

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION IN KOSOVO

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Abstract

Protecting the environment is a fundamental challenge for humanity around the world. The living environment is an important value and asset of man for his biological, psychological, intellectual, economic development and is subject to legal regulation, both at international level by means of international laws, but also at national level in respective states. Our society has considerable environmental issues.

This paper uses methodologies commonly used in social sciences. Narrative, observation, and historical method was used to pursue the objectives. This paper was developed to study more thoroughly the ecological awareness related to living environment.

The paper seeks to answer the following questions:

Q1: What is the role and impact of the human factor in raising social awareness on protection of the living environment in Kosovo?

Q2: Does education affect ecological awareness in Kosovo?

Q3: What are the responsibilities of key actors and institutions such as: (MESP), legislature, agencies and self-government bodies, i.e. local government on environmental protection in Kosovo?

Environment protection and care is not merely a social obligation; it is, above all, an individual responsibility, therefore ecological education is paramount in protecting the environment. It makes people aware of their living environment and environmental issues, as well as teach them to prevent issues that destroy the environment.

Keywords: environment, environmental awareness, education, ecological education, society, etc.

Introduction

Our living environment is very important to us, because it is the source of human life. Environment protection and ecological awareness are important for the development of life on our planet. The Dictionary of the Albanian Language defines environment as: "Environment - the totality of natural conditions in which a person or another being lives or develops, where an object is located or evolves, or where a phenomenon occurs, etc. (Dictionary of the Contemporary Albanian Language, 1981, p. 1158).

Protecting the environment is a fundamental challenge for humanity around the world. The living environment is an important value and asset of man for his biological, psychological, intellectual, economic development and is subject to legal regulation, both at international level by means of international laws, but also at national level of respective states.

-Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, Stockholm, June 1972, defines the human environment in the following terms: "*Man is both creature and moulder of his environment, which gives him physical sustenance and affords him the opportunity for intellectual, moral, social and spiritual growth*".

-United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) - The United Nations Environment Program is a program that coordinates organization's environmental activities and assists developing countries in implementing sound environmental policies and practices, and provides technical assistance for a range of international conventions, including the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (1987), the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal (1989), and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (1992).

- **Global Environment Facility (GEF)** - The facility was established on the eve of the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 to help solve the most pressing environmental problems of our planet. The GEF brings together 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector to address global environmental issues by supporting national sustainable development initiatives. Humanity is facing many challenges, one of which is the environment protection awareness. The most important human endeavor is the conscious effort to avoid causing disaster to our living environment; in fact, our inner balance depends on it.

Environmental awareness

Awareness and commitment of human forces to improve the state of the environment is among the most important issues of our lives on this planet. Our society has considerable environmental issues. Environmental protection should be practiced at the individual level, but also at organizations and government level, for the benefit of the natural environment and human beings. Society might do better if our human organizations were less rigid and more flexible and interactive as in nature's. (Odum, 1998, p. 23).

As human rights related to the environment are receiving a great deal of attention in the world, we remain waiting for a "magic wand" that will fix all our problems. We seem oblivious to the fact that it is our basic right to have fresh air, to drink clean water, and to eat safe food. (Murati, <https://sbunker.net / e-right-for-a-healthy-and-safe-environment />, January 30, 2018, 11:30). Ecological awareness consists of knowing, behaving and exhibiting views about the environment that surrounds us, therefore must be wary of the environmental destruction and preserve the basis of nature such as: land, water and air. Human society must be required to use every opportunity to protect our environment and nature. The protection of the living environment begins with each individual, as every day we hear and see how our environment is destroyed: how forests are cut down and burned, water is polluted, landfills opened at every corner, climate changing, and our ozone depleted, etc.

Protecting the environment from pollution is already an obligation that countries must implement to protect their citizens. It is the international organizations, which are supporting many countries in the region on issues of environment protection, as well as the responsible local bodies that are being supported through funding by European Union projects. On the other hand, it is precisely these organizations that will make assessments on how far these countries have managed to meet the environment protection standards and facilitate raising environmental awareness, through awareness campaigns and initiatives for cleaning habitable spaces. This is best evidenced by the campaign through social networks to unite against a major cause, such as the case of Greta Thunberg, a 16-year-old activist who uses the social network Twitter. She attended the UN, where during her emotional speech she called on world leaders to take more action on climate, and many other useful activities like this to protect the environment.

