



Review article

Rural Areas Redefinition

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Abstract

Rural development is the development of agriculture and non-agricultural employment in rural areas, increasing and differentiating incomes, taking measures to increase the education and entrepreneurship level of women and young people. The state, on the other hand, makes arrangements for rural development programs, projects and activities to achieve this and takes measures to ensure coordination between public institutions. In order to better manage rural areas and not to cause confusion in practice by the services brought by the institutions, the distinction of rural areas and the powers in these areas should be well defined. For this purpose; it is important to make the definition of rural areas effective in a way that does not cause problems in practice. The Law No. 6360 dated 12.11.2012 on the Establishment of the Metropolitan Municipality and Twenty-Seven Districts in Fourteen Provinces and the Amendment of Certain Laws and Statutory Decrees has been prepared by foreseeing that it will bring significant changes in rural area administrations. While the confusion about delivering services to rural areas in metropolitan municipalities continued after the local elections on 30.03.2014; tax, fee, drinking, wastewater use and obligations on some issues were put into effect after 5 years. On 16.10.2020, the regulation introduced by the Law No. 7254 on the Amendment of the Law on Public Finance Management and Control and Certain Laws could not fully clarify the issues such as rural neighborhood and rural residential area. And Then, In the Official Gazette dated 15.04.2021 and numbered 31455, it was thought that the Regulation on Rural Neighborhood and Rural Residential Area would solve the problems in practice. In this study, the issues of confusing rural area definitions, service delivery to rural areas and rural area regulations have been examined and suggestions have been put forward.

Keywords: Rural Development, Rural Area, Definition of Rural Areas, Rural Development Policies, Local Governments, Public Policies.

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INTRODUCTION

In terms of rural areas, it is understood that at first glance, the population density is low, economic life is mostly based on agriculture, natural conditions and traditional values are effective in shaping life, and social opportunities such as education, health, and communication are underdeveloped.

Rural areas differ in terms of their geographical characteristics, cultural and natural values, assets, social and economic structures, accessibility, relations with surrounding urban settlements, etc., and they are unique in terms of these characteristics. However, the countryside is often an extension of the city in terms of these characteristics, it is a resource provider for it and it is a reluctant host in terms of meeting the needs of the city (Öksüz et al., 2014).

In order for a place to be considered a rural area, the population must first be a certain number; according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the size that can be considered as the rural population is considered as a rural area where there are less than 150 people per km². However, the definition of rural area varies from country to country (OECD, 1994).

Regions, where more than 50% of the population lives in rural areas are considered as predominant regions. In addition, the regions where less than 15% of the population lives in rural areas are classified as predominant regions.

According to the European Union Statistical Institute (EUROSTAT) approach, rural areas can also be classified as integrated rural areas, moderately rural areas, and whole rural areas (EUROSTAT, 2021).

In another classification, rural areas are divided as follows; These are rural areas close to highly urbanized areas, areas used for tourism purposes, rural areas where various activities are carried out, rural areas where agricultural activities are dominant and areas where transportation difficulties are experienced.

Rural areas are classified as follows in the IPARD Program (2014-2020), where Part of EU Agricultural Support is Based on;

Dominant rural areas: Areas where more than 50% of the total population in a province (at the IBBS 3 level) live in districts with a population density of fewer than 150 inhabitants per km².

Central or important rural areas: Areas where 15% to 49.9% of the total population in a province (at IBBS 3 level) live in districts with a population density of fewer than 150 inhabitants per km².

Predominant urban areas: Areas where less than 15% of the total population in a province (at IBBS 3 level) live in districts with a population density of fewer than 150 inhabitants per km².

In the legislation in Turkey, rural areas are first expressed in terms of village and town definitions made by using the population size criterion with the Village Law dated 18.03.1924 and numbered 442. The population of the law is defined as less than 2,000 settlements "village", those between 2,000 and 20,000 as "town", and settlements over 20,000 as "city" (Anonymous, 1924).

Forty cities are defined in the 2014-2020 National Rural Development Strategy Document by considering population threshold criteria. In this document, all settlements with a population of less than 20 thousand are considered as rural settlements. These settlements have been accepted as villages, towns and some district centers, respectively (UKKS, 2015).

In the Rural Development Action Plan (2015-2018) prepared within the framework of the targets set in the National Rural Development Strategy (2007-2013) and (2014-2020) documents, the definition of rural area in the UKKS document was accepted exactly and the places with a population below 20 thousand were accepted as rural areas (KKEP, 2015).

