YOUTH EDUCATION AND ITS ROLE IN ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The importance of this study lies in the continuous development and changes of the globe in all aspects of life, namely scientific, social, political and economic ones as well as the development of telecommunication systems and satellite TV, etc. This has affected peoples' life in general and youth in particular. That is, the importance of education for young people becomes a priority to ensure that they can make a difference in developing their countries and achieving the goals of sustainable development (SD), and helping youth be creative and productive without putting an additional burden on their countries' shoulders. This paper aims to identify the prime significance of educating the young and edifying them to attain sustainable development goals, and the obstacles embedding young people from learning for sustainable development. Interviews with (6) young people (3 females and 3 males) were conducted and analyzed in Madaba / Jordan.

The results of this study revealed that young people consider education process is the base of development, and showed that traditional education delivered by indoctrination limits young people from accepting culture of change and creativity. In addition to that, development will no longer be achieved unless a comprehensive educational system has been reviewed and improved. The results also showed that international organizations such as UNESCO has great effects in supporting Youth Education through integrating SD issues in education.

Based on the results, the study recommends that authorities should provide youth with comprehensive and integrated education that enhance their self-confidence and the culture of change to the best. It also recommends that education should be accessible to all learners and motivate change in line with plans and policies. That is to say, education is a lifelong process that focuses on plans that cope with education quality and global changes.

Keywords: Youth, Education, Sustainable Development.

Introduction:

Youth represents the backbone of every country or nation; they are considered the heart that pulses life and innovation in any society, and a bridge connects between the past, present and the future. Due to that, it reveals the paramount of this group and the necessity of providing them with the best opportunities that shape their personalities and broaden their potentials to contribute positively in developing their communities and the world as a whole. Therefore, Youth should receive appropriate education to empower them to be equipped with knowledge and to be active members in their communities. Over time, youth have been deemed the main factor of reform movements because they are looking for a better and new life that meets their expectations and they are the ones who reject radical solutions of modern issues excluding religion and heritage.

 There are several causes that limits education quality and consequently lessens youths' role in creating the culture of creativity and innovation which in turn contributes to achieving the goals of sustainable development (SD). Education quality is considered the tool for comprehensive development. The quality of education and its efficiency determines the success of development. Human resources are the main tool for economic development that are mainly built by education. For this fact, most countries are committed to achieve quality education as a priority in countries' developmental strategic plans especially for youth. If the education system is not able to change to better situation, it will be an obstacle for development and the change processes (Hawwat, 2002).

Education has a vital role in empowering youth to tackle problems and challenges that face the process of development. This role needs remarkable efforts to deal with the some drawbacks of the culture that confine the positive change. This could be achieved by educating youth and creating positive attitudes towards education. UNESCO affirms that the post-2015 development agenda of education should have clear goals and articulate them publicly. This comes from the fact that education has an important factor to achieve the main SD goals, eradicate poverty, and build peace and democracy as means of global citizenship.

In this context,(Hassan,1992) explains that developing productive human resources cannot be accomplished apart from education. Thereby, we find a great relationship between education

and development. Education can make the change that drives the development and helps the discovery of individuals' potentials.

In Jordan, access to education has been emphasized in all the country's developmental plans. It is also worth to note that there are several royal initiatives and plans in education to ensure the importance of education in obtaining the desired sustainable development. "Basic education is compulsory in Jordan for all, and various institutions provide secondary and higher education to face the demands of work market (Musbah 2006, P. 22)".

Theoretical Background and related studies

The United Nations organizations have issued several reports that deemed people aged from 15 to 20 as youth. The age of youth rises in some countries to 28 years or in some cases to 30 (Othman, 2003). "The young people consisted of 89% of world population, which means 9 out of 10 people in the developing countries are youth (UNFPA,2014:P.5)". In this case, youth represents the largest portion of the population in most developing countries. Therefore, they can be the main source of development and growth in their countries. However, not all young learners receive education quality that help them contribute to the process of change and get rid of prior negative perceptions, poverty or illiteracy.

