

## **One of the First Ottoman Reformist in Globalization of Education: the Reform Plan of Satı Bey - the Turkish Frobel (Mustafa Sati El Husri)**

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**Abstract:** In Turkish education history, especially in education system at the II. Constitutional Monarchy, Satı Bey (Mustafa Sati El Husri) is the educational thinker of “the firsts” with his theoretical ideas and applications. Satı Bey, called as the Turkish Frobel (Mustafa Sati El Husri), the man who set up a reform plan for the Ottoman education system, particularly the teacher training, in the most rational way and applied his ideas bravely.

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**Key words:** Turkish history of education • Frobel • The first reformist • Ottoman • Reform plans

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**His Life and Services:** He was born in Yemen in 1879. He had his elementary education in Yemen. He entered to the School of Political Science at lycee level (appx. 12-15 years) and the same School of Political Science at higher education level in 1900. He worked as a Natural Science teacher for 5 years until 1905. He then served as Kaimakam (head official of a district) of Makedonya for about three years. After 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1908 (II. Constitutional Government), he was in the position of the principal at Istanbul Normal School. He traveled to Europe for scientific and professional purposes in 1910. He left his job at Istanbul Normal School in 1912 and started to work as the principal of Darüşşafaka (a prestigious lycee in Istanbul) until 1915. He left the Darüşşafaka and founded a private school called “The New School” in 1915. He opened the school called as Darülmüebbîyat which aimed to train nursery school teachers. He received a ministry counsellorship offer but he did not accept the duty and left the country in 1919. He had various managerial services in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Egypt respectively. About 20 books and hundreds of articles of him were published. He was called as “The Turkish Frobel” due to his publications. Satı Bey, who first time introduced several new notions such as school museums, painting, handicrafts, physical education, music lessons, school conferences, research tours, practice school, summer in-profession education into the Turkish Education History, died in Cairo in 1969.

### **His Characteristics:**

- He had an investigative character.
- He had an outstanding intelligence.
- He had a reformist personality.
- He was both a strong theorist and a skilful practitioner.
- He was a good populace psychologist and observer.
- He was a multidimensional educator.
- He disseminated his ideas through his speech and articles and put them into practice.
- He had a deep and rich vision.
- He was a hard-working, determined and idealist.
- He was a thinker who writes a lot.
- He had a rich fantasy world.

**Sati Bey’s Education Reform Plan:** His reform plan has two main bases which are closely connected to;

- a. Managerial reform plan
- b. Educational reform plan

**Managerial Reform Plan:** 23<sup>rd</sup> of July, 1908; the Ottoman Empire of the II. Constitutional Government years has gone downhill compared with its European contemporaries. According to Satı Bey, the reason for that was not the religion, Islam, as claimed by some people. Thinking that Islam is an obstacle for progress, out of looking that Muslim nations are not progressed, is as irrational as thinking that a valley is not able to be

cultivated by seeing this valley uncultivated once. There are also ones who claim that the reason is 'the race'. It is wrong that Turks have not served to the civilization. The Islam Civilization is not only Arabs' work. There are many Turks in Muslim scholars such as Ibni Sina, Farabi. Buhara was a civilization center. Hungarians are also from Turk race and they are not less in qualities than Europeans. According to Satı Bey, Europeans are not better than Turks in terms of intelligence and skills. Their success is due to their desire for working, their system and their education [1]. According to him the reasons are fanaticism, ignorance, lack of determination and constancy. Nor the real Islam or the Turk tribe is an obstacle for progress [2].

The direction of reformation is the west, Europe. The mentality we need is the mentality of today's Europe. Europe has passed most of its time in investigation and trial-and-error and we will benefit from their experience. So, we have the chance to reach them [1].

We should behave wisely. Because the thinking style of a society close to a high civilization is different from the one of a single society. All fruit trees were once wild. It is now nonsense to progress the wild. We take the one which is already progressed [3]. No other way is wise. We should not look for progress in any other directions. Above all, we can not try to invigorate the Islam civilization again. Europe took and had it progressed, we will take the one of Europe. It is not necessary to take the Islam civilization itself but the spirit of it [4].