In the Rural Development Special Expertise Commission Report (2019-2023) prepared by calculating the targets in the Eleventh Development Plan of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey (2019-2023), it is emphasized that rural areas are tried to be explained through factors such as the intensity of nature-human relations, social relations based on solidarity, small-scale living and production areas, distance to urban centers, low population density, the dominance of agricultural production (crop production and animal husbandry), the lack of production-based division of labor and specialization, and the existence of a village-based settlement and culture (KKÖİKR, 2018).

In studies on rural areas, it is important how to determine rural areas. Yavuz (2020) states in his study that the definitions of rural areas can be grouped under four main approaches;

In the first approach, socio-spatial parameters such as land use, population density and type of employment are used to define rural areas.

In the second definition, socio-cultural characteristics that emphasize the slower and more relaxed lifestyle specific to rural areas and the more hectic lifestyle in urban areas are taken into account.

In the definition of the third rural area, local features are brought to the forefront and rural areas are subjected to classifications such as semi-rural and full rural areas and are defined as areas where spatial and sociological characteristics characterize specific relationships.

Fourthly, in the definitions of rural areas, rural areas are defined as areas where personal perceptions and interpretations about daily relationships come to the fore. While other definitions approach rural area definitions objectively, human and psychological values are taken into account in this definition approach. For example, people who have lived in the city before and come to the countryside consider these places as a center of beauty and naturalness. Thus, people have the perception that they are moving away from the stress of urban life in these areas (Elands, 2001).

MATERIALS and METHODS

In recent years, it is seen that the criteria bearing the characteristics of rurality have changed. It is important to know these criteria well and to evaluate them in today's conditions and to redefine the rural areas in order to bring a higher quality service to these areas. There is a significant consensus that the Law No. 6360, which was put into effect after the 2014 local elections prepared in 2012 in Turkey, brought major changes, mostly in the negative direction, in rural areas. Over the years, the need to regulate rural areas has arisen. So, Some important decisions have been taken with Additional Article 3 (Annex: RG-16/10/2020-7254/10 art.) added to the Metropolitan Municipality Law dated 10.07.2004 and numbered 5216 with the 'Law on the Amendment of the Law on Public Finance Management and Control and Certain Laws' dated 16.10.2020. 6 months after the law, 'Regulation on Rural Neighborhood and Rural Residential Area' was published in the Official Gazette dated 15.04.2021 and numbered 31455. The regulation defines the rural area, the rural settled area and the actions to be taken in these matters. These regulations are very new but very important as they are urgently needed to be understood. There are not many studies describing how these regulations will affect rural areas. In this study, it is aimed to better understand rural management and the changes that the latest regulations can bring to rural areas. For this, the concepts that define the rural area, the laws and regulations made in recent years are examined and the changes they can bring to the rural area services are explained.

RESULTS and DISCUSSION

Law No. 6360 dated 12.11.2012 on the Establishment of Metropolitan Municipality and Twenty-Seven Districts in Fourteen Provinces and Amendment of Certain Laws and Decrees with Force of Law has been prepared (Anonymous, 2012). When the statistics of TUIK in 2012 are examined, it is seen that 77.3% of the population lived in provincial and district centers and 22.7% in towns and villages in Turkey in 2012 (TÜİK, 2012). After the local elections of 30.04.2014, with the implementation of the law, 16,800 villages and 1053 municipalities were added to the municipal boundaries and transformed into neighborhood status. The administrative structure of Turkey has changed by 52%. By 2016, the population in the provincial and district centers increased to 92.30% and the population in the towns and villages decreased to 7.7% (TÜİK, 2014). It was explained that this legal regulation was made in order to bring better service to the settlements at that time.

With the regulation, the legal personality of the village and municipal municipalities has been abolished in all newly established and expanding metropolitan cities. The villages in these places have turned into neighborhoods, and the municipalities have joined the municipality of the district to which they belong as neighborhoods (Avşar and Taş, 2020).

The legal entities of the villages in Istanbul and Kocaeli provinces, whose duties and responsibilities have previously expanded to the territorial borders but the legal entities of the villages within its borders continue, have been abolished and they have joined the district they are affiliated to as a neighborhood.

There are some difficulties in the management of the municipalities. While some of these challenges may be better addressed, some issues are still under discussion;

The area served by the municipalities has expanded. As the municipalities move away from the urban settlements, it is predicted that the quality of the service to be taken to more distant points may decrease (Ayyıldız et al., 2016).

