

The Importance Of Integrating Environmental Education Into School Curricula

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Abstract:

The study aimed to show the role played by the process of including environmental education within the curriculum, by integrating the concepts of the environment and the mechanisms of preserving it in the educational process and providing young people with knowledge, skills and values of individual and collective responsibility towards solving environmental problems, so spreading environmental awareness in schools through the curriculum will create a generation capable of caring for the environment and protecting it from dangers.

Keywords: Environment - Environmental Education - Curriculum.

Introduction:

This impact varies according to his culture, values, standards and patterns of behavior, as man has a major role in maintaining the ecological balance as he is the asset capable of interacting with the environment, either to live in it while protecting it or leaving and neglecting it, and thus attacking and destroying it. Environmental problems have abounded and gone beyond universality to universality, covering all aspects of life such as pollution of water, soil, plants and air, and there is no doubt that irresponsible human actions are behind this.

The environmental problems created by man have contributed to the creation of environmental awareness that can only be achieved through environmental education in the daily behavior of humans, and many studies and research have confirmed the urgent need to modify human behavior towards the environment through environmental education, which the school is responsible for preparing and directing it, along with the home and civil society institutions, the school through its educational curriculum formed a space that should be adopted to deliver environmental concepts and promote their application in a way that contributes to addressing environmental issues and problems.

The curriculum is one of the most important channels of modernization, which is a subsystem of the educational system in which the educational goals that involve the desired value system are determined, to build the personalities of individuals, and the curriculum is a frame of reference whose content includes social knowledge, natural and human phenomena, trends, values and skills, including the ability to solve contemporary environmental problems such as environmental pollution, social corruption and others ⁽¹⁾.

The needs of environmental education in school curricula represent the educators' sense of the need for the curriculum to be linked to the needs of the individual and society, and to benefit from the changes inflicted on the environment, and for the best use of its resources, and to provide the learner with appropriate environmental concepts and skills.

Within this context, the paper asks the following questions:

- What is environmental education?
- What are their characteristics?
- What are its aspects and objectives?
- How does the inclusion of environmental education in educational curricula contribute to the protection and preservation of the environment?

Definition of environmental education:

1- Environment:

Environment is defined in Arabic as derived from the root bo, from which the past tense b is taken, and it means: the state of stability and equilibrium, or the place, surroundings or house in which the organism lives ⁽²⁾.

Allah Almighty said in His Holy Book: "We also enabled Joseph in the land to occupy it wherever he pleases, a share in our mercy of whomever we want, and we do not waste the reward of the benefactors."⁽³⁾

Idiomatically: The dictionary of social sciences referred to the concept of the environment as: everything that provokes and affects human behavior. ⁽⁴⁾

In the sense that the environment is the vital framework in which man lives and is affected by his conditions, and this is reflected in his health and social conditions.

The environment is also defined as the medium or spatial area in which man lives, including natural and human phenomena that are affected and affected by them ⁽⁵⁾.

It is also defined as the framework in which a person lives, obtains the necessities of his life, and practices his relations with his fellow human beings, which is the medium or spatial field that affects and is affected by man in a variety of ways and methods ⁽⁶⁾.

The Declaration of a Conference on the Environment of Mankind, held in Stockholm in 1972, summarized the concept of environment as: everything that surrounds man ⁽⁷⁾.

2- Environmental Education:

Various regional and international conferences have been interested in trying to find solutions to environmental problems and how to deal with them, and among what was proposed was the introduction of environmental education in the school curriculum, which requires the inclusion of environmental concepts in books that have value dimensions and teaching them to the student in order to improve his behavior in dealing with the environment.

Environmental education has two aspects, a systematic aspect, which is education directed to pupils and students in the stages of education, and the second aspect is related to non-formal environmental education, which is directed to the general public, and takes several means and places, and is more comprehensive than formal environmental education, so it is a continuous and lifelong process, from human birth to death.

Definition of environmental education in light of local trends:

Environmental education is defined as an educational program aimed at clarifying the human relationship and interaction with his natural environment and its resources to achieve the acquisition of various experiences by students ⁽⁸⁾.

Or it is education, education and awareness in order to know the right way in which a person should deal with the environment around him ⁽⁹⁾.

It is also defined as: the process of forming values, attitudes and perceptions necessary for the learner in order to understand and appreciate the complex relationships that bind man and his civilization to his biosphere ⁽¹⁰⁾.

