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ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Environmental education educates the people to live friendly with environment, it also develops the sense of responsibility to understand the environment and protect the environment. Environmental Education is an important tool which cultivates the sense of responsibility and care among students and people towards environment, how to behave with environment and how to protect the environment from pollution for sustainable development? The sustainable development can be done only in healthy environment. Without healthy environment, sustainable development is impossible. Therefore, environmental education is playing a vital role in sustaining the development without environmental damage.

We can aware the students, people, economists, policy planner, industrialists and polluters regarding environmental pollution and its problems. It is fact that environmental education can play vital role in maintaining the sustainable development and in protection of the environment. It is fact that environmental education can play a significant role in protecting the environment and sustaining the development. Without environmental safety and precautions, industrial development is harmful for the society. Therefore, environmental education is only the tool which can play a vital role in protection of environment and continue the sustainable development.

Therefore, knowledge of environmental education is very essential to all the students and common people, it should be the integral part of their curriculum in schools, colleges, and universities and linked with environmental importance and values for sustainable development.

Keywords: *Environmental education, sustainable development, importance, principles, teaching values and role of EE.*

INTRODUCTION

Environmental education is an important instrument which inculcates the sense of humanity and sense of adjustment between man and environment. Environmental education educates the people to live friendly with environment, it also develops the sense of responsibility to understand the environment and protect the environment. Environmental Education is an important tool which cultivates the sense of responsibility and care among students and people towards environment, how to behave with environment and how to protect the environment from pollution for sustainable development? The sustainable development can be done only in healthy environment. Without healthy environment, sustainable development is impossible. Therefore, environmental education can play a vital role in sustaining the development without environmental loss.

In the age of technological and industrial development, it is a great challenge to Government and society to protect the environment from hazard pollution. In this situation, only environmental education can play a vital role in developing of environmental awareness among the students and people regarding environmental pollution and its effects on human beings. It can provide various methods and techniques for the protection of environment.

Concept of Environmental Education

The definition of environmental education which was evolved and accepted at the International meeting (IUCN-1970) may be put as follows- "The progress of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness of man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. Environmental education also entails practices in decision making and self formulation of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality."



Internationally, environmental education gained recognition when the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1972, declared environmental education must be used as a tool to address global environmental problems. The United Nations Education

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) created three major declarations that have guided the course of environmental education.

Environmental education is a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment and associated challenges, develops the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges, and fosters attitudes, motivations, and commitments to make informed decisions and take responsible action (UNESCO, Tbilisi Declaration, 1978).

Environmental education (EE) refers to organized efforts to teach about how natural environments function and, particularly, how human beings can manage their behavior and ecosystems in order to live sustainably. The term is often used to imply education within the school system, from primary to post-secondary. However, it is sometimes used more broadly to include all efforts to educate the public and other audiences.

Concept of Sustainable Development

Barbier (1987) "provided a detailed definition of sustainable development. He defined sustainable development as one which is directly concerned with increasing the material standard of the living of the poor at the grassroots level which could be quantitatively measured in terms of increased food, real income, educational services, health care, sanitation and water supply, emergency stock of food and cash etc, and only indirectly concerned with economic growth at the aggregate, commonly national level. In more specific terms, sustainable development aims at reducing the absolute poverty of the world's poor through providing lasting and secure livelihood that minimise resource depletion, environment degradation, cultural disruption and social instability."

Adishesiah (1989) "sustainable development is development which meets the basic needs of all, particularly the poor majority for employment, food, energy, water and housing, all ensures growth of agriculture, manufactures, power and services to meet the needs. In that sense sustainable development merges economics and environment both in theory and decision making."

By the Brundtland Commission: Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission, 1987:8).

Sustainable development is seeking to meet the needs of the present without compromising those of future generations. We have to learn our way out of current social and environmental problems and learn to live sustainably. Sustainable development is a vision of development that encompasses populations, animal and plant species, ecosystems, natural resources and that integrates concerns such as the fight against poverty, gender equality, human rights, education for all, health, human security, intercultural dialogue, etc. Education for sustainable development aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and in the future, and to act upon these decisions.

