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Sustainable Development and Environmental Health Literacy in Iran

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Based on World Health Organization's (WHO's) goals, during the period 2015-2030, all countries should effort to achieve the indicators of sustainable development in the national, regional and international levels [1]. Sustainable development goals (SDGs) concern the process of changes to improve life in a sustainable way for future generation [2].

Iran, as a member of WHO, with the enormous geographical diversity faces wide spectrum of challenges: inadequate resources of potable water, urbanization, air pollution and dust storm, water pollution, deforestation, desertification, oil pollution as well as soil erosion [3].

Declining of water resources is the important challenges as three lakes of Orumieh, Bakhtegan and Hamoun are dried and Karoun River in the south-western province of Ahvaz, are also at risk of drying up [2]. Many other lakes and rivers are drying and about 517 Iranian cities or towns are also experiencing water shortages. Based on scientific researches, traditional methods for application of water resources in Iran is about70 % higher than the world average and a huge volume of water resources is wasted in the agriculture section [4].

In past years, the air pollution and dust has increased continuously in Iran and lead to poor air quality in all metropolises. Some end results of air pollution are slowdown of economic activities, closing of offices and schools as well as respiratory illnesses [5].

To protect the environment and overcome these challenges, Environmental Health literacy (EHL) is a key term. EHL integrates concepts from both environmental literacy and health literacy to develop the wide range of skills and competencies that people need in order to seek, understand, evaluate, and use environmental health information to make informed choices, reduce health risks, and improve quality of life [6]. In fact, EHL increase the sensitivity of individuals to protect the environment.

The process of becoming environmentally health literate constitutes raising scientific literacy, environmental literacy, and numeracy among the general public. This goal can be achieved by improving EHL skills, like buying green products, planting tendril plants in roadsides, using of decorative trees in homes, appropriate application of energy resources like less use of luxury lightening, construction of irrigation networks,

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development of new methods of sprinkler irrigation and using public transportation instead of driving private cars [5].

Today's, in the area of growing concerns about climate change and sustainable development, methods to promote EHL area in progress [6]. Due to the essential need to increase knowledge of Iranian citizens and provide future generation with the knowledge and skills in environmental health, policy makers and nonprofit institutions need to make applicable decisions like connecting the field of informal science education to the EHL concepts to deal with this issue.

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