

The Priority of Awareness Building and Its Role in Achieving Preventive Environmental Security

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Abstract:

The study attempted to explore perceptions and mechanisms for environmental advancement based on diagnosing the fundamental problem, which lies in the necessity of focusing on the human factor and its role in preserving the environmental surroundings. This is within the priority of activating the management of low-cost human resources over the equipment process that requires expensive capabilities—despite the importance of both elements. It then clarifies the role of governmental institutions as well as private entities such as civil society organizations, associations, and various media outlets in raising public awareness about the importance of preserving the environmental milieu we live in. This is achieved by taking the initiative in participatory processes with citizens, media campaigns, and others to move from theoretical and ineffective conditions to practical legal solutions and mechanisms that contribute to changing mindsets and ideas. These are also financially inexpensive and rationalize expenditure management in the state, as the process of change in humans begins at the level of ideas, then translates into

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tangible and perceptible forms through the imitation of civilized actions and behaviors that influence daily life.

Keywords: Environmental awareness; environmental security; prevention; civil society; environmental protection institutions; Malek Ben nabi.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the enormous budgets the state spends annually in its policy to preserve the environment, it still needs greater support. This is because these policies should take into account an important factor in the environmental prevention process, which is raising human awareness, as the human factor is the main cause of the environmental problems we face today due to the loss of awareness about the seriousness of many negative behaviors practiced by individuals in their daily lives without realizing the extent of their impact on the surroundings and the ecosystem around them.

The problem, then, lies in diagnosing the issue and treating it by the responsible bodies for environmental preservation, as expenditures on equipment and material means in addressing environmental problems take the lion's share—without diminishing their importance—at the expense of the preventive approach embodied in the human being and the necessity of raising their awareness to adopt civilized behaviors towards the environment within an integrative process. Protecting the environment is a civilized act, and the human is an actor who creates civilization; so how can we care about the act and call for its preservation without considering the actor who is the cornerstone in this mission to achieve environmental security?!

Here lies the important role of government institutions and the elite through civil society organizations in confronting this task. As the saying goes, an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure.

The researcher's idea for the study emerged from being influenced by the vision of the Algerian thinker and civilization

engineer Malik Bennabi regarding the renaissance of backward societies in order to establish civilized behaviors. He addressed this topic in many of his books, especially: *The Problem of Ideas in the Islamic World*, *The Problem of Culture*, and *The Conditions of the Renaissance*. He focuses greatly on the human being as the cornerstone in building civilization, benefiting from the experiences of advanced societies in this regard.

The study aims to advance the environmental reality in our country, starting with raising awareness about environmental risks and investing in humans, who are considered the first link from which environmental awareness begins and also the last link by enjoying a clean environment.

The study has adopted an analytical and critical approach to the reality of the ecosystem in Algeria and has reviewed the positions of the thinker Malik Bennabi regarding the focus on the human factor and its role in changing the environmental reality and building civilization.

Problematic: Accordingly, the problematic of this intervention lies in the secret behind the inefficiency of the policies followed despite the expenditures on equipment being greater than on the management and development of human resources in the field of environment, and the extent to which the human factor is considered the cornerstone in protecting the environment through opening effective channels for awareness and changing mentalities, whether among officials or citizens, towards the environment and its preservation, highlighting the effective role of the elite and civil society organizations in raising awareness and reducing environmental problems in Algeria and developing countries?

This study builds its hypotheses on the role of the elite and their involvement in both media institutions, civil society, and government institutions in creating awareness among citizens as a preventive priority to achieve strategic environmental security in the long term.

Study plan:

We have addressed the topic as follows:

First: The role of the human factor in preserving the environmental surroundings

Second: Activating government institutions and civil society organizations to raise public awareness about environmental security

Conclusion: Which includes a summary of the most important study results.

2. First: The role of the human factor in preserving the environmental surroundings

The human factor is considered the cornerstone in preserving the environment, and it is also an indicator for measuring the level of civilization of any human society or the lack thereof. Investment in humans should be relied upon to produce civilized behaviors towards the environment and its protection.

2.1 Preserving the environment is a culture and civilized behavior:

The topic of preserving the ecosystem falls within the civilized behaviors of society, and it also reflects its refined culture that makes humans and society interact positively with the environmental surroundings.

The ecosystem is directly affected by the ideas that humans hold about it. The environment is part of the whole, and therefore it does not control humans as some believe; rather, the opposite is true. Humans are the ones who control it, alongside natural laws, according to an integration between the natural environment, in which humans have no involvement, and the environment constructed by humans⁽¹⁾.