Focus of Environmental Education

1. To develop the awareness and sensitivity about the environment and environmental challenges
2. To develop the knowledge and understanding about the environment and environmental challenges
3. To develop the attitude concern for the environment and help to maintain environmental quality.
4. To develop skills to mitigate the environmental problems.
5. To develop the participation for exercising existing knowledge and environmental related programmes.

Need of Environmental Education

Environmental education is and has to be integral part of all education programmes and also should become part of social, cultural, and economic development of education. Environmental education should enable people to perceive the environment in its totality that is the totality of physical, biological, socio-economic and



cultural complex. Environmental Education must aim at enlisting the co-operation and involvement of the people in environmental action (Shrivastava 1996). One of the primary goals of Environmental Education is to encourage more environmentally responsible behaviors. Research has indicated that merely teaching-awareness of environmental problems is not sufficient (Kalinawaski, 1990-91; Shrivastava 1986; Shrivastava and Shrivastava, 1999; Hewit, 1997 and Eagles and Damare, 1999). A curriculum that teaches only facts and concepts may have a slight effect on children's attitude towards the environment, by involving them actively in their encourage them to become active. Knowledge alone cannot influence the protection of environment (Hine.et. al, 1987; Shrivastava, 1996)

Importance of Environmental Education

The urgency and importance of environmental education is further reflected in the National Policy on Education (1986). The National Policy on Education aims at creating a "consciousness of environment." On 22nd November, 1991 the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has given direction to Union and State Governments to make a environment education a compulsory subjects at school and college levels. But more than a decade of this historic direction of Supreme Court various state governments did not take any action. It is after Public Interest Litigation (PIL), now various state governments are bound to introduce the environmental education at school and college levels. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education-2000 (NCFSE 2000) state in this context:" School curriculum has therefore to help to generate and promote among the learners: understanding of the environment in its totality both natural and social and their interactive processes, the environmental problems and the ways and means to preserve the environment." It is reflected in the guidelines for the development of School syllabi.

Environmental education is a process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and added tools necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relationship among man, his culture and his bio-physical surrounding .It creates an overall perspective, which acknowledges the fact that natural environment and man-made environment is interdependent. It should consider the environment in its totality and should be a continuous lifelong process beginning at the pre-school level and continuing through all stages. It should about and from the examine major environmental issues from local, national and international points of view. It should utilize various educational approaches to teach and learn about and from the environment with stress on practical activities and first-hand experience. It is through this process of education that people can be sensitized about the environmental issues.

Importance of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define; it is also continually evolving, which makes it doubly difficult to define. One of the original descriptions of sustainable development is credited to the Brundtland Commission: "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p 43). Sustainable development is generally thought to have **three components: environment, society, and economy**. The well-being of these three areas is intertwined, not separate. For example, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens. The sustainability paradigm rejects the contention that casualties in the environmental and social realms are inevitable and acceptable consequences of economic development. Thus, the authors consider sustainability to be a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life.

Sustainable development is development that lasts. It has been defined by the Brundtland Commission as "meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the needs of future generation." Poverty removal is the biggest challenge of today, meeting the needs of the poor today is an essential aspect of sustainability meeting of subsequent generation. Infact, the present should meet their needs without compromising the ability of future generation for meeting their needs.



Principles of Sustainable Development

Many governments and individuals have pondered what sustainable development means beyond a simple one-sentence definition. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* fleshes out the definition by listing 18 principles of sustainability.

- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- Nations have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, but without causing environmental damage beyond their borders.
- Nations shall develop international laws to provide compensation for damage that activities under their control cause to areas beyond their borders.
- Nations shall use the precautionary approach to protect the environment. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, scientific uncertainty shall not be used to postpone cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- Nations should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and promote appropriate demographic policies.
- Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. Nations shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.
- Nations shall enact effective environmental laws, and develop national law regarding liability for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. Where they have authority, nations shall assess the environmental impact of proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact.
- Nations should cooperate to promote an open international economic system that will lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries. Environmental policies should not be used as an unjustifiable means of restricting international trade.
- The polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.
- Sustainable development requires better scientific understanding of the problems. Nations should share knowledge and innovative technologies to achieve the goal of sustainability.
- The full participation of women is essential to achieve sustainable development. The creativity, ideals and courage of youth and the knowledge of indigenous people are needed too. Nations should recognize and support the identity, culture and interests of indigenous people.
- Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

The "Rio principles" give us parameters for envisioning locally relevant and culturally appropriate sustainable development for our own nations, regions, and communities. These principles help us to grasp the abstract concept of sustainable development and begin to implement it.