In other words, to ensure youth could play the positive role and make a difference in economic and social structures and achieve the desired developmental outcomes, authorities should focus on the education quality, the characteristics of their teachers and the skills they acquire during the teaching learning process. Therefore, the relationship between intellectual and social variables for this group should be strengthened to achieve a positive change we seek (UNDP, 2014). Furthermore, the main goal of education should focus on making positive changes in their behaviors, skills and potentials. Therefore, the goals of sustainable development and the desired change will be successfully achieved.

It is worth to notice that it is educational system could guarantee the social balance by lessening the dramatic increasing levels of illiteracy, and considering other natural resources as means of helping youth improve their lives. That is to say, the process of sustainable development couldn't only attained by depending on the financial resources but also it requires trained, well-educated, qualified and productive human resources, "the desired development can be achieved by

investing in human resources and as result of that the whole society will be developed (Russell,1966: p. 1)".

Many international organizations like UNESCO, World Bank and UNICEF have formulated various policies and conventions to highlight the paramount importance of education in developing nations. These organizations have implemented many projects and programmes in order to help developing countries achieve access and equity in education. These projects accomplished great success, that of the national reports and studies revealed that the percent of youth accessed education has significantly increased, and this reflected one of the most important goal of SD which is the provision of education by 2015.

Additionally, this requires exerting remarkable efforts to meet the basic learning needs mentioned in the World Conference on Education for All, which was held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand. The delegates adopted a World Declaration on Education for All, in its first article, it states that "Every person should be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. These needs comprise both essential learning tools such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy and problem solving and the basic learning content such as knowledge, skills, values, and altitudes. Human resources are greatly in need of all these tools and content to be able to survive, develop their full capacities, live and work in dignity, participate fully in development, improve the quality of their lives, make informed decisions and to continue learning (UNESCO, 1990).

Education and Development

Needless to say, Education constitutes the paramount pillar for developing countries, it was found that developed countries put human development on its top agenda. That is, these developed and modern countries regularly review their education systems and training, educational strategic plans, teacher development and curricula. The situation in The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is no longer different from that of the international one, that is, it has put education on one of its top priorities due to its belief that by educating its youth, it could keep up with the technological revolution and live in the globalization age and be able to cope with its challenges successfully. Jordan supported the development of education by adopting several initiatives and educational reforms as Education Reform for Knowledge (ERfKE) to produce a

lifelong and autonomous young learners who can cope with social changes and think critically in the national and global issues.

According to UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills, perspectives and knowledge. Therefore, they can make informed decisions and act upon them for the benefit of themselves and others in the present time and in the future. ESD helps the citizens of the world to learn effectively to guarantee they will have a sustainable future (UNESCO, 2006).

(Abboud, 1992,p18) indicated that the semantic relationship between Education and Development in Arabic language in which they have the same meaning. Mohammed Ezzat (Abdulmoujod, 1995, Ps. 63 - 64) defines Development as "the mobilization of resources and directing efforts to increase opportunities. It means the selective opportunities in the specific fields which include: enough income, education, increase the life expectancy and hygiene environment. Consequently, specialists confirm that general education aims to provide students with information, skills and values to facilitate their lives and future work. It also helps developing mental processes to keep learning, and improve their abilities to accomplish the required tasks and work as well as how to deal with information, technology and modern productive tools (The World Bank, 1995).

Education and Development aim to develop learner' competences and skills to be able to build knowledge network in formal or informal education. Therefore, human capital is the power of sustainable development that improves the quality of life and boost the economic growth. Furthermore, the quality of the educational system in any country identifies its future where the source of sustainable development is the educated youth who received training and empowerment.

In Jordan, the most important strategic investment is in human resources. Human resources are the real wealth of Jordan. This is a permanent policy of Jordanian government since the country's establishment. Educational system in Jordan was developed to respond effectively to the urgent needs of individuals and society.

