e-ISSN: 2757 - 5489
TOPLUM, EKONOMİ VE YÖNETİM DERGİSİ
JOURNAL OF SOCIETY, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT
Cilt Volume 4 Sayı Issue Özel Ay Month Ekim October Yıl Years 2023

LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND ACTIVITIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT (CASE OF MANISA METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY) [1]

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Abstract

The responsibilities and services of local governments towards rural areas, brought about by the equalization of the metropolitan contiguous area with the provincial border, have increased and expanded. It is essential to ensure the continuity of the supply of products from the city to the countryside, with the efforts of the municipalities to increase agricultural productivity in rural areas and to ensure the livelihood of local residents living in rural areas. In this context, Manisa Metropolitan Municipality carries out many studies to support the producers in rural neighborhoods and to ensure rural development throughout the province. In this study, the activities of the local government to support the citizens living within the service boundaries and making a living from farming and the benefits to be seen as a result of these activities are evaluated. The study is handled within the framework of the activity reports and strategic plans of the metropolitan municipality.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Local Governments
Rural Development
Agricultural Support
Metropolitan Municipality

Makale Hakkında

Araştırma Makalesi

Gönderim Tarihi : 08.09.2023
Kabul Tarihi : 13.10.2023
E-Yayın Tarihi : 29.10.2023
DOI : 10.58702/teyd.1357226

[1]. Bu makale, 27-30 Eylül 2022 tarihleri arasında yapılan International Congress on Engineering and Agricultural Sciences (ENAG 2022) de bildiri olarak sunulan çalışmanın genişletilmiş halidir.

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e-ISSN: 2757 - 5489

Cilt 4 Sayı Özel Ay Ekim Yıl 2023
Volume Issue Month October Years

TOPLUM, EKONOMİ VE YÖNETİM DERGİSİ
JOURNAL OF SOCIETY, ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT

YEREL YÖNETİMLERİN KIRSAL KALKINMA VE TARIMSAL DESTEK FAALİYETLERİ (MANİSA BÜYÜKŞEHİR BELEDİYESİ ÖRNEĞİ)

Öz

Büyükşehir mücavir alanının il sınırı ile eşitlenmesinin getirdiği yerel yönetimlerin kırsala yönelik sorumlulukları ve hizmetleri artmış ve genişlemiştir. Belediyelerin kırsal alanlarda tarımsal verimliliği artırmaya yönelik çalışmaları ile kentten kırsala ürün arzının sürekliliğinin sağlanması ve kırsalda yaşayan yerel halkın geçiminin sağlanması önem arz etmektedir. Bu kapsamda Manisa Büyükşehir Belediyesi, kırsal mahallelerdeki üreticilerin desteklenmesi ve il genelinde kırsal kalkınmanın sağlanması amacıyla birçok çalışma yürütüyor. Bu çalışmada, yerel yönetimin hizmet sınırları içerisinde yaşayan ve geçimini çiftçilikle sağlayan vatandaşları desteklemeye yönelik faaliyetleri ve bu faaliyetler sonucunda görülecek faydalar değerlendirilmektedir. Çalışma, büyükşehir belediyesinin faaliyet raporları ve stratejik planları çerçevesinde ele alınmıştır.

Keywords

Yerel Yönetimler
Kırsal Kalkınma
Tarımsal Destek
Büyükşehir Belediyesi

Article Info

Research Article

Received : 08.09.2023
Accepted : 13.10.2023
Online Published : 29.10.2023
DOI : 10.58702/teyd.1357226

Citation Information: Soylemez, A., Ay, H. M. ve Gunes Ay, N. (2023). Local Governments and Activities for Rural Development and Agricultural Support (Case of Manisa Metropolitan Municipality). Journal of Society, Economics and Management, 4 (Special), 110-120.

Kaynakça Gösterimi: Söylemez, A., Ay, H. M. ve Güneş Ay, N. (2023). Yerel Yönetimlerin Kırsal Kalkınma ve Tarımsal Destek Faaliyetleri (Manisa Büyükşehir Belediyesi Örneği). Toplum, Ekonomi ve Yönetim Dergisi, 4 (Özel), 110-120.

e-ISSN: 2757 - 5489
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INTRODUCTION

