

# CULTURAL SITUATION OF FOREST-PUBLIC RELATIONS

(BARTIN EXAMPLE)

**Erdoğan ATMİŞ**

Research Assistant  
ZKÜ.Forest Faculty of Bartın

**Sezgin ÖZDEN**

Ms Forest Engineer

## ABSTRACT

In Rio de Janeiro in 1992, it was pointed out that active contribution of society is needed for sustainable development in the relations between public and forest. Societies have to play effective role on making and practicing of forestry policies. It is desired that people should have more knowledge about forests and forestry services to do this.

Terms of forest and forestry have been used as terms related to foresters and villagers who live in and around forest for long time in Turkey. Only relations between forest and the villagers have been tried to point out in process of forest policy making, but urban society has been emphasized under the cover of "Public Relation to Forestry" during constitution "The Development Plans in Turkey"

The society in Turkey who lives in cities does not know many advantage of forests unfortunately the urbanized men who think that the forest as a nice part of nature is not aware of other values of the forest (e.g. protection of water and air quality).

In this study knowledge levels about forest and forestry of urbanized men were investigated by several techniques.

According to the results of the study, it is very difficult to reflect the demands of urban society on forest services to forest policies in Bartın. Because this part of society has not enough knowledge about forest, so they cannot shape easily their demands on forest.

**But these results show that policy makers have to make policies, which increase level of knowledge of the society about forest in this area.**

**Key words:** Education, Interview technique, Nonwood Products, Public Relations

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Relations between several communities and forests have been continued during centuries. In the primitive ages, forests have been admitted as a shelter and source of income. Formerly harmful uses have been vehemented and destructive effects on forests occurred day by day.

30% of the forests on the earth have been reduced due to the extension meadows, cities and agricultural areas in the past 10,000 years (**POSTEL at all. 1991**).

Therefore, the forest areas of Anatolia also have been degraded and reduced by over uses and forest fires during the history of Anatolia. According to Brice; the natural forest vegetation of Anatolia has been restricted and reduced by the progressive desiccation of the country since the last Ice Age, there is clear evidence of accelerated deforestation in the past 2,000 or 2,500 years, which cannot be explained by any such natural process. A human cause must therefore be sought (**BRICE 1955**)

It is clearly seen that; forests were reduced years after years when there were no rules on the relations between forest and society. The balance between forests and society has been tried to establish by the Forest Act dated 1937 that is accepted as a beginning point of technical forestry in Turkey. But it is so hard to say that, the balance has been established because of inefficient applications.

In Turkey, forests have been admitted as a resource that provides wood products for years. Efforts to extend socio-cultural services from forests could not be adequate. For instance, many works related to the forests and societies just aim to develop forest villagers.

There is no "**Forestry-Society Relations**" part in the Main Forestry Plan, which is an important supervisor for Turkish Forestry (**OGM 1988**).

**1st Forestry Council** in 1993 and **7. Five Years Development Plan in Turkey** mention about "**Forest-Village Relations**" and "**Forest-Public Relations**" (**ORMAN BAKANLIĞI 1993 and DPT 1995**). However the contents of both are almost same that

have developing forest the life standard of villagers. . Furthermore in Turkey some duties of forestry are to meet the requirements of whole people in the forest areas, which have values on the national and cultural resources.

Consequently, the Forest-Public Relations should be gathered under two main covers as "**Rural Population-Forestry Relations**" and "**Urban Population-Forestry Relations**"(EKİZOĞLU 1996).

Important changes on demographic structure have been occurred from rural areas to urban areas by migrations in last decades in Turkey. According to 1990 census of population; 58.4% of Turkey population has been lived in provinces and districts. According to authors this ratio will be 70.8% in 2000, 88.8% in 2025 (GÜVENEN 1992).

The migration of most population to urban areas and some problems that are born from rapid urbanization change some traditional thoughts and the society's demands have been getting various. In that case Forest-Society Relations should be created more conscious. It should not be forgotten that; application forestry policy objectives is not easy and positive results can not be obtained unless the importance of forests for a country is not known and accepted by most of people in a country (ÖZDÖNMEZ at all. 1989).