The importance of ecological education

It is known that man is part of nature and that he should love, preserve, be ashamed to destroy nature, because nature can live without man, but man cannot live without nature.

The environment is the bedrock of man's life activity and without it, he could not exist. Environment care and protection is not only a social obligation, but it is, above all, an individual responsibility. Environmental education is of great importance for environment protection because it makes people aware that they care about their environment and about environmental issues, but also helps him become aware and recognize environmental issues and ways to prevent their devastating impact on the environment.

Dr. Kiril Temkov in ETHICS FOR GRADE VI book where, among other, things the book educates children about the value and importance of nature, such as: In addition to health, care for nature and the environment is also important for humanity. Environmental science is called ecology, while ECOLOGICAL ETHICS

teaches people to care for nature, as well as to have a good living environment. Due to overcrowding and technological evolution, nature and the environment are damaged; there are fewer trees, water is more polluted, the air quality is worse, people generate more waste and find it difficult to cope with the dirt, the climate is changing, with very dire consequences. Chemicals cause disease and many other health problems. Nuclear weapons are very dangerous. Wise people are concerned about such dangers and suggest that people show restraint, act seriously, and care for nature. It is the basic idea of today's and tomorrow's morality. (Temkov, 2010, p. 34). This ecological ethics is very meritorious, if the children are actually taught to care about the environment since their early age.

Ecological and environmental education provides many definitions, such as: Ecological education is the acquisition of contemporary knowledge, skills, sciences and attitudes on ecological features, processes and laws on the environment, knowledge on human actions / impact on the environment in various forms and dimensions; understanding the goals and opportunities of science, technology, social sciences and arts for complete protection and enrichment of the environment; formation of good habits of students for maintaining personal hygiene and aesthetic regulation of school environments, as well as the formation of habits for a right attitude towards objects in nature, or for cultural values in general.

Environmental education is a learning process that fosters people's knowledge and awareness on the environment, associated challenges, and develops skills and experiences needed for change and for forming attitudes, motivations and commitments to be informed and to take responsible action. Ecological consciousness or morality which reflects commitment and responsibility for the environment, including plants and animals, as well as current and future generations of people. It is oriented towards human societies that live in harmony with the nature, their survival and well-being are dependent upon. Or, the search for moral values and principles in man's relationship with the natural world. (Potera, 2002, p. 22).

The necessity of law enforcement on environmental protection in current society

Each individual or institution is responsible for environment protection, however, most competent are defined by the laws of the executive institutions of central and local government, as well as government agencies for environmental protection. "The environment, according to contemporary dictionaries, represents the totality of external physical and biological conditions in which living organisms live (Veselaj & Mustafa, 2007, p. 10)

We have different definitions that portray different approaches, however, they are quite similar in terms of defining environment. In addition to executive bodies, such as Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) and environment protection agencies, laws are also issued in Kosovo in order to ensure environment protection and establish environmental standards in harmony with European Union standards and in accordance with the Constitution Republic of Kosovo, . The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo has adopted 10 special laws on environmental protection. According to a report: "Environmental risk in Kosovo is the result of uncontrolled construction of large areas, inadequate urban planning and industrial urban areas, old and obsolete industrial technology, increased number of vehicles, lack of wastewater treatment, waste accumulation, as well as uncontrolled deforestation." (www.mmph-gov.net, Annual Report 2005/2006).

There are also authors who have given very short but very generic definitions. The following is an excerpt of such definition: It is a conclusion of world experts that the best way to solve problems related to the state of the environment is to create adequate instruments, set out policies, laws and establish institutions for addressing them at global, national and local level (Kadriu, 2018, p. 7). In order to have a clean and sustainable environment, it is the responsibility of the competent authorities to implement laws that regulate the protection of specific areas of the environment, to invest in protection and addressing environmental issues and to cooperate with all structures and organizations, non-governmental organizations to prepare and raise awareness on dangers posed by pollution and the destruction of the living environment. In this respect, the awareness campaigns on environment protection play a role, as they have and will continue to have an impact on raising the awareness of citizens on environment protection.