'Sustainable Development' is a crucial concept worldwide, aiming for balanced and long-term progress in social, economic, and environmental aspects. This approach seeks to achieve development while considering the needs of both current and future generations. Sustainable development encompasses fundamental elements such as the preservation of natural resources, the maintenance of ecosystem balance, poverty reduction, and the establishment of social justice. One key feature of sustainable development is the sustainable use of natural resources. This requires the careful management of resources like water, energy, forests, and agriculture. Instead of excessive consumption and resource wastage, efficient and effective utilization of these resources is vital for sustainability. Sustainable development also emphasizes the balance between economic growth and environmental and social impacts. Economic growth is undoubtedly important, but it should not lead to resource depletion or environmental degradation. Sustainable economic growth should be combined with poverty reduction and the alleviation of income inequalities. Sustainable development promotes social justice. This includes equal access to education, healthcare services, job opportunities, and other essential services. Moreover, it underscores the need to design policies and projects by considering the needs and priorities of different communities. The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline a global framework for sustainable development. These goals encompass ending poverty, eradicating hunger, ensuring clean water and sanitation, promoting gender equality, encouraging sustainable energy use, and advocating for climate action. In conclusion, sustainable development is an indispensable approach to building a better future worldwide. It encourages the sustainable use of natural resources, a balance between economic growth and environmental and social impacts, social justice, and global cooperation. Sustainable development aims to improve the quality of life for both current and future generations while preserving our planet's resources and ecosystems. Therefore, sustainable development is a goal in which everyone, at both local and global levels, can contribute.

The responsibilities and services of local governments towards rural areas, brought about by the equalization of the metropolitan contiguous area with the provincial border, have increased and expanded. It is crucial to ensure the continuity of the supply of products from the city to the countryside, with the efforts of the municipalities to increase agricultural productivity in rural areas and to ensure the livelihood of local residents living in rural areas. In this context, Manisa Metropolitan Municipality carries out many studies in order to support the producers in rural neighborhoods and to ensure rural development throughout the province. In this study, the activities of the local government to support the citizens living within the service boundaries and making a living from farming and the benefits to be seen as a result of these activities are evaluated. The study is handled within the framework of the activity reports and strategic plans of the metropolitan municipality.

1. Rural Development and Agricultural Support

As its name suggests, sustainable development is a concept linked to economic growth, although it involves a different approach to resource use. Therefore, the policies and strategies put forward by countries within the framework of the concept are absolutely focused on

ensuring continuous and balanced economic development. This is where the characteristics of globalisation come into play. The definition of sustainability has also been introduced into all economic sectors and new marketing strategies have been developed. New strategies such as sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism and sustainable rural development have begun to shape economic policy approaches (Pezikoğlu, 2012: 83).

In the *A New Rural Development Paradigm for the 21st Century* (OECD, 2016), two rural development paradigms were compared in a simple way. According to this study, agriculture was central to the rural development approach and the main objectives were to increase agricultural incomes and competitiveness. In the new approach, all sectors of the rural economy are considered important and the main objectives are to increase the competitiveness of rural areas and the value of local assets and to ensure the use of underutilised resources. In addition, the main actors in rural development policy have changed from central government and farmers to local, regional, central, all levels of government and all local actors. Whereas in the past the instrument of rural development was subsidies, now it is investment. Policymaking involving different sectors in the region, valuing local values and ensuring the participation of all local actors in the intervention process are defined by an integrated, internal and participatory approach respectively.

The main structure of the rural development policies of the European Union is regulated by Council Regulation No. 1698/2005 dated 20 September 2005 on rural development supported by The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). With this regulation, the EU rural development policy for the 2007 and 2013 programming period has three main objectives, and these objectives will be achieved with three main thematic axes. These axes (tarimorman.gov.tr, 2022);

a) Improve the competitiveness of the agriculture and forestry sector,

b) To improve the environment and the countryside,

c) Improving the quality of life in rural areas and promoting the diversification of the rural economy.

People living in rural areas generally earn their living from agricultural production, which is a land-based branch of production. Agricultural production is undertaken to ensure daily food security rather than monetary income. However, due to the primitive and traditional nature of production techniques, the desired level of efficiency is not achieved, thus threatening food security. From the point of view of balanced development, rural areas are the areas where investments should be made in various infrastructures (roads, water, electricity, etc.). In general, the settlements where the urban population lives receive a large share of infrastructure investments, while the regions where the rural population lives may be deprived of these investments. Moreover, the areas where education and health problems are most acute and where the use of resources is not rational are also rural areas. On the other hand, the primary target group of human development is the rural population. More than half of the world's population lives in the rural areas of underdeveloped countries, in an environment where resources are scarcely used, health conditions are inadequate and primitive agricultural activities are carried out. Such an environment brings poverty and misery to the people. As underdeveloped countries realise their development, they must not

