

Environmental Education and Awareness: An Overview

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I. INTRODUCTION

Environment Education: The Path of Sustainable development.Promoting a sense of responsibility through environment education.Environmental education (EE) aims to create an environmentally literate citizenry, poised and motivated to take action on pressing environmental issues—from climate change to habitat conservation and from endangered species to water scarcity. Environmental education is about engaging students, community members, policy makers, the young and the old. It is about empowerment, skills development, and providing opportunities for action. At its best, environmental education represents hope and change.

Indian society has been environment and natural friendly since times immemorable in its scriptures, religious history and education, environment has halo of religious tinge. People worshipped nature as demi God i.e. sun, fire, sky, water and earth (Dharitri mata) alongside some trees, rivers, animals which are environment friendly, were declared God.

The United Nations has designated the period 2005 to 2014 as the decade of "Education for Sustainable Development". The objective is to integrated the concept of sustainable development in education process around the world. environmental education is an integral aspect of this concept. It is a process of action-oriented, political learning. The European Green Dot programme is making a significant contribution to making people promote sustainable development.

Need For Environmental Education

- All major natural resources in the country are in grave danger of irreparable damage.
- A society cannot survive if its natural resources are rendered unfit for use by its people.
- The only hope of salvaging this grave situation is by making the young aware that they need to proactively begin to protect the environment they will inherit.
- Science and Technology can help in a limited way but cannot deliver it.
- Development process and ignorance of people about retaining the ecological balance. Indeed, no citizen of the earth can afford to remain aloof from the issues related to the environment. It is therefore that the study of the environment becomes an integral part of the education.

Environmental Education (E.E.):

It is a process to promote the awareness and understanding of The environment, its relationship with man and his activities. It is also aimed at developing responsible actions necessary for preservation, conservation and improvement of the environment and its components. Despite these differences of meanings, we shall include all these under the umbrella of E.E. for the purpose of this study. Any curriculum working for all or any of these objectives shall be considered as E.E. curriculum. There are some excellent accounts that throw light on different aspects of E.E. and have provided guidelines from time to time.

The Concept Of Environmental Education:-

Various combinations of words such as Environmental Education (E.E.). Environmental study (E.S.) and Environmental Approach (E.A.) are being used in the literature in the context of environment and education. Although, according to semantics of the words, E.E., E.S and E.A. have different meanings in the strict sense of The terms, but one finds that these are being used many a time synonymously and interchangeably. We consider here the implications of E.E., E.S and E.A. and see in which context these are relevant and important, and how these are related to teacher training Programmes. Environmental Education (E.E.) : Encyclopaedia of Educational Research (Mifzel 1982) states : Defining 'environmental education' is not an easy task. Unlike other curriculum areas, the specific content of E.E. has never been well defined. It is universally agreed, however, that environmental education should be interdisciplinary, drawing from biological, sociological, anthropological,

economic political and human resources. ! It is also agreed that a conceptual approach to teaching E.E. is best. The majority also agrees that E.E. is the process of recognising values and clarifying concept related with environment and its problems in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand surroundings. It also entails practices in decision making and self formulating a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality.

The concept of environmental education can be classified as:

1) Education for the Environment

Environmental education is a pragmatic response of the defacement of the environment. Environmental education is a kind of education which will seek to make pupils fully aware of the problems connected with their environment so that they will be able to tackle these problems with a sense of responsibility.

2) Education about the Environment:

Environmental Education includes conservation, outdoor and natural resource education as well as nature study but it also includes every thing that relates to man and his environment. E.E. is the study of man and how he shapes his total natural and cultural surroundings for good or ill.

3) Education through the Environment

Environmental education is not a separate subject. It is a multi-disciplinary approach both to education and to the problem of environment.