Parameters for Sustainable Development

- care the environment through environmental education
- development and environmental protection
- proper management of industries wastes
- proper management of polluted water
- development through environmental care
- polluted free society and environment
- social, economic and cultural development



Teaching of Environmental Values

Environmental educators also agree that promoting respect for the environment, teaching values related to the environment and encouraging environmentally responsible behaviors should be integral part of an environmental curriculum. Environmental Education may become one of the most important areas of teaching as continued destruction of vital ecosystem threatens the environmental balance. Educating younger children is extremely important, given that most attitudes are set and difficult to change by the time students are in high school (Jaus, 1982). Younger children are eager to learn about their surroundings. They explore, dig, collect and observe organisms. Beginning of Environmental Education in the early grades also validated the concepts and discoveries they have already made.

In Environmental education, the emphasis should be on developing the values of social responsibility, concern for others, the harmony with nature. Action, which will lead to the development and reinforcement of these values, should stem from a problem solving situation focusing on an environment-related issue. Action learning as a strategy is potentially effective in the development of the values supportive of environmental preservation and protection because to its inbuilt opportunities for activities calculated to offset the growing problem of environmental degradation. The target values in action learning could well be social responsibilities and concern for others as well as harmony with nature.

Role of Environmental Education in Sustainable Development

In 1977, the Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Georgia emphasized the role of Environmental Education in preserving and improving the global environment and sought to provide the framework and guidelines for environmental education. The Conference laid out the role, objectives, and characteristics of environmental education, and provided several goals and principles for environmental education.

October 14–26, 1977-The Tbilisi Declaration development and conservation "noted the unanimous accord in the important role of environmental education in the preservation and improvement of the world's environment, as well as in the sound and balanced development of the world's communities." The Tbilisi Declaration updated and clarified The Stockholm Declaration and The Belgrade Charter by including new goals, objectives, characteristics, and guiding principles of environmental education.

Environmental Education is an important instrument which can play a significant role in development of environmental awareness among the students at school, colleges, and universities level. Environmental awareness can be enhanced in the society through formal, informal and non-formal education systems. Environmental education should be an integral part of curriculum and based upon environmental values, ethics, common knowledge and interest of the students. For protection of environment from pollution, environmental education should be an integral part of school system and related with their daily life activities. The students can be aware regarding environmental pollution problems and bound to think towards protection of environment.

It was visualized that in the planning process and in the implementation of development projects, environmental considerations must be based on an understanding of the emerging issues and responsibilities. Environment with its living and non-living resources, represents the most fundamental building blocks for national development and social well being. Its sustainability is inevitable for sustainable development. But because of pressure generated by the rapid population growth, increasing poverty, large and growing numbers of animals and misuse and unplanned use of natural resources for industrial and agricultural development its sustainability was under threat.

Through environmental education, we can aware the students, people, economists, policy planner, industrialists and polluters regarding environmental pollution and its problems. It is fact that environmental education can play vital role in maintaining the sustainable development and in protection of the environment. It is an important tool through which we can develop the environmental aware among the students and common mass, especially factory owners and industrialist for safety of the environment and earth. It is fact that environmental education can play a significant role in protecting the environment and sustaining the



development; without environmental safety and precaution development is harmful for the society. Therefore, environmental education is only the tool which can play a vital role in sustaining the development without environmental loss.

CONCLUSION

In fact, environmental education can play an important role in development of environmental awareness among the human beings for protection of environment from the hazard conditions for safety of the society. The students can be aware regarding environmental pollutions and its effects on human life; they can also be trained regarding various techniques and methods for protection of environment through environmental education. Therefore, knowledge of environmental education is essential to all the students and common people, it should be the integral part of curriculum in schools, colleges, and universities and linked with environmental importance and values and sustainable development.

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