On the other hand in present day according to representative management approach, everyone should be added to policy-making process. For this reason, society should be informed about forests and forestry at first.

In this study the knowledge level and the requirements from forests of the inhabitants of the province of Bartın who have several ages, sexes and education levels were investigated and according to findings forestry organizations were criticized.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

**Interview technique** is used in this study. **Interview schedule** is also used as a standard observation tool. The questions were asked face to face and the responses were noted by interviewer (GÜVEN 1996).

Generally **close-ended questions** were used in schedule, however **open-ended questions** were used too. 26 questions were asked to interviewees.

**Quota sampling** was used as sampling technique (GÜVEN 1996). And the study was applied in province of Bartın. According to census of population 1990, people who live in Bartın were grouped as age, educational background and sex (DİE 1994).

Population of Bartın was divided as homogeneous groups by this grouping. As a result 36 homogeneous groups were existed.

Questions were not asked to the people who are younger than 15 years old. In addition illiterate people who are younger than 35 years old were neglected because of the fact that some difficulties in sampling plot. 2% of the people who are older than 15 years old in sampling area were calculated for representativeness. The interview was done with 431 persons in sampling area and the responses were registered to schedules at the same time.

### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **3.1. Most Known Forest Product**

The findings below were obtained at the end of the interviews." What is the most known forest products and services in your opinion" The responses of the questions were organized in that order

- Fuelwood production (93%),
- Raw materials of paper production (87%),
- Erosion control function (85%),
- Roundwood production (83%),
- Nature conservation function (77%),

In addition picnicking in forest area, protecting people health and other products and values were graded with more little rates. It is interesting that; although picnicking in forest is known by majority of people, recreation as a technical concept is just known 2% of interviewees.

#### **3.2. Most Important Benefits of Forests**

"What is the most important benefits of forests in your opinion" interviewees answered this question as:

- Raw material of paper production (66%),
- Erosion control function (54%),
- Fuelwood production (46%),
- Roundwood production (39%).

It is so obvious that wood products were more preferable than nonwood products. However as a difference erosion control function of forests was placed in second order. The

Other non-wood values that are climate regulation, protection of people health, and picnicking were placed toward at the end of preferences. While the preferences of the illiterate people are fuel-wood production with 82%, roundwood production with 72% the preferences of the people who graduated from university did not prefer this products as above. For instance 8% of university graduated people were preferred fuelwood products of forests. On the other hand according to university graduated people the order is done as below;

- Erosion control function (79%),
- Climate regulation function (67%).

### **3.3. Forest Reducing**

Consequently, when education levels of the people increase the expectations from forests change from wood productions to non-wood productions.

81% of the interviewees think that the forest areas of the world are reducing and 84% of them think that it is true for Turkey's forest area. Accordingly, most of the people are aware the harm on forest resources. According to respondents who think that forest areas are reducing, the causes of reduction are;

- Forest fires (45%),
- Applications of Forest Law is not done well (13%),
- Inadequate of management activities (12%),
- Inadequacies of the Forest Law with (9%).

63% of illiterate people and 8% of university-graduated people indicate forest fires as the main cause of forest reduction. On the other hand according to university graduated people the main causes of forest reductions are inefficient forest management and inadequate technical capacity.

### **3.4. View to Forestry Organizations**

As a related question; "Can forestry organizations serve effectively and spread in your opinion?" was asked. The positive responses are 15% of all responses. While 21% of responses are mediocre, according to 36% of interviewee forestry activities are not successful and adequate. In addition 13% of interviewees claim that; they have never seen a forestry activities. The last 15% of responses did not answer. One of the causes of this situation is; forestry activities cannot explain to society by forestry organizations.

Although, there is a Directorate Forest Enterprise in province of Bartın, only 53% of interviewees were admitted it as a forest organization, which works, on forestry. In addition General Directorate of Forest Product Industry (ORÜS) with 26% and the

Ministry of Forestry with 17%, General Directorate of Forestry 3%, territorial divisions with 5% was preferred by respondent. 24% of them said that they knew any forestry organizations.