• Definition of environmental education in light of global trends:

Defined by the Northern Uni University (NU) in 1970: as a type of education that aims to know values, clarify concepts, and develop the skills necessary to understand and appreciate the relationships between man, his culture and his environment.

The definition adopted by the Belgrade Symposium in 1975: it is a type of education that aims to form a generation that is aware and interested in the environment and the problems associated with it ⁽¹¹⁾.

There is a definition presented by the participants in the meeting of the United Nations Programme in Paris in 1978, as an educational process that aims to develop citizens' awareness of the environment and related problems and provide them with knowledge, skills and various attitudes ⁽¹²⁾.

The Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization also defined it as: the process of forming the values and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the relationships formed by man, and working to preserve the diverse sources of the environment with the need to make good use of them in order to maintain a decent life and raise living standards ⁽¹³⁾.

Based on the above, it can be said that environmental education is the process of forming positive attitudes and behaviors towards the environment, which is based on cognitive foundations aimed at achieving individual and collective participation in order to alleviate environmental problems, or find solutions to them with a desire to achieve a lifestyle that achieves human well-being.

3- Characteristics of environmental education:

Through the above definitions of environmental education, the characteristics are as follows: ⁽¹⁴⁾

1. The concept of environmental education includes the field of knowledge and perception, the field of acquiring skills and practices, and the field of acquiring values and attitudes.
2. Environmental education must lead to a certain environmental behavior that pushes humans to work to solve environmental problems and to prevent new environmental problems.
3. Environmental education must emphasize the relationships and interactions between the different elements of the environment.
4. The need to deal with the environment in environmental education programs on the grounds that the environment is a system and that the impact on one of the elements in the ecosystem will be transmitted to the rest of the other elements and affect it.
5. Environmental education emphasizes individual and collective efforts to shape and preserve the environment.
6. Environmental education is no longer directed only towards avoiding environmental problems, but also towards working to improve this environment and prevent new problems.
7. It is necessary to keep pace with the changes facing the environment, control and direct them for the benefit of both the environment and man.
8. Environmental education is a lifelong process involving all sectors of the population regardless of their age and status.
9. Environmental education usually tends to solve specific problems of the human environment by helping people become aware of these problems.

It is clear to us that perhaps the most important feature of this education is that it is a basic process that tends to solve the problems faced by the environment, as its main goal is to help people realize these problems in order to form environmental awareness among individuals.

4- Objectives of environmental education:

While there are many definitions of environmental education, their objectives have also multiplied, and each definition reflects certain goals that differ according to different societies in terms of their reality, and the problems they suffer, and the goals of environmental education have been determined through many local and international seminars and conferences, so we find the Belgrade Charter summarizing the objectives of environmental education as follows: ⁽¹⁵⁾

1. **Awareness:** Helping individuals and groups gain awareness and sensitivity to the overall environment and associated problems.
2. **Knowledge:** Helping individuals to gain a basic understanding of the environment, its problems and the role of man in solving them.
3. **Behavior and attitudes:** Helping individuals and groups acquire social values, a strong sense of belonging to the environment, and motivation to participate effectively in protecting and improving it.
4. **Skills:** Helping individuals and groups acquire skills to solve environmental problems.
5. **Evaluation capacity:** Assisting individuals and groups to evaluate environmental standards and programs in light of environmental, political, social, economic, aesthetic and educational factors.
6. **Engagement:** Helping individuals and groups develop a sense of motivational responsibility in relation to environmental problems to ensure appropriate action to solve them.

5- Principles of Environmental Education:

The Tbilisi Conference held in the capital of Georgia in the former Soviet Union in 1977 by proclaiming the basic principles of environmental education: the study of the environment in all its natural, technological, economic, political, cultural, historical, ethical and aesthetic aspects.

- Environmental education should be a lifelong process within and outside the formal education system.
- Environmental education is not limited to one branch of science, but takes advantage of the content of each science to form a balanced comprehensive view.
- Emphasizing the importance of local, regional and international cooperation in avoiding and solving problems.
- It helps to discover environmental problems and real causes, and emphasizes careful thinking and skill in solving complex environmental problems.
- Reduce the supremacy of independent programmes in the field of the environment, as this can be counterproductive, especially if the nature of guidance and maturity prevails.
- Bridging the gap between scientific research and curricula in order to increase the effectiveness of environmental education.
- Creating scientific trends through practices and actual application of concepts, acquisitions and values that the student learns theoretically ⁽¹⁶⁾.

