

NATURE CONSERVATION AND ECOLOGY THROUGH THE EYES OF YOUTH

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Abstract: This article analyzes current environmental problems, their causes and consequences, as well as the role of young people in nature conservation. The study is based on statistical data and reports from international organizations, and provides scientific conclusions and recommendations.

Keywords: ecology, climate change, youth, sustainable development.

In the 21st century, environmental problems have become one of the most serious global threats to human development. Rapid industrialization, technological progress, and the overexploitation of natural resources are disrupting ecological balance. Climate change, air pollution, water scarcity, and the decline of biodiversity are among the most pressing global challenges today.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the average global temperature has increased by approximately 1.1°C compared to the pre-industrial period. Although this may seem small, it has serious consequences such as melting glaciers, rising sea levels, and an increase in extreme weather events.

Environmental problems are mainly caused by human activity. Greenhouse gas emissions accelerate global warming, while industrial waste pollutes air and water resources. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 7 million people die every year due to air pollution, showing its direct impact on human health.

Another serious issue is the decline in biodiversity. In recent decades, wildlife populations have decreased by an average of 60%, indicating severe ecosystem imbalance.

Uzbekistan also faces significant environmental challenges. The drying of the Aral Sea is one of the most tragic ecological disasters caused by human activity. As a result, millions of hectares of land have become saline, and hundreds of thousands of tons of salt and dust are released into the atmosphere annually, negatively affecting both climate and human health.

In this context, youth play a crucial role in addressing environmental challenges. They are the most active and innovative part of society, responsible for future development. Recently, environmental awareness among young people has significantly increased, and they are increasingly adopting eco-friendly lifestyles.

Youth initiatives include tree planting, waste sorting, reducing plastic use, and environmental awareness campaigns. The nationwide 'Green Space' project in Uzbekistan is a clear example of youth involvement. One tree absorbs approximately 20–25 kg of carbon dioxide per year, contributing to climate mitigation.

Scientific studies show that 50–60% of household waste can be recycled. However, this potential is still underutilized, making youth participation in waste management especially important.

Overall, solving environmental problems requires a comprehensive approach, including environmental education, renewable energy development, improved waste management systems, and support for youth initiatives. Protecting nature is not only a current necessity but also a moral responsibility to future generations.

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