The environment is a shared issue of both rich and poor countries, both developed and developing, because environment protection is closely linked to the human factor. Another challenge is the rational and sustainable use of natural resources, shifting towards existing available resources and towards renewable resources. Another challenge is to avoid all detrimental actions, converting them instead to economic activities that have the least impact on the environment.

According to 2005/2006 Report of the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning, it is stated that: "Environmental risk in Kosovo is the result of uncontrolled construction of large areas, inadequate urban planning and industrial urban areas, old and obsolete industrial technology, increased number of vehicles, lack of wastewater treatment, waste accumulation, as well as uncontrolled deforestation."

When talking about the challenges of environmental protection, we must also take into account some factors that may bring about improvement, regeneration or even preservation of the environment itself in its natural state. Areas for the use of natural resources, and activities in those areas, should not endanger the environment beyond the prescribed norms, while construction of building should be done based on specific plans, following assessment of the impact of such plans on the environment. It is also necessary to plan waste disposal facilities, which must be in line with European standards, so as not to cause ecological pollution during their activities.

The impact of education on social awareness for environmental protection

The right to awareness and environmental education is also prescribed by the Aarhus Convention on 25.06.1998 in Aarhus, Denmark. This Convention concerns the "right of the public to information, to participate in decision-making and to the right to seek court redress in matters relating to the environment." The Aarhus Convention includes:

- Acceptance of the right to information, participation and the ability to go to court, based on the right to an environment conducive to health.
- A broad definition of responsible public authorities, including all central and local government bodies, as well as the private sectors actors.
- A broad definition of environmental information, including environmental health information.
- Ensuring the public's right to participate in environmental decision-making, including the drafting of environmental policies and legislation,
- Supporting the right to information and to participate in decision-making, with recourse to judicial redress.
- Involvement of the European Union institutions within the purpose of the Convention and the need to promote the implementation of the principles of the Convention in international bodies on environmental issues.

Man has always had an impact on the living environment, whether good or bad. Man, consciously or unconsciously, exploiting these environmental goods destroys it: throwing waste in open spaces, polluting the air with various harmful gases, polluting water in various ways, destroying forests, etc. Through his actions, man has caused major imbalance to virtually all environment elements, even though he knows very well that nature can live without man but man cannot live without nature. Therefore, the creation of morality and consciousness should be deemed necessary, to ensure that parallel with the rise of human material power, man also develops his moral abilities and his relationship with nature in a way that will not create hostility, exploitation, but above all, cause no major consequences (Kadriu, 2012: 119).

Conclusions

Our environment today is overloaded with many different pollutants, such as: they affect human health, sometimes leaving behind major consequences, although on the other side, the man himself has significantly contributed to the deterioration of this otherwise difficult situation through the use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and other poisons, as well as through various activities he undertakes for his own personal or collective needs. To prevent this, educational education and awareness are essential to help future generations live in a clean environment.

It is necessary to establish better cooperation between central and local bodies in the future, so that relevant laws on environmental protection are implemented fully and achieve environment protection standards. Building competent and capable institutions, equipped with tools for the implementation of environmental policies, such as decision-making, monitoring and supervisory and inspection institutions, are priorities for maintaining a safe and sound environment.

Social media, press and television also play an important role, by creating a greater space for educational programs. The main task of our current society should be to protect the environment. In order to have an environment in which a person lives a peaceful, ecologically ethical life, we must ensure its protection, in cooperation with state institutions, environmental organizations. Electronic media, televisions must work in the educational and moral process, so as to raise awareness and education of younger generations on environmental issues. The campaigns carried out through TV commercials, social networks, manufacturers' notice about the degrading effect that various products have on the environment, the living environment must be clean and protected from degradation that can come from the human factor.

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