPERSD, an individual who receives physical education is more likely to have a well-built physical structure. In addition, it takes part in more physical activities and becomes more aware of the

importance of physical activity to have a healthy life (<http://www.ichpersd.org/i/children.html>). Considering above mentioned statements, we can define “Physical Education” as culturalization, socialization and citizenship development training which aims at providing students with moral values, sound personality characteristics through muscle and physical development In addition, it contributes to the development of appropriate behaviors, the main goal of general education (Mirzeoğlu, 2003: 84).

In short, it is clear that physical education was given importance despite all deficiencies and difficulties in Village Institutes. Institute students who started the day by playing national folk dances continue their active life style in the institute by working in the fields, workshops and during free times. In other words, national folk dances were successful applications in contributing both to physical and cultural development.

Bilir (2008), who examines Physical Education Courses in Village Institutes according to constructivist approach, states that similar approaches should be tried even today’s modern world since the results obtained from Village Institutes Model applied during the early years of Turkish Republic were quite encouraging (Bilir 2008; 149-150).

It is believed that the results obtained in this study from the content of physical activities and “Physical Education and National Folk Dances” course, which was later included in the program, will significantly contribute to national and international literature on sports education. By highlighting the important functions of national folk dances in Village Institutes education system, some studies can be initiated regarding the inclusion of national folk dances more and more in national and international education programs.

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