It is striking that it is just education which can make a difference or a change. Therefore, investing in education has become a must in the 21st century. In addition, the right of education

is guaranteed by all contemporary constitutions which appeared clearly in Human Rights in 1966 as a social right under the responsibility of the country. Education is a human right, and the country should provide all children with elementary education, and committed to continue secondary education development. Accessible and equal Education should be provided as well as higher education. Specific informal education programs should be designed for people who miss the chances of attending the primary education. Additionally, the right of education includes the elimination of all forms and levels of discrimination in the educational system, and develop the standards to assure the quality of education. It's a key and a genuine right that stated by all constitutions all over the world like Jordanian Constitution 1952, Federal German Constitution and Spanish Constitution (Husban 2012).

Related literature indicated that education is the cornerstone in the development process, and the success of development depends largely on the success of the educational system in any society. Therefore, there is a direct connection between education and development that is human being are the core of development process that contributes to gaining the required information and skills; achieving the sustainable development efficiently and with equity, and at the same time education constitutes one of the most important pillars of development in any society in all areas. (Ashour, 2014) explains that the society which improves education quality and qualification of its individuals will secure the professionalism of human resources that run and manage the development factors, and contribute to building a strong and normal society that ensures the social security and the political and economic stability.

Obstacles Facing Development-oriented Education

Education has been receiving great attention from Jordanian government because it is considered a basement for national unity to develop the youth abilities and attitudes. However, education faces several challenges represented in two main factors which are the following:

Oriented or Guided Education: some parties or agencies guide this education to impose a kind of thinking or outcomes that reinforce and achieve their intentions and goals by abandoning the intellectual diversity and excluding other forms of thinking. Indoctrinated Education is described as inactive teaching style, where information and knowledge are delivered by the indoctrination

method with the absence of research, participation and experiment. In this kind of education, students depend completely on the teacher as a source of information without exerting any effort to search for information.

Reading abstention: reading is one of the most important stimulations of the human brain. It is the main source of knowledge and information.   However, the modern means of entertainment like smart phones create a culture of distraction from all kinds of reading and thinking. Additionally, there are some unqualified teachers who are unable to educate these generations. Habits and traditions: although these habits and traditions constitute an important ground for any community harmony, but they could sometimes be an obstacle for education and development by forcing members of society to reject any opportunities of change. Traditions sometimes limit the opportunities of education for youth especially the girls and encourage them to leave school, it consequently has negative effects on society.

Lack of the efforts of raising awareness is one of the most serious factors that threaten nations. Youth awareness should receive sufficient attention as they are exposed to different religious, social, economic and political pressures. The importance of raising awareness is a necessity in the current time, this could be achieved by developing individuals' life in various aspects and arming them with recent science and knowledge. "Horkheimer" describes education as one of the important factors that identifies the human working forces."The role of the scientific awareness is clear in bridging the gap between communities and individuals. Therefore, the relationship between scientific awareness and development is positive (Braizat, 2015, P. 57)".

Study methodology

Qualitative approach was employed to achieve its goals. Six interviews were conducted with youth (3 males & 3 females) aged from (19 to 25) and living in Madaba governorate in Jordan. The following questions were asked:

What do you think the kind of education the youth is in need in the present and future?

Does the culture of positive change face obstacles?

What are the obstacles of achieving the goals of education and their reflection on the process of development?

What are the roles of the concerned bodies to integrate youth in the process of development in Jordan?

The table below shows the distribution of respondents according to their gender, work and living place.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents According to their Gender, Work and Living place.

No	First name	Gender	Age	City or countryside
1	Laila	F	19	Countryside
2	Rana	F	22	City
3	Amal	F	25	City
4	Mohammad	M	20	City
5	Fares	M	24	Countryside
6	Taysir	M	19	City

According to the respondents, there are obstacles and limitations of youth education and it leads to lessen the desired change for achieving the goals of sustainable development. All respondents blamed policy makers and decision makers who are responsible for developing educational system, raising the awareness of youth and empowering them, because their policies and decisions might build or damage the coming generations. Furthermore, there is a general agreement among the respondents that the basic motive of youth and development is education and the desire to change positively. They justified that the culture of change comes from the quality and effective education, which is neither guided nor indoctrinated. In addition to that, education could enable youth to be creative and innovative, if it was institutionalized properly. Laila said, "Education is the precious treasure in life that youth can obtain, where he/she can invest in or lose".