neglect the people in rural areas and give special importance to rural development studies. Rural development in its simplest definition. These are the studies that aim to improve the rural environmental conditions that bring negativities to human life (Tolunay and Akyol, 2006: 121). In general, agricultural support, which is provided to steer the agricultural sector in the desired direction, is a government intervention that is used to solve problems that arise in the sector, to ensure the adoption of new technologies and to eliminate production inadequacies, and that is withdrawn when it is no longer needed. The main objective should be to create a competitive industry that is not dependent on support i.e. that can stand on its own feet. Agricultural support is expected to have a positive impact on farmers' incomes and to contribute to solving the structural and cyclical problems of the sector. However, trying to solve all the problems of the agricultural sector with support can lead us astray. It ignores the fact that the economic growth of the last fifteen years has had a greater impact on the improvement and growth of the Turkish agricultural sector than agricultural subsidies and even agricultural policies. Therefore, both the implementers and the opponents should not make an important mistake by completely linking the positive and negative developments in the agricultural sector to agricultural policies and agricultural subsidies. Agricultural subsidies are the most discussed and debated part of the agricultural policies in Turkey as well as in the whole world. Even the term *agricultural policies* is used instead *of agricultural support*. In fact, since agricultural policies include agricultural support, it is not wrong to express them in this way. While agricultural policies include all government savings and interventions related to the sector, supports mostly represent the monetary incentive part of the policy. In addition to direct monetary transfers, supports can also include protectionist benefits and indirect support to farmers, especially through trade policies (cdniys.tarimorman.gov.tr., n.d.).

Agricultural Support policies have 3 main objectives (Ataseven, 2016: 2):

1. Directing the production of agricultural products,
2. Supporting the producer,
3. Maintaining the balances within the country.

With the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, while security and continuity of supply gained importance, the need for the development of sustainable production and consumption models was felt in all segments of society. In addition, global climate change, which is expected to increase its impact over the years, will bring about the formation of more conscious societies and will reinforce the sustainability perceptions and expectations of consumers, which we are observing today. In this process, it is considered essential to create an efficient and highly productive agricultural sector that is environmentally and socially sustainable, based on advanced technology, while increasing its international competitiveness with its production structure that considers the supply-demand balance. In the Farm to Table and Biodiversity Strategies, which include the EU's goals in agriculture, food and biodiversity under the European Green Deal, the goal of a robust and resilient food system that works in all conditions and provides access to an adequate supply of suitable food for citizens is maintained, while avoiding pesticides, antimicrobials and over-fertilization. It is stated that there is an urgent need to reduce dependency, increase organic farming areas, improve animal welfare and reverse biodiversity loss (ticaret.gov.tr, 2021).

The development of sustainable agricultural technologies is important not only for the future of humanity but also for the future of our planet. Agricultural activities are responsible for 18% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, sustainable agricultural policies based on reducing the carbon footprint of agricultural production can also support the fight against the climate crisis. On the other hand, the water density of agricultural activities is quite high. The food and agriculture sector accounts for 69% of total global water use. From this point of view, supporting sustainable agricultural practices for more efficient use of water can prevent the danger of the water crisis from deepening (tskb.com.tr, 2022).

How to achieve this increase in agricultural production and how to make it sustainable in changing climatic conditions is an important question today. However, today, the agricultural sector is undergoing a great transformation with the effect of developing technology, and now the future of the agricultural sector is shaped by technological applications (Karagözoğlu, n.d.: 1).

As concerns about environmental protection, natural resource management and the world's capacity to feed an ever-growing population continue to rise, the sustainability of agriculture and natural resources is emerging as a central theme among the public and policymakers alike. The emphasis placed on this reflects the recognition that the quality of human life and the quality of the environment are inextricably linked. The problems transcend the relevant science. They encompass ideologies and values, ethics and aesthetics, in short, the arena of public opinion and public policy. Issues also cross national borders and involve critical considerations of intergenerational responsibility and equity (National Research Council, 1991: 9).

A deepening awareness of the interdependence of agriculture, the environment and socioeconomic conditions has questioned the sustainability of existing agricultural production systems. In industrialized countries, the environmental impacts of intensified production have led many to seek ways to maintain and increase productivity through better management of the entire agricultural system, including socioeconomic incentives and changes in policy (National Research Council, 1991: viii).

Clearly, the production of technologies adapted to the needs of small farmers must emerge from the integrated study of the natural and socioeconomic conditions that influence farming systems and dominate their responses to alternative technologies. Many conditions affect the crop system or management practice a farmer chooses. Natural conditions (climate, soil, pests, diseases) impose biological constraints on the crop system. On the other hand, many socioeconomic conditions (transport, capital, markets, labor, farm inputs, credit, technical assistance) influence the external environment that conditions the farmers' decision-making process (Altieri, 1995).