II. AIMS; OBJECTIVES AND ATTRIBUTES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION :

Aims :-

The specific aims of E.E. fall into three groups (Vidart, 1978) :

1. Cognitive aims : These include importing knowledge about environment and an ability to think which will enable the individual and his social group to work out political solution to the wide variety of problems connected with environment.'
2. Normative aims These relate to the inculcation of ecological awareness which will be conducive to The creation of modification of value models enabling The individual and the group to identify the factors that upset the environment equilibrium (which is nothing other than the ecological equilibrium) and protest against them.
3. Technical and applicative aims This means planning collective practices which preserve, improve or restore the quality of life, as understood by the community in the light of formal and informal education in such a way that the demands made by economic development do not conflict with the biological rhythms of The ecosys tern.

Objectives

The objectives of E.E. programmes are drawn on The basis of the objectives described in Belgrade charter. In practical terms the objectives of E.E. have been stated by Stapp et al. (1970 P.80) as follows :

1. A clear understanding that man is inseparable part of a system, consisting of man, cultural and biophysical environment and the man has ability to alter The interrelation of this system.
2. A broad understanding of the biophysical environment both natural and man-made, and its role in ' The contemporary society.
3. A fundamental understanding of the biophysical environmental problems confronting man, how these problems can be solved and the responsibilities of The citizens and government to work towards their solution.
4. Attitude of concern for the quality of biophysical environment that will motivate citizens to participate in biophysical environment problem solving.

Attributes

1. There is increasing literature on E.E. and some of it describes its characteristics. The commonly agreed characteristics are (Unesco, 1981);
2. Environmental education should be integrated into The whole system of formal education at all levels;
3. Environmental education should be interdisciplinary in nature;
4. Environmental education should adopt a holistic perspective which will examine the ecological, social, cultural and other aspects of particular problems;
5. E.E. should be centred on practical problems related to real life; and
6. E.E. should aim of building up sense of values.

Challenges of EE in India

The implementation of EE in Sabah is not without challenges. Although more organisations are giving priority to EE as compared to 20 years ago, challenges whether big or small remain in this field. Among others, challenges faced by EE implementers are:

- To win broader support for EE
- Changing people's attitude
- Generating action for environment
- Limited funding
- Duplication of activities
- Lack of skills
- Lack of co-ordination
- Effective policy must be implemented to curb consumption by the affluent
- We need moral education to instill genuinely environment respecting moral values in the young student society.
- Conventional educational methodology is no longer adequate for the real needs of tomorrow
- Though there are definitional and implementation flaws, environment NGOs and activists need to be given credit and accolades for creating a nation-wide awareness of the crisis of environment deterioration.
- Future student generation must acquire knowledge and skills in technologies and keep pace with rapid advances in practically in all areas.
- The communication perspective opens the door to another kind of tools that environmental educators can use in order to improve the educational practice.
- Minds on experience is also needed with Hands on experience.

Suggestions for a successful implementation of EE campaign

For a successful implementation of EE programme or campaign, the following principles are Essential:

Focused targets

- There must be goal, specific targets, milestones and a set of activities.

Flexible strategy

- Regular reviews and monitoring.

Effective communications

- Prepare effective communication strategies.

Regular reporting

- Set up reporting measures.

Strong leadership

- Strong staff leadership. (knowledge, skill, commitment)

Firm funding

- Available funding.

Evaluation, monitoring and lesson learning

- To improve further, evaluation, monitoring, constant learning and adaptation are required when selecting the type of activity, the characteristics of the target groups must be considered carefully.

Choice of language

- Local languages and informal those are most effective in the rural areas.

Level of reading, verbal and visual literary

- The levels of reading, verbal and visual literary must be studied to enable the appropriate use of printed information, verbal communication and graphics. Straightforward illustrations and colorful printed information are more attractive as well.

Traditional media

- Media such as radio and television should also be considered because they are most effective in rural area and urban area, respectively.