6- Fields of environmental education and their importance:

Environmental education as the process of preparing man for successful interaction with his environment, including various resources..

It seeks to provide an opportunity for everyone in society to acquire knowledge, values and basic skills to protect and improve the environment, as well as to provide the child with a broad understanding of the environment (both natural and social), in addition to helping individuals and groups to acquire sensitivity to the overall environment and its problems ⁽¹⁷⁾.

There is no doubt that environmental education deals with certain aspects, which differ in their identification by educational researchers and others (ecologists), as "Hussein Abdel Hamid Ahmed Rashwan" believes that the essence of education revolves around the elements and components of the environment, namely the biosphere, the technical environment, and the social environment ⁽¹⁸⁾.

Which can be illustrated as follows:

A - Biosphere: It includes biosphere sciences, which in turn include climate sciences, life sciences, education sciences, and geological sciences.... Etc.

B - Technical environment: and technical ocean sciences include construction, building or engineering sciences.... Etc. .

C -The social environment: The sciences of the social environment include sciences that deal with political, economic, social, cultural, ethical, religious and other aspects.

Another division of the environment can be added from the point of view of social scientists, where the environment is divided into:

A - Geographical environment: It is the one in which man lives and consists of the seasons of the year, wind, atmosphere and soil... Its impact on humans is secondary but inseparable from the environment.

B- Social environment: It means the social structure, its systems and the prevailing social relations between the population living in the geographical environment, including customs, traditions, rituals and customs^{....(19)}.

In this context, the importance of environmental education in the face of the dangers that result mainly from the wrong practices of man towards the environment emerges and becomes clear, (environmental education) derives its importance from being an important input to rationalize human behavior towards the environment and its resources, and therefore it is no longer a luxury or a formality, and for this reason developed and developing countries are interested in it alike, realizing that the real role will only be achieved by man who understands the problems of his environment and contributes to solving them for himself and for generations. Many following.

7- Inclusion of environmental education in educational curricula:

• Definition of educational curricula:

Curriculum language: the origin of the word latin the curriculum means a curriculum the clear way, and it is said: follow the man in the sense of a wire ⁽²⁰⁾.

The holy qur'an says: "for each of you we have made a law and a method" ⁽²¹⁾

Idiomatically: The educational curriculum is defined as all the experiences, activities and planned practices provided by the school to help students achieve the desired educational outcomes to the best of their abilities.

It is also defined as: an educational plan that includes elements consisting of objectives, content, learning experiences, teaching and evaluation, derived from philosophical, social, psychological and cognitive foundations, linked to the learner and his society and applied in educational learning situations, intended to contribute to achieving the integrated growth of the learner's personality with its mental, emotional and physical aspects ⁽²²⁾.

Saadeh also defines it: as a composite of a set of elements that are linked to each other, functionally and integrated, and Tyler identified it in four elements: goals, content, teaching and evaluation ⁽²³⁾.

It is defined as a set of experiences and activities that the school prepares for its students with the intention of helping them to develop comprehensively and modify their behavior according to its educational goals ⁽²⁴⁾.

Educational scholars confirm that direct education through direct targeted experiences is the best education, and it leads to lasting results, and since education ultimately aims to prepare the individual to interact and adapt to his local environment and society and contribute to solving their problems, and work to advance progress in them, and take the curriculum as a means to reach this end... The role that the curriculum must play is summarized in two main points, the first of which is to provide students with a common amount of knowledge, skills and methods of thinking, and to provide them with attitudes, values, patterns of behavior that each individual needs as a minimum to ensure that he interacts successfully and adapts to society. In addition to the curriculum, students are helped to learn about and study their environment through various means, such as visits, scientific trips, study camps, ⁽²⁵⁾.

The environmental approach was associated in its beginnings with science curricula because they are the most appropriate curricula in terms of their nature and topics for this approach, where the content of these many curricula can be included in environmental concepts and problems ⁽²⁶⁾.

Accordingly, the environmental approach can be adopted in the curricula for all stages of formal education through several methods, among these methods and methods, including:

- 1. Entrance to study units:** This entrance addresses environmental issues as a unit, and this unit may be based on the subject, where the curricula are concerned with preparing units in different subjects, and these units may be based on the principle of experience, where the unit in a specific period of time in all its social, economic and natural dimensions, and this entrance shows the principle of integration of experience and the inclusion of knowledge towards the environment, which are two of the main goals that it seeks to achieve.