Food is our most basic need, the foundation of life. Most of this basic need is provided by agriculture. Agriculture, which provides for the continuation of all life and civilisation, is in an old, deep and great crisis, both in the world and in our country. Because the enormous increase in agricultural production, especially in the last century, in accordance with the demands of the time in which we live, has led the world, which is actually a closed system, into an ecological crisis. The world is a closed system for all kinds of applications. Although

sunlight provides the energy necessary for life, all other resources are finite. Until now, the biggest problem facing human societies has been the inability to balance their various demands with the ability of ecosystems to withstand the pressures resulting from these demands. As agricultural production cannot feed the world population, it will be far from being able to feed the growing population in the future (Yılmaz, 2020: 14-15).

The global and regional changes taking place in the world make it important to optimise the use of resources in the agricultural and food sectors, as well as in all other sectors. In order to meet the safe food needs of the growing population, studies to minimise the negative impacts of global economic, social and natural changes on agriculture and food are increasing. Many models have been tried in practice to ensure environmental protection and efficiency, as well as to stabilise agriculture and food security and economic growth under pressure for water, energy and food. Different factors are effective in achieving success between systems or business models and this situation depends on the applied area, production structure and various economic and sociological factors (Güneş and Karakaş, 2022: 313).

Agro-ecosystems cannot be sustainable in the long term without the knowledge, technical competence and skilled labour to manage them effectively. Given the ever-changing and indigenous nature of agriculture, sustainability requires a diverse and adaptable knowledge base that draws on both formal, empirical science and farmers' own local knowledge. Social institutions that support the training of both farmers and scientists foster innovation and farmer-research partnerships that can improve both agricultural productivity and long-term sustainability (ttgv.org.tr, 2022).

2. Activities on Agricultural Support and Rural Development by Manisa Metropolitan Municipality

One of the two goals of the activity reports published by Manisa Metropolitan Municipality in 2019-2020 and 2021 has been determined as 'Developing Rural Development' in Manisa with Innovative Sustainable Policies, with an Environmentally 'Compatible and Participatory Approach that Observes Ecological Balance'. The first of the objectives of this aim has been determined as 'Creating Irrigation Policies for the Efficient Use of Water in Agriculture and Providing Appropriate Infrastructure for the Establishment and Operation of Agricultural Irrigation Facilities'. As for the performance target, "Water saving and Supporting the Transition to Irrigated Agriculture" has been determined (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Within the scope of achieving these aims and objectives, the open canal irrigation system, which was first located in the Beyce District of Soma District, has deteriorated due to the completion of the economic life of the concrete canals and has become an earth canal in places. With the Drip Irrigation System to be built, it is aimed to prevent water losses and to irrigate more land with the pressurized irrigation system. With the completion of the construction of the facility, 1,159 hectares of agricultural land in the neighborhood with a population of 358 will be irrigated with the modern irrigation system. In this context, steps have been taken to construct irrigation canals and damaged irrigation canals for the same purpose in many districts (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Agricultural filling facilities have been established at various points in order to ensure that the farmers who carry out agricultural spraying activities on the lands used as agricultural land in the province of Manisa can fill the tanks of the spraying machines in the field without searching for a water source. Six new agricultural filling facilities were added to our five neighborhoods, two in the Demirci District Çataloluk neighborhood, one in Akhisar District Çobanhasan neighborhood, one in Ahmetli District Bahçecik neighborhood, and one each in Şehzadeler District Tepecik and Çınarlıkuyu neighborhoods. In addition, the warehouse of the existing agricultural filling facility located in Demirci District Gümele Neighborhood was renewed. Spraying water is provided to farmers free of charge (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Continuing to produce projects for producers in Manisa, which has fertile lands, the Metropolitan Municipality carried out surveys in 54 Neighborhoods to ensure rural development throughout the province. DES (Deep Electric Drilling) and hydrogeological survey studies have been completed within the scope of the establishment of a facility for the supply of groundwater (groundwater) in Kırkağaç Center and Çobanlar Districts. The reports and cost analyses to be prepared in the neighborhoods where the groundwater surveys were evaluated positively by the technical team as a result of the survey studies, and the cost analyses to be prepared in the neighborhoods where sufficient water was measured for two years in the water measurements of the above-ground (YÜS) sources, will be submitted for approval, and the construction of the ones that are decided to be built. Studies will be started for this project (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Another objective of the aim of "Developing Rural Development in Manisa with Innovative Sustainable Policies, Environmentally Compatible and a Participatory Approach that Observes Ecological Balance" was determined as "Developing Livestock with the Purpose of Increasing Efficiency and Quality in Animal Products" (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Since the construction, maintenance and repair works of the animal drinking water ponds (HIS), which provide drinking water to the animals in the dry season in the regions where animal husbandry is intense in rural areas and are very useful and demanded by the citizens, are carried out by metropolitan municipality construction machinery, the construction costs and construction time are very low. It was completed in a short time, and they started to serve in the same year. Construction of 20 new HIS ponds was completed in 2021. Because the existing HIS ponds throughout the province are filled with the materials carried by the rainwater and formed as a result of natural accumulation, both the storage capacity and the quality of the stored water decrease. For this reason, livestock cannot meet their clean water needs. Along with cleaning and meeting the maintenance and repair needs, studies are carried out periodically to ensure that the existing ponds can be used again in a healthy way (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