Islam Civilization has an important role in construction of intellectual and scientific base of the west civilization. Then, we, the whole nation, should begin a struggle to hear, think and behave as a European, should verify the reforms which will make progress possible in intellectual, managerial and economic areas.

### **Educational Reform Plan**

**Education Philosophy:** We can grasp his ideas on education from the following say; "Although Europe is quite better than us in education they clamor for school, reform and education; on the other hand, we do nothing despite of our regression. Education has to be treated as a matter of life and death." [1].

### **The Aims of Education in Satı Bey's Views:**

- To expand general qualities of a person without dulling his special skills and to make him have a skill.
- To equip the person with particular ideas and experiences in order to enable him to be perfect bodily, mentally and morally.

- Education must socialize the person and make him more enterprising.

**The Content of Education:** In order to educate an individual in Satı Bey's views, the content of education should contain the followings:

- A National and Islamic content which will help to establish an Islamic and national education
- The content containing natural sciences which will enable education to become scientific.
- Specialty giving and occupational content which will enable to raise enterprising persons [4].

According to him information which will inoculate native country love has been kept away from schools for years. National identity of people and its reflection to education is ignored. Furthermore, the national goal of the country is not determined and described and not worked on methods to reach those. Lack of all these has led to having a non-national education content [5]. In order to be nationalized, by bringing out national characteristics, determining the national goal and describing the methods and information that would inoculate those to the people, our education can be national and our people can be nationalized by getting rid of conservatism [5].

Satı Bey professes on having scientific education system and how our people will have scientific mentality as the following: "I mean by natural science lessons those which depend on experience, examine life and train the minds to assignment, investigation, classification and deduction. Because of this, I believe in a reformation in the style and spirit of those lessons" [5]. According to him, the first and the most important condition of being an enterprising person is to head work by body and mind training. In his education mentality, work is not a production means like in Makarenko, Blonsk. Work is a means for creating higher values and it is a major principle for occupational education. In his opinion; "...as it is wrong to claim that eating is the main goal of life by looking at that living is only possible by eating, it is also wrong to show the goal of education like to train producers by depending on that living is due to working and working is due to producing" [6].

**Reform Plan for Elementary Education:** Elementary education has an important place in Satı Bey's education reform plan. Elementary education is the action point and central platform of the reform plan. In an intellectual discussion, he had with Emrullah Efendi, Satı Bey answered the question "should the education reform

begins from elementary or higher education?" as "it should start in elementary education", replies the idea of Emrullah Efendi, which is "it should start in higher education" and which is known as "Tuba tree<sup>1</sup> theory (Tuba ağacı nazariyesi), so: "education depending on a useless elementary education never develops" [7]. In his another article, Satı Bey says, "The basis of national development is education, particularly elementary education; so we must treat elementary education with great care and importance. No type of education which is not depending on elementary school can develop the country. Genuine intellectuals are raised as real trees, not as Tuba Tree. The matter on the basis of national development and raising intellectuals is the matter of elementary education" (p.86) and this shows that he considers elementary school education as "the engine" of the reform plan [8]. In sum, he claims that strong secondary and higher education can not be founded on unstable elementary education; on the contrary, experts and intellectuals who will help development can be raised from an education system that depends on elementary education.

**Teacher Training Reform Plan:** The most urgent problem of the current education system is the matter of "teacher" according to Satı Bey. The system will succeed to be modified owing to them because it is impossible to give new things to students by teachers of old mentality. Having teachers equipped with enough teaching methods and occupational knowledge will form one of the vital bases of the reform plan. Two ways are possible to reach this:

- to raise new and competent teachers
- to modify the current teachers into more useful and competent state

In order to reach these goals, the current teacher training schools must be modified in terms of philosophy, goal, politics, content and method; in other words, it must become perfect.

Satı Bey became the leader of the action of training modern teachers in the II. Constitutional Monarchy. With his character, both as a theorist and practitioner, he added new value to the notion of 'teacher'. According to him, a teacher is not only an education worker teachers are the soldiers of an army battling against domestic and foreign enemies. The destiny of nations depends on work of teachers' armies rather than the soldiers' armies [9].

