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**ECOLOGY AS FIELD OF SOCIAL RELATIONS**

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*Abstract*

During cognition and transformation of the nature and itself, the mankind has passed the way from the protosociety in which the social relations were in embryonic state up to the modern society – difficult organized system of interaction of people which is characterized by multidimensional structure and regulated by various institutes. Already in the ancient time environmental problems had social coloring, defining the economic structure, a tenor of life and destiny of population. Therefore the sphere of ecology is considered by us as the subject domain of activity. Ecology determines the development of society and is an important component of social practice. It covers all spheres of social life and ensures the social development of the younger generation. While acting in various subject areas, including ecology, people participate in social interactions, which turn into social relations and are fixed in the form of statuses, or positions of people in society. Knowledge which in unity with the relations is created and shown in activity and communication, forming the sphere of ecology as cross-disciplinary field of knowledge are not less important component of social practice for existence and development of society. That's why ecology is the sphere of social relations that are necessary for the existence and development of society and are the complex of statuses and subjective positions.

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## 1. Introduction

The modern world is developing in the context of two interrelated processes:

- *globalization* as the creation of a world community with a single economic, political and cultural space;
- *ecologization* as the penetration of environmental knowledge, practices, and values into various spheres of social life. (Jickling & Wals, 2008), (Cherkashin & Titov, 2012).

Together, these processes determined the formation of a special sphere of society called ecology (the ecological sphere of society).

## 2. Research Questions

The term "ecological sphere of society" is not new. For example, it was designated by the term "socio-ecological sphere of society" in Sosunova's dissertation "Social Ecology as a Sphere of Sociological Knowledge" (1997).

The process of institutionalization of public relations ensuring the satisfaction of the public need for ecological well-being and security is the evidence of the development of the sphere of ecology. And it is rather about the genesis of the need than its quantitative characteristic experienced by all members of society.

This approach does not contradict the fundamental provision on the social origin of human motivation, which can be particularly explained by the fact that the objects of its needs are the product of social production. Under the conditions of the environmental crisis, such products are air suitable for breathing and water suitable for drinking. On the other hand, this need refers to the biological group since not only individuals but also species as a whole need to satisfy it. (Viljunas, 2006)

## 3. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is seen in determining the core of the concept for the two of the main functional literacies – the language literacy and the literary literacy and their interrelation with the cultural aspect of education.

## 4. Research Methods

As a result of studying scientific, informational and educational publications, we identified the following signs of the emergence of ecology as a special sphere of society:

- *In the political sphere*: inclusion of ensuring environmental well-being and safety of citizens into the list of the main functions of the state; intergovernmental and international commissions, committees, conferences and agreements on sustainable development and environmental security; the formation of ecological environmental law as a legal branch, a science and an academic discipline; the development of international and national environmental legislations; the presence of public administration bodies of nature management and environment protection; the development of social ecology as a special branch of

sociology; ecological issues in the policy documents of political parties and candidates for government bodies; public environmental movements and unions influencing the state policy in the field of nature management and environment protection; international and national public environmental organizations (unions, movements, funds).

- *In the economic sphere*: informing consumers about the environmental quality of goods and services; the expansion of the environmental sector of the economy; ecological conversion; the development of the market of environmental goods and services; introduction of ecotaxes; inclusion the cost of restoring the habitats disturbed during production into the cost of the final product; state subsidies and tax incentives for industrial production based on the recycling of waste; increase in demand for products of ecological farming; the introduction of economic zones of the ocean and the division of the seas; forest and soil cadastre; the compulsory economic evaluation of the environmental impact of the construction of buildings, structures and communications; the development of environmental auditing; the preparation of ecological specialists; ecological financial funds; ecological certification of enterprises; ecological licensing; Ecological regulation of economic activity (ecological rationing).
- *In the spiritual sphere* (culture, education, science, religion): environmental orientation in periodicals; printed mass media focused on environmental and health issues; TV and radio programs dedicated to nature and the environment; prose, poetry, sculpture, graphics, painting, documentary and feature films about the relationship between humanity and nature; the development of environmental ethics and bioethics; the existence of nature-oriented religions; the emergence of interdisciplinary sciences at the intersection of ecology and physics, chemistry, mathematics, geography, biology; the emergence of a scientific direction that studies economic and social development while maintaining a favorable environment (the science of sustainable development); an active study of ecological consciousness by psychologists; the emergence of an area focused on studying the ecologization of secondary and higher education; the inclusion of disciplines of an ecological profile into programs of educational institutions; training of environmental specialists (engineers, lawyers, journalists, economists); additional environmental education (school forestry, contests, naturalists); the development of ecological tourism (Jacobus, 2004),( Borejko, 2003).
- *In the social sphere*: exemptions and cash payments to citizens who are forced to live or work in areas suffering an ecological disaster; state insurance of environmental risks of citizens; state subsidies for the prevention and treatment of ecological diseases; tax privileges and state subsidies to recreational and valeological institutions serving citizens living in ecologically unfavorable regions; free or concessional pharmaceuticals for poor citizens living in areas of environmental stress; social advertising of ecological issues in mass media.