Therefore, when adopting this approach in the educational curricula, several environmental dimensions should be emphasized: the ethical dimension of the environment, the aesthetic dimension of the environment, and the health dimension of the environment.

In general, the construction of educational curricula in the light of the environmental approach should not be carried out in isolation from the objectives of environmental education, which are: awareness, knowledge, attitudes, values, skills and participation ⁽²⁷⁾.

- 2. Integrative approach:** This approach is concerned with including certain environmental topics in some appropriate educational curricula, or that educational curricula are included in environmental concepts, so that it includes the environmental dimension in school materials by entering environmental information or linking the content to its issues, and this depends on the efforts of teachers and educational supervisors in the method of education and guidance.

3. Independent approach: It is represented in integrated study programs for environmental education as an independent curriculum, and this entrance is suitable for the pre-school and primary education stages⁽²⁸⁾.

Based on these entrances, we understand that for the entrance to the study units, the content of the educational curricula must achieve the objectives of environmental education by supporting them with appropriate environmental experiences that include environmental knowledge from information and concepts that the student learns from the educational curricula, while the integration approach focuses on the efforts of teachers and educational supervisors in their presentation of environmental concepts that must be taught to the learner in order to understand and absorb them, and finally the independent entrance, in which we do not see a completely independent material dedicated to the environment alone, but there are axes or What are known as units and are taught in sections.

8 - scientific methods for teaching environmental education in schools:

There is no doubt that the process of including environmental education within the school curricula is not an easy profession, because it is not limited to the process of providing young people with environmental education in a direct academic cognitive manner, but must go beyond cognitive goals to reach knowledge, emotions and skills that the student integrates in the behavior of practice and guidance, and I am sure that this integration will only be embodied through educational methods confirmed by the World Environmental Protection Organization, and has been explained by Rateb Al-Saud as follows:⁽²⁹⁾.

- 1. Methods of direct experience:** Through direct interaction of students with the environment, it provides a tangible physical basis for learning environmental concepts, and it is known that the more senses used by the learner, the faster his learning is, and direct experience can include sites in the natural environment.
- 2. Methods of action research:** Assigning students to conduct practical research on environmental issues, making them active participants in collecting, classifying, organizing, analyzing and extracting the necessary recommendations in the light of their analysis, and then coming up with laws or general provisions, and it also enhances educational opportunities through collaborative teamwork, and appreciating the value of efforts made to preserve the environment.
- 3. Methods of role-playing:** The role-playing strategy can be used to find solutions to environmental problems, and these strategies are summarized in testing a specific environmental problem, and then selecting groups of students that represent the intersecting interests of this problem, distributing roles among them, representing these roles, and then evaluating performance, and determining the effects of the results.

The philosophy of perhaps the roles emerges from the fact that the problems are of a complex and intertwined nature, in which the interests of individuals conflict with each other on the one hand, and the interests of individuals from the interests of society on the other hand, the problem of permissible awareness, for example, in which the interests of livestock owners conflict with the interests of society represented in government policy, and with the interests of consumers⁽³⁰⁾.

- 4. Methods of studying environmental issues:** It is closely related to the methods of conducting research, as it contributes to helping students understand the elements of the issue, the reasons for its emergence and the conservative methods to be taken, taking into account the important issues related to students' daily lives, and what the media publishes continuously, and adopting the discussion method because it helps the learner to understand himself and make a positive change in his behavior by thinking and respecting others.
- 5. Methods of solving problems:** Providing students with the ability to make conscious and responsible decisions about the environment is one of the goals of environmental education, which requires achieving the participation of these students in discussing environmental problems and proposing alternatives and solutions to them, that are realistic and appropriate to their abilities and interests through open and directed group discussions, role-playing, games, simulation, and carrying out realistic projects.
- 6. Methods of participation in environmental activities:** Participation in environmental activities is one of the best means to achieve the goals of environmental education, as it helps students to acquire information functionally about the activity they do, and learn manual skills through the use of devices and materials, and it also develops scientific thinking skills such as accurate observation, measurement, data collection,

discrimination, organization and classification, in addition to acquiring desirable attitudes, habits and values such as careful drawing conclusions and estimating the balance Nature and respect for it, and appreciation of the efforts made by official and civil institutions in the service of the environment.