The majority of interviewees think that the Forest Guards carry out all of the forestry activities with 41%. In addition forest engineers with 18%, forest enterprisers (Supervisor) or territorial divisions' chiefs with 9% are known as executer of forestry activities. 24% of interviewees have not got any ideas about this subject. Consequently, Forest Guards are also well known in urban areas such as rural areas. Forest enterprisers or forest engineers are not known such as forest guards.

98% of interviewees are not member of any **NGO** or volunteer organization. 2% of them are member of The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA), Hunting Clubs and Chamber of Engineers.

The question "When do you think forests mostly" was asked. According to responses; forests are not thought by forestry organizations' activities. On the contrary they are thought when environmental problems take place in agenda. For instance forest fires, erosion, etc. The others are;

- Forest fires (17%),
- Picnicking (16%),
- Fuelwood need (13%).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Because of the fact that Western Black Sea Region has the largest forest area in Turkey the majority of people who live in sample area think that the forest resources of Bartın and Turkey are larger than their real rates. At the same time most of interviewees aware that forest areas are reducing in Turkey like earth's forest resources.

The majority of interviewees are aware the erosion control function water production and protection of water quality function, prevention of air pollution function, climate influence function of forests. Unfortunately the consciousness of the society is not created by forestry organizations. Thus forest-public relations activities are neglected by forest organizations. The consciousness is created by media and developed of telecommunication services in our opinion. But it is disputable that this consciousness is healthy.

Education changes human's opinion about forests and forest areas. While illiterate people require wood product, the people who have higher cultural level require nonwood products from forests. Thereby, there is a relation between cultural level of people and environmental consciousness. In addition, the indifference of people to NGO and volunteer Organizations prevent to join the policy-making process.

The knowledge level about forests and the expectations from the forests of the community vary according to the education level. It is also clear that forestry institutions have not had sufficient relations, with especially urban society, on introducing forests.

This study has brought up this lackness at least in province of Bartın. It has already been a necessity to found the forest - society relations including the future well, and to do the research that will enlighten the forestry studies in Turkey generally.

## 5. REFERENCES

**BRICE. W.C., 1955:** The History of Forestry in Turkey, İ.Ü. Orman Fak. Der., Cilt 5, Sayı 1-2, İstanbul.

**DİE. 1994:** 1990 Genel Nüfus Sayımı. Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri. 67-Zonguldak. TC. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü. Yayın No: 1657. Ankara.

**DPT. 1995:** Ormanlık. Yedinci Beş Yıllık Kalkınma Planı Özel İhtisas Komisyonu Ormanlık Alt Komisyonu Raporu. Yayın No: DPT: 2400- ÖİK: 461. Ankara.

**EKİZOĞLU, A., 1996:** Türkiye'de Ormansızlaşma sempozyumu'na Sunulan Bildiri. Orman Mühendisleri Odası. Ankara.

**GÜVEN, S., 1996:** Toplum biliminde Araştırma Yöntemleri. Ezgi Kitabevi yayınları. P.78.Bursa.

**GÜVENEN, O., 1992:** Türkiye Nüfus yapısı ve Nüfus Çevre Etkileşimi. Dünya nüfus Günü Toplantısı Sonuç Kitapçığı. Türkiye Çevre Vakfı Yayını. P.93-133. Ankara.

**OGM, 1988:** Ormanlık Ana Planı 1990-2009. OGM Araştırma Planlama ve Koordinasyon Dairesi başkanlığı. Yayın No: 3. Ankara.

**ORMAN BAKANLIĞI, 1993:** 1. Ormanlık Şurası Tebliğler ve Ön çalışma grubu Raporları. Seri No:13, Yayın No:006, Cilt:2. Ankara.

**ÖZDÖNMEZ, M., İSTANBULLU, T., AKESAN, A., 1989:** Ormanlık Politikası. İÜ. Orman Fakültesi Yayınları. Yayın No: 401. İstanbul.

**POSTEL.S., RYAN, C.J., 1991:** Dünyanın Durumu, Worldwatch Institute Report, p.88. Washington D.C.).