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Respondents accorded that the education in all levels (basic & higher) and types (vocational & technical) should be a must and all young learners should receive it regardless of his culture, religion or race.

It is important to highlight that all education components are available in Jordan, but they need some improvement. Youth need a comprehensive and integrated education that promote the culture of positive change as well as reinforcing the self-confidence of the young. Therefore, quality education needs good and qualified teachers who can raise the awareness of youth. Mohammad described unqualified teachers, as "they are mere machines work to produce rather than educate".

Additionally, respondents found that all the concerned agencies of education are exerting their utmost efforts to evaluate and assess it to be consistent with the international conventions like United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and Education for All Movement. However, the indoctrination style of teaching and the reluctance of reading prevent the achievement of the goals of sustainable education or education for all initiatives. Poverty was the main reason behind the reluctance of education in the past. Nevertheless, there are now many reasons make youth feel the ineffectiveness of education, e.g. ineffective teaching methods despite the great development in curricula. There is a problem in applying the developed curricula in the classroom.

Respondents thought that activities of international agencies have a vital role in empowering youth. Respondents talked about the culture of change that they experienced through educational process, it is a meaningful culture in which human beings are the core goal to be empowered. Therefore, youth can do their best to participate in the development process instead of waiting for it. Regarding the role of culture in education, it has largely affected many generations that is what was forbidden in the past, it may become allowed due to habits, traditions or rituals. Faris said, "My father no longer believed education is worthless and men don't need education".

That means there is a true awareness of the importance of positive change of culture and as a result, the tools of knowledge are now activated to achieve the development process. Respondents recommended that increasing the access to education, encouraging youth to change their society positively, in addition to working in line with policies and plans as it is a lifelong process and meeting the global changes.

Investing in human resources is the most important value in life. If youth receives quality education and the attention they deserve, the whole society will be cooperative and integrated. To summarize, youth have a prime characteristics in terms of psychology and physiology and their empowerment is a priority to get rid of negative habits. Rana said, "Youth is a remarkable power of change, and if this power is well-educated, the desired results will be significant and all society will gain its ouitcomes". Youth believes that the governmental and private sectors are responsible for achieving expected results in this regard, and for formulating educational plans and policies of achieving the goals of sustainable development. However, it is not an easy task and it is advisable to exchange the experience of other countries in this field .

Accordingly, it is concluded that in order to achieve the goals of education for sustainable development, youth needs a participatory curricula that motivate learners, change their culture positively and enable them to take the required decisions to achieve SD. Therefore, youth will be qualified, decision makers and critical thinkers and they could contribute to the development process.

Conclusion

It becomes clear that there is a positive relationship between education and development, because the goal of development is improving human beings' skills and capacities. The link between Education and Development is embedded in the principles and philosophy of Jordanian society. The goal of education is to instill the positive values in youth and equip them with knowledge, skills, values and traditions as well as preparing them to be active members in their society.

If the outcomes of education can deal with the challenges and the recent requirements of the world, and can keep up with new scientific inventions and technology. This can be achieved by education that aims to make an advancement. Education forms an essential core for development plans and policies. It is also an important pillar for sustainable development process.

In order to make the educational system successful, youth should receive an appropriate education on all levels. We should raise the awareness of the importance of change that leads to achieve the sustainable development and make education a top priority. In general, we can say

that there is a strong relationship among education, the culture of change and sustainable development. Thereby, it is necessary to assure a coordination among all concerned sectors, and improve traditional education and teaching. If there is a desire to achieve the sustainable development, we should improve the educational level and make it accessible to youth who is the power of developing societies.

To put it in nutshell, educating youth is considered the prime device of achieving the expected outcomes of the society and to prepare youth to be good citizens by connecting education with the culture of positive change. Consequently, the whole society will be on a strong foundation that leads to sustainable development by using abilities, skills and resources according to the needs and capacities. Therefore, the study was conducted to show the importance of education and the culture of change and their reflections on the sustainable development, in addition to define the obstacles facing education, change and sustainable development.

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