## 5. Findings

The institutionalization of relations that ensure the satisfaction of the public need for environmental security indicates the formation of a special area of social relations – ecology, which is a society subsystem formed due to the complication and differentiation of existing social relations.

The complex of social relations that satisfy the need for environmental safety should be attributed to the main spheres of society, which is confirmed by:

a) the place of the need for the environmental safety (satisfied in the sphere of ecology) in the in the group of basic needs (related to long-term survival).

According to the theory of Maslow, self-actualization (personality) appears where the higher needs appear. The need for environmental safety and welfare refers to the existential and – even under extremely unfavorable environmental conditions – physiological, which are both lower needs. (Cooke, Mills & Kelley, 2005)

However, not everyone but only a person who is the bearer of an ecological culture and possesses a developed ecological consciousness tries to satisfy this need. This confirms the special, dual nature of the need for environmental safety and welfare.

b) the material, energetic and informational conjugation of the economic activity of society and nature;

c) the close interconnection of the environmental sphere of society with the political, economic, spiritual and social spheres;

d) the interdependence of social, political, economic and environmental crises;

e) the emergence of the ecological component as a part of sustainable development of humanity;

f) a significant increase in anthropogenic pressure on nature and health (Costanza, 2003), (Rethinking Education. 2015).

The development of the ecology as a field of social relations is determined by the state of the corresponding social institutions whose functions are: to maintain a health-friendly and eco-friendly environment ensuring the physical, psychological and social well-being of the population; to preserve the genetic fund, species and landscape diversity of wildlife as an invaluable public domain; ensuring rational and sustainable nature management; to find the balance between the reproduction and use of renewable natural resources; to rationally use the non-renewable resources, including the transition to cyclical use of production waste (Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva, 2014).

The effectiveness of regulation of public relations by the social institution of ecology in the ecological sphere depends on the effectiveness of its functioning as a system of social control, which, according to Berger, includes five levels: state; public morality and customs; professional system; social environment; family and friends (Berger, 1996).

All these levels are significant for the individual. However, the strongest normative pressure on the person's behavior often goes from his family and friends.

Given the current ecological policy of the leading economic powers, which, according to Yablokov, the President of the Center for Ecological Policy in Russia, exacerbates the ecological crisis and leads to the de-ecologization of public consciousness, the importance of social control at the level of "family and friends" for the formation of social relations that ensure the functioning of the social institution of ecology is significantly growing (Chaplygina, 2004).

According to our data, 54% of the schoolchildren who carried out ecological research projects noted interest in their activities from those around them (relatives, friends, acquaintances), while 16.3% of the students reported that during the project, the adults repeatedly offered them their help (Titov & Cherkashin, 2016). Despite legal nihilism, as well as low legal literacy and awareness of Russians,

including the sphere of ecology, these data allow us to expect a good scenario in the development of social relations in ecology (Titov, 2003).

With the immediate reorientation of education to form the ecological culture in the younger generation, the modern civilization will have a real chance to overcome the conflict between social and natural principles in man and society and move to a qualitatively new stage of sociogenesis, which L. Braun calls "sustainable society" (Brown, 2011).

In the meantime, the reasons to draw a disappointing conclusion about the dysfunction of social institutions regulating social relations in ecology, which should meet the need for ecological well-being and security, are: the deterioration of health and a decrease in the average life expectancy of Russians in certain regions caused by a progressive deterioration in the quality of the environment; the destruction of the genetic fund, species and diversity of wildlife; the unsustainable, exhaustive use of natural resources, as well as the poor state of public ecological consciousness.

## 6. Discussion

Over the past two years, there were several major events on environmental issues, for example, 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris, XXII UNWorld Climate Conference, and the statement of Antonio Gutierrez, the UN Secretary-General, on the issues of climate on 23.03.2017. The recent proclamation of 2017 as the Year of Ecology to "draw attention to the problematic issues existing in the environmental sphere and improve the state of environmental security of the country" give hope for the activation of social institutions regulating social relations in ecology to meet the need for ecological well-being and security (Ukaz Prezidenta, 2016).

## 7. Conclusion

The sphere of ecology is a field of social practice, in which the activity of people is aimed at the cognition and transformation of:

- living systems and the environment;
- the influence of production on living systems and their environment;
- personal and social relations intertwined with nature.

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