It has been stated that pre-law no. 6360 structures can be licensed in places where the village legal personality has been abolished. however, it should be understood that the licensing requirements are difficult and cannot be done easily (Özdemir, 2019).

The movable and immovable assets belonging to the towns that turned into neighborhoods were transferred to the district municipalities within the boundaries of the metropolitan city. The village budget was abolished by the law. It is stated that it will not be successful in the short term only with the service provided by the municipalities without the village budget (Gün, 2014).

Some issues were postponed for 5 years in the implementation of the Law No. 6360 dated 12.11.2012 on the Establishment of the Metropolitan Municipality and Twenty-Seven Districts in Fourteen Provinces and the Amendment of Certain Laws and Statutory Decrees after the local elections of 30 March 2014.

Taking into account the existing livelihoods of the municipalities and villages, which are connected to the metropolitan district municipalities as neighborhoods, where the legal entity has been abolished, a new duty and authority has been given to the metropolitan municipalities and metropolitan district municipalities to carry out all kinds of activities and services in order to support agriculture and livestock.

Metropolitan and metropolitan district municipalities will be able to produce new projects for agriculture and livestock activities to be carried out within the scope of their duties, and will be able to carry out collaborations and projects on modern production and cultivation with activities to support

farmers. After this arrangement, municipalities established units and companies operating in the field of agriculture.

It should be emphasized that the municipalities assigned to agriculture and livestock are metropolitan municipalities and metropolitan district municipalities. Other municipalities carry out services in the fields of duty and responsibility in order to provide the services related to the development of economy and trade specified in the article 14 of the Law No. 5393.

The legal personality of the local administrative associations has been abolished. Their duties on issues such as wastewater and solid waste have been taken away from them. In these matters, the need for new practices has emerged in the business of delivering services to rural areas (Genç, 2014).

In order to understand the rural area administration well, the definitions of village, rural neighborhood and rural settled area should be well known.

The village status defined by the Village Law dated 18.03.1924 and numbered 442 continues in 50 provinces with no metropolitan municipality. Services are provided to these areas with the KÖYDES project. In the 31 provinces where the metropolitan municipality was established, the status of the village changed and it was named as a neighborhood. The metropolitan municipality board provides services to these areas with the KIRDES project.

The issue of rural areas in metropolitan municipalities is still a matter of debate. Some important decisions have been taken with Additional Article 3 (Annex: RG-16/10/2020-7254/10 art.) added to the Metropolitan Municipality Law dated 10.07.2004 and numbered 5216 with the 'Law on the Amendment of the Law on Public Finance Management and Control and Certain Laws' dated 16.10.2020.

Settlements that have turned into neighborhoods within the boundaries of the Metropolitan Municipality when they were village or municipal municipalities before the law can be accepted as rural neighborhoods if they are found to have rural settlement characteristics by examining the characteristics such as distance to the city center, accessibility to municipal services, current housing status and socio-economic status with the decision and proposal of the affiliated district municipal council within ninety days at the latest.

It has been taken as a basis that the determination is made at the neighborhood level. However, in other neighborhoods, not all of which are determined as rural neighborhoods, the determined area is defined as rural settled area provided that it is not less than ten thousand square meters.

The qualification of rural neighborhoods or rural settled areas can be removed by the same procedure specified in the same paragraph of the law.

Metropolitan municipalities may accept or reject the offer from the district municipality in the same way or by modifying it as specified in the law.

'Regulation on Rural Neighborhood and Rural Residential Area' was published in the Official Gazette dated 15.04.2021 and numbered 31455, considering that the regulations were not sufficiently understood 6 months after the amendments made to the Metropolitan Municipality Law dated 10.07.2004 and numbered 5216 with Article 3 (Annex: RG-16/10/2020-7254/10 art.) of the Law No. 7254 on the Amendment of the Law on Public Financial Management and Control and Certain Laws on 16.10.2020 (Anonymous, 2020).

In the Official Gazette dated 15.04.2021 and numbered 31455, the Regulation on Rural Neighborhood and Rural Residential Area was published in order to regulate the rural neighborhood or rural residential area, the procedures related to their determination, the exemptions and discounts to be applied in these places and to explain other issues (Anonymous, 2021).