**The Plan for Sending Students to Europe:** Sending students to Europe keeps an important place in Satı Bey's education reform plan. One of the, or maybe the first of the people studying on this issue, which is hot since III. Selim in Ottoman Empire, in detail and systematically is Satı Bey. According to him Ottoman education system will gain dynamism owing to the people who are sent to Europe and who come back as experts. But the issue of sending students to Europe goes on unsystematically. In fact, it must follow the guidelines below.

- Aims of sending students to Europe must be determined in the most rational way.
- Not many students but qualified students must be sent there, so the results will be better.
- The candidates, who will belong to applied sciences mostly, must be determined according to aptitude and skills tests.
- The ones with enough life experience and who are at least graduates of high school must be sent.
- Where to send the students must be considered seriously and they must be sent to universities of various countries such as Germany and France.

**The People Education Reform Plan:** In the years following II. Constitutional Monarchy, the Ottoman Empire has passed through various modifications in political, managerial and ethical areas. But according to Satı Bey, the change on the top of the pyramid reaches the people not on time. The effect of Constitutional Monarchy is seen almost none on large people groups. But people education is a must for civilization that is spread among all parts of the community [9].

There are there main points in Satı Bey's education; Body, Mind, Ethics [10]. What a pity that enough care is not given to ethical development in our education system. Moreover, "Today, it is almost a usual habit to ignore, criticize and deny the sacred things [11]. This shows that our community is going through a crisis. Sociology will be guide in surpassing this crisis. The main responsibility is again of education institutions. By the help of various activities such as summer courses, evening schools, professional courses, conferences for people, etc like in developed countries, we should reflect certain effect of education to the people. Especially the power of elementary school teachers can be used most effectively on people education. Moreover, this matter should be taken into consideration in raising programs of elementary school teachers; so they can be able to educate the people.

<sup>1</sup>It is believed that Tuba tree is a kind of tree that only exists in heaven and in contrary to the trees in the world its roots are in air and the branches are in the ground.

### Some Maxims From Satı Bey:

- “The hand rocking the cradle creates the future.”
- “No other period is better than disaster times for generating country love, because they have great inspiring power.”
- “The principal condition of victory in battles is ‘Hope and Determination.’”
- “Education is a matter of life and death for us.”
- “Schools reflect the past, represent today and display the future of a nation.”
- “Education based on an inadequate system can never advance.”
- “Being a teacher is also being a mürebbi (tutor, pedagogue, trainer, corrector) more than any other things.”
- “The greatest weakness of our education system is the approach that any person can be a teacher.”
- “Training and Education’ is a type of art and skill.”
- “The destiny of nations depends on work of teachers’ armies rather than the soldiers’ armies’.”
- “Training and Education’ begins form the early years of life.”
- “Teacher Training Schools are the basis of our education in the future.”
- “Teachers are the soldiers of an army battling against domestic and foreign enemies.”
- “Our future depends on the situation that our education and schools will be in.”
- “A real and social revolution will be possible via education in schools.”
- “People education is a must for civilization that is spread among all parts of the community.”
- “The most chronic drawback of our education is memorization habit.”
- “Teachers should raise good electors.”

### CONCLUSIONS

The ideas of Satı Bey which influenced the Republic Period can be concluded as following:

- Research method and technique are important in education.
- It is possible to increase the quality in education by uniting practice and theory.
- The goal of education is to improve individuals’ special talents and spiritual skills [10].
- Social change, a new community and nationalization, national progress, civilization can only be possible

through educational mobilization on the center of which there are schools, well-trained teachers and intellectuals.

By means of his ideas above, Satı Bey has a deserved reputation in Turkish Education history. In our teacher training history there is a Satı Bey period which is unquestionable. His thoughts in this area are still effective.

The mentioned success of Satı Bey is not of chance or surprise. Even when he was a student he was called as “Archimedes” by his friends because of the interest and aptitude he had against natural sciences [12]. He has been distinguished as a hard-working, determined, idealist educational practitioner and theorist [13].

As a conclusion, we hope that this great talent, the Arabian Ottoman intellectual had had the chance of knowing Atatürk and the Republic Period could benefit from his vast knowledge and experience. Because there were times our country needed him. But he was too away.

In spite of everything, I express you [Satı Bey] the thanks of a nation on account of your services.

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