There is no single best methodology for each target group. It is best to design programmes according to the wider context namely theme and message, purpose of activity, expected outcome, budget and resources available. Target groups need to be specifically defined as well. The following table outlines some of the target groups and suggested methodologies for EE:

TARGET GROUP	SUGGESTED METHODOLOGY
Rural community	Visit, talks, drama, role play, poster, community training, competition among students, religious gatherings, mobile EE units, mobile health units, mobile libraries, mobile internet units
Environmental NGOs	Workshops, seminars, field trips, training by relevant experts, co-organising activities, grants giving
Editors of local papers	Personal appointment, preparation of series of articles
Columnist, feature writers and reporters of local newspapers	Workshops, seminars, field trips
Local Radio DJs	Provision of information materials, factsheets, magazines
Private sector – CEOs, senior managers, officers	Printed materials, AV talks, trips, seminars
Professional bodies	Printed materials, AV talks, workshops, seminars
Members of State Assembly, Members of Parliament	Invitation to special events, newsletter, emails
Political leaders and workers	Dialogue, meetings, workshops
Religious leaders/bodies	Courtesy calls, meetings, invitation to sit in working group or relevant committees.
Teachers’ trainers/lecturer	Provision of easy-to-use teaching aids (e.g. EE education kits), talks, training, field trips
Principals/Headmaster	Through District Education Office or HQ. Special functions and ceremonies.
Teachers	Provision of teaching aids, training, workshops, use of education centres, field trips
Tertiary students	Field trips, talks, workshops
Teacher trainees	Talks, training, workshops, field trips
Government officials departmental heads	Invitation to special events, newsletter, emails, coorganising activities, grant giving, implementing agency
Government staff	Briefings, newsletter, emails, printed materials, coorganising Activities
Kindergarten children	Trips, visual, games, story book, sticker
Teenagers	Celebrity/idol as ambassadors for conservation
Youth	Competition for designing animated flash clips and creative SMS messages
Students (upper secondary)	Camps, field trips, talks, competitions, career guidance
Students (upper secondary)	Camps, field trips, talks, competitions, career guidance
Students (lower secondary)	Trips, talks, games, visual, competitions
Students (upper primary)	Trips, talks, competitions, visual, games, story books,stickers
Student (lower primary)	Trips, visual, games, story book, stickers
Local visitors/day trippers	Conducted activities, interpersonal communication, guided walk, exhibitions, brochures
Housewives	Mass media
Forest Management Units (owners, managers, workers), communities around forested area	Training in sustainable forestry management, wildlife, management issues, wildlife-human conflict

III. CONCLUSION

Sustenance of “Nature” that is the key to the development of future of mankind. It is the duty and responsibility of each one of us to protect nature. It is here that the understanding of the “Environment” comes in the picture.

It is high time to follow an ideology religiously that evokes the necessity and responsibility of human to respect, protect and preserve the natural world for its anthropogenic affection. To promote EA group learning, informational and inspirational seminars, environment books and brochures are just a few of the tools that can get us involved in promoting the effects on environment, in that way, we have to follow the path of our ancestors, who revered and worshipped nature as a result, their achievement was safe from rapacious hands.

EA fosters a sense of connection to the natural world, promotes sustainable development and encourages conservation of irreplaceable natural resources and vulnerable plant & animal species. EA aims at developing responsible actions necessary for preservation, conservation and improvement of the environment and its components EA seems as an educational tool helping people around the world, understand the economic aesthetic and biological importance of preserving natural resources and eliminating or reducing the harmful aspects of man-made alteration. It helps people to understand the consequences of human activities or various levels indentifies remedial solutions.

With the advancement of science and technology, commerce & trade mentality of people was also commercialized and he started exploiting nature for his gain, as a result water bodies got polluted, forests disappeared, species of animals were extinct or the verge of extinction. It is high time to wake, otherwise situation will be like Cap town (Africa) which is declared a waterless town. Statistics show situation is horrible, but not so the hope and results, if all the classes of society take a stride towards solutions. Collectively, every

section, religion classes, members of every walk of life has to wake up as high alert and plunge himself in the goal to save The posterity.

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