(1) - Mouhandis Iqdam, Susan Sami Al-Binaa, "Environmental Awareness Booklet," unpublished information, p 3.

Therefore, environmental protection is more a matter of culture and civilizational awareness than anything else, as behavioral imitation is the result of being influenced by prevailing ideas in society after assimilating them

A ugly image cannot inspire beautiful imagination or great "ideas, for its ugly appearance in the soul creates an even uglier imagination, and a society that contains ugly images must inevitably show the impact of these images in its thoughts, actions, and "endeavors⁽²⁾.

With these words, Professor Malik Bennabi summarizes the role of the intellectual aspect, whether through the presence or absence of awareness, in influencing the environment in which a person lives. It is said that a person's life is made by their thoughts

William Elton defines environmental awareness as: "An individual's awareness of their role in protecting the environment"⁽³⁾

If we look at the reality of the environment in our society, there are many manifestations of societal backwardness and a lack of environmental awareness, which is reflected in various forms, including visual pollution (the disappearance of aesthetic features), which is the distortion of any view that the human eye falls upon, causing psychological discomfort when looking at it. We can also describe it as a kind of lack of artistic taste, or the disappearance of the aesthetic image of everything surrounding us, from buildings... to roads... or sidewalks... and others. We will present some examples of

And: Ahmed Mansour Al-Zuhairi considers: "The Environment, Its Concept, and Its Relationship with Humans," Agricultural Environment and Environmental Genetics Curriculum, Zagazig University, Egypt 2016, accessed on May 4, 2026, source: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/310324120_albyyt_wmfhw_mha_wlaqt_ha_balansan_m1

(2) -Malek Ben Nabi: "The Problem of Culture," translated by Abd al-Sabour Shahin, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, p81.

(3) -Quoted from: Turkiya Turkiya and Kulthum Masoudi: "Environmental Awareness among Community Members and Behaviors Adopted Towards the Environment - A Field Study in the City of Biskra" Journal of Human and Social Sciences, University of Biskra, Volume 10, Issue 03; ,2021 p185 -206

this type of pollution ⁽⁴⁾:

- _ Poor urban planning of some buildings, whether in terms of spaces or their architectural design.

- _ Street lighting poles with heights that do not suit the streets.

- _ Garbage bins in shapes that evoke pessimism.

- _ Variation in the paint of building facades and lack of harmony in their external appearance.

- _ Use of glass and aluminum, which leads to an increased feeling of heat.

- _ Air conditioning units and antennas on the facades.

- _ Waste from garbage in vacant lots and around garbage bins.

- _ Housing spread in cemetery areas.

- _ Restoration projects in archaeological areas and the lack of harmony between the new parts and the old ones.

- _ Demolished buildings amid high-rise buildings.

- _ Broken cars, or those loaded with goods with an inconsistent appearance.

- _ Signs and billboards hanging in the streets with their conflicting colors.

- _ Constructing buildings in front of beautiful views and hiding them, such as the sea or any place with water, among many other examples that are countless.

2.2 Change begins with investing in people to protect the environment

Man is considered the most important factor in protecting the environment, as the environment we live in is directly affected by

(4) -Mouhandis Iqdam, Susan Sami Al-Binaa, "Environmental Awareness Booklet", Op cit , p 25-26.

society and its perceptions of life and beauty; indeed, the environmental milieu represents a mirror reflecting the level of backwardness or civilizational progress of societies, since the environmental aspect is linked to the element of beauty as one of the most important elements upon which culture is built as a human behavior in any society, and through it the public taste is formed therein⁽⁵⁾.

Therefore, the reality experienced by every society is attributed to the ideas and perceptions held by all its members without exception among its different strata, with no distinction between elite and general public, and this is manifested in two forms: either they influence as factors of social life advancement in its various aspects, or they negatively affect as pathological factors that hinder social growth⁽⁶⁾.

Therefore, the change in ideas and behaviors must start from the (educated) elites and end with the general public, because the disease of backwardness and environmental harm is one of its manifestations if it prevails in a society where the elite resemble others. This is because the elite today live in inactivity and distance from influencing their reality, and culture is a social behavior, not academic certificates. Accordingly, awareness and change must also reach everyone.

The awareness process begins by raising the intellectual level of the elite through sensitizing them to the necessity of reviewing negative ideas towards the environment, so that this is translated into practical behaviors in civil society organizations and associations or in official institutions, forming an effective model that the general public can emulate, so that there is similarity in ideas and behaviors between them and the summit, which is the elite.

Consequently, negative ideas begin to dissolve little by little

(5) -Malik bin Nabi: "Conditions of Renaissance," translated by Abdul Sabour Shaheen and Omar Kamel Masqawi, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, p. 87,p 91.