Among the activities that students can participate in are many and varied, such as participating in cleaning campaigns inside cities and on beaches, planting trees, caring for them and bombing their fruits, participating in competitions on certain environmental topics such as writing reports or preparing an environmental album that includes pictures of positive and negative practices against the environment, and students also contribute to the formation of committees or associations of friends of the environment to contact the local community for environmental awareness ⁽³¹⁾.

7. The role of stories in the formation and development of environmental awareness:

Stories and tales of various kinds, realistic, fictional, popular, and composed by humans, animals, plants or others provided to the child provide information about the environment and its problems and the consequent structural applications that develop children's skills in preserving and maintaining the environment, and stories and tales are of great importance in the childhood years, as they work to enrich environmental concepts among children and form a sense of belonging to the environment and the importance of Respect for the environment and the development of attitudes and habits related to health, food, order and cleanliness of the environment, as well as linking stories and tales to the environment of the child in which he lives helps to twin the young individual aware of his responsibility with others towards preserving and developing it.

8-The use of field visits and educational trips:

It is one of the important ways to achieve environmental education, as it gives the learner the opportunity to interact and interact directly with the environment, increasing his understanding of it, and also allows him to regularly observe the elements of the environment and the mutual influence between them and individuals, helping them to form a comprehensive perception of environmental problems, after which analysis, extrapolation and drawing conclusions contribute to solving problems ⁽³²⁾.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt that addressing environmental problems in our world today requires a new pattern, whether in education or research and study, in line with the requirements of discrimination in society and in life in all its aspects, preserving the environment is an individual responsibility before it is the responsibility of environmental legislation and laws, and to preserve the environment, environmental education must be included in the curricula in a thoughtful and effective manner, capable of forming conscious and positive behavioral patterns for the student towards the environment.

The school is the strongest link in environmental education based on its role in promoting values and forming attitudes and patterns of sound environmental behavior among students, which enables them to deal well with the environment, as they are affected by the activities and practices that take place inside and outside the school.

Environmental problems and their consequences do not depart from being a crisis of values made by man by his actions and practice towards the environment, and any treatment of these problems will only come through the educational system and with the most scrutinized educational programs that include social and scientific values and knowledge that have the ability to create sound environmental awareness that improves the human being by dealing with the environment in which he lives, and therefore the process of including environmental concepts and values in the curricula and using environmental topics as a base for the scientific level or presenting environmental issues In the content of the curricula, and presenting them in a way that helps modify the behavior of individuals and achieve environmental protection is inevitable and the main concern of many countries and conferences.

Educational curricula must be developed and included Environmental education that directs human relations with the environment and organizes them in a way that ensures the presence of individuals aware of the desired environmental values, trends and behaviors, to protect the environment is primarily an individual

responsibility and the individual will not be able to assume his responsibilities if he is no longer properly prepared through integrated curricula that introduce him to his environment and its problems, and develop his abilities to solve these problems or at least mitigate them, the essence of environmental education is to prepare the human being. Those who are in harmony with their environment, are keen to protect them, improve the investment of their resources, and this will only be possible by including the environmental dimension in the school curricula in a thoughtful and conscious manner that takes into account all global changes in an economic or political environment.

Study recommendations:

On this basis, the study proposes a number of recommendations and suggestions to activate environmental education, which are as follows:

- The necessity of developing curricula and including environmental education that directs human relations with the environment and organizes them in a way that ensures the presence of individuals who are aware of the desired environmental values, trends, and behaviors.
- Awareness and awareness that protecting the environment is primarily an individual and moral responsibility, and the individual will not be able to bear his responsibilities if he is not properly prepared through integrated curricula that introduce him to his environment and the problems it suffers from and develop his ability to solve these problems or at least mitigate them. Its intensity.
- Focus on providing students with national and international laws and legislation related to the environment by teaching them and including them in books so that they can understand the magnitude of the risks that have prompted the existence of laws and regulations to deal with the environment.
 - Focusing books and curricula on environmental concepts that help reduce environmental pollution, such as the importance of recycling waste to reduce pollution, rationalizing the consumption of water, wood and natural resources, while encouraging the use of renewable energies as a resource that protects the environment.
 - Involving many specialists in different scientific fields, such as environmental and earth sciences, psychology, and sociology, when including environmental content in educational curricula in order to plan and enrich those contents to bring students' awareness and interest in the environment and the correct behaviors to protect it.

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