Continuing its efforts to ensure rural development, Manisa Metropolitan Municipality, in order to contribute to the development of the beekeeping sector and to increase the production of quality honey, S.S. With Manisa Honey Producers Agricultural Development Cooperative, to teach beekeepers how to raise their own queens instead of buying ready queen bees, to contribute to the need for queen bees in the country by establishing commercial queen bee enterprises, to protect and spread the local bee ecotypes of the Aegean Region and to minimize the arrival of diseases and parasites in the region. 'Beekeepers from Manisa Produce

Queen Bees and Royal Jelly Project' was implemented in order to minimize the scope of the project; a total of 40 beekeepers were trained, including 20 trainees on Queen Bee Producer and 20 trainees on Royal Jelly Production. With the Royal Jelly Production training, it was aimed to increase the income of beekeepers with additional bee products by producing royal jelly, and it was decided to continue the training program in various districts of the province for five years. In the training program, 150 Langstroth-type beehives, 500 Queen Bee Breeding Hives (selected from hives where two queens can be produced in the same hive) and 10 Breeding Queens (one year old West Aegean breed) were taken from the Aegean Agricultural Research Institute. The purchased materials were delivered to the Honey Producers Cooperative (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

In order to increase the product quality and yield within the scope of the project to improve the greenhouse cultivation in the province within the scope of the aim of 'Increasing the Agricultural Product Diversity and Productivity throughout the Province according to the Geographical Characteristics of Manisa', the damage caused by the natural disasters in the districts of Kırkağaç, Gördes, Demirci, Köprübaşı and Kula. Maintenance and repair of a total of 11 greenhouses were carried out. Nylon support was provided to 10 producers with Tepe Nylon damage. Documentation and land controls of 153 producers and institutions in the Greenhouse Cultivation Development Project were completed (manisa.bel.tr, 2022).

CONCLUSION

When we evaluate the works of Manisa Metropolitan Municipality for rural development and agricultural support, especially the studies on irrigation come to the fore. The construction of water channels, which were built by the central government but later closed for use, destroyed or still need to be rebuilt, is important for the farmers who carry out activities for irrigated agriculture.

The animal drinking water ponds created for the continuation of animal husbandry and for the farmers who make a living with animal husbandry, on the other hand, have met the need in this regard.

Educational programs come to the fore in beekeeping activities throughout the province. Training on effective and efficient beekeeping methods was provided primarily through training programs for farmers engaged in beekeeping. Then, with the agricultural support, steps were taken to carry out beekeeping activities throughout the province in a farmer-oriented manner within the cooperative.

In terms of commercial agriculture, it is also important to provide support for the processes of obtaining geographical indication and EU product quality registration of local products in line with the goal of obtaining sufficient and sustainable income in regions where the potential for agricultural production resources is generally weak, but such supports could not be implemented due to the global epidemic.

Finally, agricultural support policies should have holistic features that support sustainable agriculture, improve the structure of the agricultural sector, ensure widespread production, protect natural resources and the environment, are pro-poor, transformable, improve the existing ones instead of starting over, are easily managed, easily utilized and

produce versatile solutions. In addition to the impact and effectiveness analyses of the existing support policies, it is very important to make reliable policy analyses before the new support policies are put into practice in order to achieve the goals of the support.

Research and Publication Ethics Statement

The study does not require an ethical committee approval.

Contributions of the Authors

The contribution of A.S. to the article is 40 % the contribution, H.M.A. is 30% and the contribution of N.G.A is 30%.

Conflicts of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest.

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