(6) - Malik bin Nabi: "The Problem of Culture," translated by Abdul Sabour Shaheen, Dar Al-Fikr, Damascus, p. 14.

until they vanish and are replaced by positive visions and behaviors towards the environmental surroundings we live in as a result of this interaction.

3. Activating government institutions and civil society organizations to raise public awareness about environmental security

Many of the human and material resources possessed by a country like Algeria, for example, have not achieved the hoped-for goal in the field of protecting the ecosystem from the problems threatening it. This happens despite the allocation of huge budgets for this purpose, yet they lack effectiveness.

3.1 The problem of prioritizing things and means over human awareness in environmental policies

The reason is that the human factor is the main cause of the imbalance in the ecosystem, but the diagnosis of the treatment is misplaced due to incorrect ideas about appropriate solutions by society in all its segments and institutions. This is done by relying solely on material resources without addressing the root of the problem, which is the human being who is considered the basis of environmental risks.

In our view, human and material resources have not been optimally utilized to advance society and its generally negative behaviors towards the ecosystem.

Also, underdeveloped societies always tend to follow the superficial appearances and results of civilization that characterize advanced societies, trying to import the form and external appearances without building their own unique style and finding appropriate solutions based on their intellectual and cultural references.

They rush into the world of things, acquiring devices and technology, and applying environmental policies that may have succeeded in another society but fail with us because they were born

out of the intellectual advancement of those societies and countries. These material equipments were brought without consideration for our reality and the problems of our people, within what is called the phenomenon of "accumulation," through which we mistakenly believe that we have become advanced and solved environmental pollution problems.

However, the reality is contrary to what we imagine. Since our people are not originally qualified to practice civilized behaviors, they misuse these means simply because they are absent from their world of ideas and they are unaware of them. For example, places designated for garbage disposal will not be respected even if we increase their number in our cities, because the idea of their importance is missing from people's minds.

Also, in our society, there is a deeply ingrained false belief about the environment and its cleanliness, and the reason for this lies with the official bodies themselves. The processes of decorating cities and facades here, and planting trees, for example, have become associated with official visits by officials in a deceptive manner that shows that the development policies have succeeded, or to cover up the failure in managing the financial resources allocated for this in front of the officials. As if the general public is not concerned with the cleanliness of the environment!?

Therefore, you do not find them preserving it, nor do they take any initiative towards it, because such practices issued by the official authorities do not consider the citizens nor make them a target for environmental protection. Consequently, there is a state of disconnect between the official bodies and the citizens.

2- Priority of Environmental Awareness for the Citizen and Mechanisms for Its Implementation

For this reason, the equation must be reformulated correctly, and it is necessary to change the officials' mentalities and ideas by focusing on the human element as the basis for development, and that the

citizen is the target through policies of environmental protection and prevention, as well as raising awareness among everyone about the necessity of preserving the environment we live in, and working on refining the accumulated material and human potentials and organizing them to come up with effective solutions to our various environmental problems.

The official government channels and civil society organizations are considered the means and mechanisms through which environmental awareness is instilled. They are represented as follows:

A_ Associations: In reality, if we count environmental protection associations, they number in the thousands, but most of them need activation to operate according to the noble goals and ideas we mentioned.

B_ Media outlets: Public awareness of the importance of environmental protection is manifested through television channels, radio stations, and newspapers, as the media has become highly influential in our present time.

C_ Local official bodies: This involves raising awareness at the level of municipalities, departments, and states about the necessity of making the citizen the goal and cornerstone in the process of comprehensive development, and within their priorities in their programs, so that the citizen participates in the initiatives taken by these bodies to clean the environment and others.

4. CONCLUSION

The study attempted to verify the hypotheses that answer the problem, and it yielded several important results:

1 _ The ecosystem is directly affected by the ideas that humans hold about it, as the environment is part of the whole.

2 _ The issue of preserving the ecosystem falls within the civilized behaviors of society, and it also reflects its refined culture that enables humans and society to interact positively with the environmental

surroundings.

3 _ Change begins with investing in humans to protect the environment, and the human factor is considered the most important factor in environmental protection because it is the main cause of environmental imbalance. Therefore, it is also relied upon in environmental prevention.

4 _ It is necessary to reorganize and rationalize the accumulated material and human resources to come up with effective solutions to our various environmental problems.

5 _ Activating official government channels and civil society bodies, such as associations and media outlets, is considered the preventive means and mechanisms through which environmental awareness is instilled according to the set objectives to achieve comprehensive environmental security in which humans reconcile first with themselves and then with their surroundings.

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