In Article 4 of the regulation on the determination of rural neighborhoods, it is stated that they are within the boundaries of metropolitan municipalities and are determined in neighborhoods that turned into neighborhoods when they were village or town municipalities in 1984 and later. In order to determine the rural neighborhood in the relevant article;

- Whether the rural settlement characteristic continues or not,
- Distance from the city center and transportation status,
- Whether municipalities can access at least one of their services such as road, water, wastewater, solid waste, public transportation in full capacity,
- Whether the rural nature of the current construction status continues,
- Whether it is established and within the development areas in accordance with the zoning legislation,
- Socio-economically; high rural population rate, agricultural, forest, pasture, plateau and winter landform a significant part of the surface area, whether agricultural production, livestock and forest activities are determined as the main source of livelihood,

These are evaluated by considering similar issues with one or more of the characteristics.

According to Article 5 of the regulation, it has been taken as a basis to determine the rural residential area at the neighborhood level. In addition, areas of not less than ten thousand square meters in neighborhoods that cannot be determined as rural neighborhoods due to the fact that they do not meet the conditions specified in Article 4 within the integrity of the neighborhood can be determined as rural residential areas under the principles and conditions specified in Article 4. However, rural residential areas can be identified in parts of a neighborhood or multiple neighborhoods.

The procedures to be performed by the municipalities are regulated in Article 6 of the regulation. Accordingly, a decision is taken by the relevant district municipal council in order to determine the rural neighborhood or rural settled area. This decision, which includes the proposal, is sent to the metropolitan municipality with its reasons. The decision and proposal are brought to the agenda at the first meeting to be held by the metropolitan municipal council as of the date when the decision and proposal of the district municipal council are submitted to the records of the metropolitan municipality and the metropolitan municipal council decides on the determination of the rural neighborhood or rural residential area within ninety days at the latest.

The metropolitan municipal council must take a decision within the specified period. The metropolitan municipal council accepts or rejects the proposal from the district municipality in the same way or by changing it.

While the metropolitan municipal council is evaluating the offer of rural neighborhood or rural settled area from the district municipality;

- Expanding or narrowing the offer related to the rural neighborhood by determining the rural settled area in the neighboring neighborhoods if economic and social integrity with other neighborhoods adjacent to the neighborhood requires, or

-It may decide to extend the offer regarding the rural settled area in a neighborhood to the boundaries of the neighborhood.

It is said that the metropolitan municipal council cannot change the offer of rural neighborhoods or rural settled area coming from the district municipality to cover or exceed the boundaries of the district municipality.

A time limit cannot be foreseen for places identified as rural neighborhoods or rural residential areas. If it is determined that these characteristics of the places determined as rural neighborhoods or rural residential areas by the district municipalities are lost, the nature of rural neighborhoods or rural residential areas can be removed in accordance with the procedure in this article in accordance with Annex 3 of the Law.

In Article 7 of the Regulation, it is stated that the coordinates of the area determined according to the decisions of the metropolitan municipality council taken regarding the determination of the rural neighborhood or rural residential area will be added and the decisions of the district municipality council and the metropolitan municipality council regarding the rural neighborhood or rural residential area will be announced by appropriate methods such as other council decisions.

The beginning and end of the implementation period of the rural neighborhood or rural settled area is regulated in Article 8 of the regulation as the applications related to them after the announcement

of the rural neighborhood or rural settled area start from the beginning of the calendar year following the year in which the decision of the relevant metropolitan municipal council is made. It has been stated that the practices related to rural neighborhoods or rural residential areas will continue until the end of the year in which the relevant metropolitan municipal council decision is made regarding the removal procedure to be performed in accordance with the procedure in Article 6.

CONCLUSION

As can be seen from the definitions and limitations of rural areas, it seems difficult to make a definition that fully explains the single and rural areas. The fact that the definition of rural areas has not been made fully, the differences in definition cause some problems in delivering services to these areas, especially in places where there is a metropolitan municipality.

On 16.10.2020, the regulation introduced by the Law No. 7254 on the Amendment of the Law on Public Finance Management and Control and Certain Laws could not fully clarify the issues such as rural neighborhood and rural residential area. As a matter of fact, there have been problems in determining the status of rural areas. In the Official Gazette dated 15.04.2021 and numbered 31455, it has been calculated that the Regulation on Rural Neighborhood and Rural Residential Area will solve the problems in practice.

It will be possible to better identify the needs of rural areas by better defining them, eliminating the problems encountered in service delivery, to bring quality service to rural areas by better determining the distinction of powers and to make rural development more healthy.

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