PROTECTING NATURE IS NOT A TREND — IT IS A DUTY!

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Abstract. The negative impact of human activities on nature, the disruption of ecological balance, and the depletion of natural resources are discussed. The pedagogical foundations of forming a conscious attitude towards nature, developing ecological culture, and protecting nature in the younger generation are also analyzed. The article focuses on the development of students' ideas about nature in the process of environmental education and the formation of a sense of responsibility for preserving nature.

Keywords: Mother Nature, ecology, ecological culture, ecological consciousness, nature conservation, ecological balance, climate change, ecological education.

Nature is an inseparable part of human life and the primary source of all living things. The lives of all living beings on Earth are inextricably linked to water, air, light, and nourishment. For this reason, preserving nature and making rational use of its riches is one of the most important responsibilities facing humanity. Today, the ecological balance is being seriously disrupted as a result of human activity. Problems such as air pollution, the depletion of water resources, the decline of soil fertility, and the shrinkage of forests are emerging as consequences of industrial development, population growth, and the excessive exploitation of natural resources. These processes are having a negative impact not only on nature but also on human health [1].

For this reason, educating the younger generation with a sense of love and responsibility toward nature is of great importance in addressing ecological problems today. By shaping students' understanding of nature and developing ecological culture, it is possible to raise individuals who will approach the preservation of nature with responsibility in the future.

The relationship between nature and human beings. Nature and human beings are inseparably connected. Humans obtain water, food, energy, and other essential resources from nature. At the same time, nature constitutes the living environment for humanity. If the ecological balance in nature is disrupted, this situation has a negative impact on human life as well. According to scientists, life on Earth has been forming for millions of years. First, aquatic plants appeared; later, the plant and animal kingdoms developed on land. However, over the past hundred years, the pressure exerted on nature as a result of human activity has been increasing sharply. As a result, numerous plant and animal species are now under threat of extinction [2].

Protecting nature is not merely an ecological issue but a social and spiritual one as well. Because nature is an inseparable part of human life, and its cleanliness and purity are of vital importance for human health.

Developing students' understanding of nature. Today, developing students' understanding of nature is one of the important pedagogical tasks in the system of ecological education and upbringing. This process is accomplished by explaining the significance of nature to students and by shaping ecological consciousness and ecological culture in them.

Various pedagogical methods can be used in the educational process to form a conscious attitude toward nature in students. Direct observation of nature plays an important role in consolidating students' knowledge about the natural world. For example, by observing processes such as the growth

of trees, the changing of seasons, and the development of plants, students begin to better understand the changes occurring in nature.

Practical activity is of great importance in the process of ecological education. Activities such as planting trees, caring for flowers, and beautifying the school grounds shape in students a sense of love and responsibility toward nature [3].

Ecological conversations and discussions. Conducting conversations about ecological problems during lessons develops students' ecological thinking. For example, organizing discussions about problems such as air pollution, the depletion of water resources, or climate change helps students form an understanding of the necessity of preserving nature.

Interdisciplinary integration. Connections between various subjects play an important role in shaping knowledge about nature. For example, studying texts about nature in language lessons, depicting nature scenes in fine arts lessons, and studying ecological processes in geography and biology lessons help students develop a holistic understanding of the natural world.

Developing ecological culture. Ecological culture is a set of values directed at humans' careful attitude toward nature, rational use of natural resources, and protection of the environment. Today, the development of ecological culture is one of the most important issues on a global scale. Every year on the 22nd of April, International Earth Day is celebrated. Through this date, the idea of preserving nature is widely promoted [4].

In the Republic of Uzbekistan as well, a number of measures are being implemented to protect the environment and develop ecological culture. In our country, special attention is being paid to expanding green areas, planting trees, and developing ecological education. Moreover, the cooperation of the school, family, and society is of great importance in resolving ecological problems. Parents must instill in their children habits such as preserving nature, saving water, and disposing of waste properly.

Life began with water and evolved from it. According to scientists, 500 million years ago there were only aquatic plants. 400 million years ago, plants began to appear on land as well. For the past 135 million years, flowering plants and trees have been developing.

On Earth today there are several million species of living organisms, which can be divided into two groups: the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. Not a single one of these organisms can survive without water, light, or nourishment. If the substances these living organisms absorb and assimilate for nourishment fall below the required level, they face the risk of extinction. Up to this point, hundreds of thousands of diverse representatives of the plant and animal kingdoms have lived on Earth and then disappeared entirely. Of course, the main causes of these extinctions were natural processes, climate change, and disasters.

However, over the last 100 years, the ecological situation has been deteriorating at a sharp rate as a result of the rapid development of science, technology, and industry, combined with a lack of attention. Ultimately, it is human activity alone that is responsible for the extinction of many representatives of the plant and animal kingdoms and the consequent rapid approach of life on Earth toward catastrophe. The Earth itself is a living organism. It too feels, loves, values, and, when necessary, punishes. God Almighty gave it to us as a dwelling place for living.

He arranged everything on this earth so that life could continue — with neither deficiency nor excess. This condition can be compared to our own body and organism. A human being cannot live far from the surface of the Earth, because their home and place is the Earth. There are atmospheric layers surrounding the Earth, and it has its own protective ozone layer. I compare this layer to the membrane that envelops a child in the mother's womb. If this membrane is unhealthy — that is, if it has many holes and tears — irreparable harm will come to all living beings on Earth, and in short, to life itself.

The atmospheric layers surrounding the Earth, its crust, and the various elements and substances located in its depths are necessary for the life of our planet. Similar elements have, over hundreds of

thousands of years, been drawn to each other, approaching and striving toward one another, and accumulating in certain places. These are what we know as oil, gas, gold, various stones, ores, minerals, plants, living creatures, water, and air. There is no other creature that possesses such a high capacity to adapt to any conditions as the human being. Since life first appeared on Earth, tens of thousands of species of animals and plants have lived and then disappeared. Under natural conditions, such a process occurs over hundreds and thousands of years. However, in our era, this process is occurring at an extraordinarily rapid pace. For the unnatural disappearance of everything created by God Almighty, it is only the human being who is responsible.

We must never forget that everything created by God — whatever it may be — exists for the human being, for their health and well-being; we must be grateful, and it is our duty to preserve and protect them. A human being cannot live even 6 to 7 kilometers away from the Earth. The Earth is our home and shelter, created for us by God in this boundless, dark, and terrifying universe. God has not created any living organism — whether animal, plant, or any other element — with deficiency or excess. Every thing has been created perfect in its own way and has its own place.

The atmosphere consists of 78 percent nitrogen, 21 percent oxygen, and 1 percent other gases. Even a change of 0.1 percent in this composition would lead to catastrophe. If God wills it, and if human faith is complete and all knowledge and activity is rightly directed, and if patience and contentment prevail, may He Himself protect us from such a catastrophe. Love for Mother Nature is, in essence, love for life. And our highest duty is to preserve this love.

In conclusion, nature is an inseparable part of human life and the primary source of all living things. For this reason, preserving nature is an important responsibility of every human being. By developing ecological culture in the younger generation, it is possible to increase the sense of responsibility for protecting nature. By imparting ecological knowledge in the educational process, organizing practical activities, and conducting ecological events, students develop a conscious attitude toward nature. Therefore, preserving Mother Nature is not merely an ecological task but a human duty — because preserving nature means preserving the future of humanity.

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