

Environmental Education: A Necessity To Mankind.

By : Poonam Bhagat

Abstract

The Planet is our first home; it needs much more maintenance for its existence, compared to the efforts we put into its destruction. The environment is the only source of the water we drink, the food we eat, and, most importantly, the shelter for living. In short, it accomplishes our primary requirements in life. However, there are two sides to every coin. We cannot expect our environment to pay off its duties when we do not care about our responsibilities. If we create a huge gap between rights and duties, all we face is a harmful imbalance. Well, we are already in the stage of bearing the consequences. For controlling the situation, the only way out is Environment Education in India as well as in whole World. Today, it is a need for such education not only in India but across the globe. Environment Education has a significant role in making the youth conscious about their environment. This paper focuses on the need of environmental education.

Keywords : Environment, Ecology, Environmental Education.

Introduction

Environment refers to the interaction between the physical, chemical and biological components. Ecology is the study of the relationship between organisms and their environment. **Ramdeo Misra** laid the foundations of ecology and environmental science in the country. He was called as 'father of Indian ecology' by the ecologists world over.

Environment derived from the French word "Environer" means surround. Generally everything that surrounds and affects living organisms is called the environment. As per **Environment(Protection) Act 1986**, "Environment includes

water, air and land and the inter-relationships that exist among and between water, air and land, and human beings, other living creatures, plants, microorganism and property". Environment means all surroundings which individuals gain awareness of their environment and acquire knowledge, skills, values, experiences, and also the determination, which will enable them to act - individually and collectively - to solve present and future environmental problems.

Components of Environment

The basic components of the environment are atmosphere or the air, lithosphere or the rocks and soil, hydrosphere or the water, and the living component of the environment or the biosphere.

- **BIOTIC COMPONENTS (LIVING)**: It consists of the living parts of the environment, including the association of a lot of interrelated populations that belong to different species inhabiting a common environment. The populations are those of the animal community, the plant community and the microbial community. **BIOTIC COMPONENTS (LIVING)** consists of the living parts of the environment, including the association of a lot of interrelated populations that belong to different species inhabiting a common environment.

The biotic community is divided into:

- Autotrophs,
 - Saprotrophs, and
 - Heterotrophs
- **ABIOTIC COMPONENTS (NON-LIVING):** these are the most important determining factor of where and how well an organism exists in the environment. Although these factors interact with each other, one single factor can limit the range of an organism thus acting as the limiting factor.

These factors can be categorized into following groups:

Physical factors and
Inorganic And Organic Substances.

Environmental Principles

Nature knows best

- All forms of life are equally important
- Everything is interconnected
- Everything changes
- Everything must go somewhere
- Ours is a finite earth
- Nature is beautiful

Environmental Education : Meaning and Definition

Environmental Education a complex process, covering not just events, but a strong underlying approach to society building as a whole. Environmental Education provides people with the awareness needed to build partnerships, understand NGO activities, develop participatory approaches to urban planning, and ensure future markets for eco-business. 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, 1977).

The thing is that society is changing very rapidly. We have new innovation, ideas etc The demands of public are very high. To meeting needs of general mass there is huge destruction of natural as well as man made environment. There are arising many problems like Climate change, Drought, Soil Erosion, Pollution of many types, Ozone depletion etc. Introduction of Environmental Education is really a catalyst to World. Environmental Education has a key role in propelling the transition to a sustainable future. To bring about awareness and an effective change in attitudes traditional approach to environmental education may not be enough. Innovative ideas need to be incorporated to involve students and communities to acquire knowledge and more importantly skills to face the challenges to our environment and eco-systems due to pollution, rising global temperatures and other factors.

According to **UNESCO**, "Environmental Education implements environment conservation goals."

According to the report of a conference of **African Educators at Nairobi (1968)** "Environmental Education is to create an awareness and understanding of the evolving social and physical environment as a whole, its natural, man-made, cultural, spiritual resources together with the rational use and conservation of these resources for development."

The IUCN Commission of Education (1970) stated that “Environmental Education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his bio-physical surroundings.”

National Policy on Education, 1986 has laid great stress on the need for introducing environmental education at all educational levels. It states that, “There is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permit all the ages and all sections of the society”.

Components of Environmental Education :

Environmental education does not relate to supporting a particular viewpoint or a course of action. Instead, it refers to the conditional analysis of an existing ecological issue and coming up with a precise solution.

Education in this field helps an individual to develop:

- Problem-solving skills, and
- Decision-making ability.

Let us now discuss the components of Environment Education that help us with the relevant study.

• Sensitivity and Awareness:

For providing a solution, you first need to know and understand the environmental problems. So, you should be active enough to know about your environmental surroundings.

Apart from that, you shall also be sensitive enough to analyze the overall scenario and act accordingly.

• Knowledge As Well As Understanding:

Once you are aware of the environmental situation, you should focus on building knowledge about the same. It is possible only through extensive study of the subject.

As you are acknowledged, you can possess a better understanding of environmental challenges.

• Positive Attitude:

Each one of us knows that the present environmental condition is not acceptable. However, it is our actions that have put our environment in the current situation. So, the improvement in our attitude can make a difference.

All we need to do is develop the concern and spread the motivation regarding the same.

• Skill Enhancement:

One of the primary components of the Environment Education is skill enhancement. It helps individuals to identify environmental challenges and propose a relevant solution for the same.

You can readily analyze the situation and then immediately come up with ideas for improvement.

• Participation:

Last, but the essential component of environmental education is Participation. Neither government nor NGOs can alone bring about a difference.

It is the participation of every 'I' that can create an impact of our imagination.

History of Environmental Education

The first Earth Day celebrated on 22 April 1970—the national education on environmental problems—paved the way for modern education. Later that the year, President Nixon ratified the Environment Education Act which aimed to include environmental education in K-12 schools. Then in 1971 the National Association for Environmental Education (also known as the North American Association) For Environmental Education was created to promote environmental education program and improve environmental literacy by providing resources for teachers. Internationally, environmental education gained recognition when the UN Conference on the Human Environment declared environmental education as essential tool for tackling global environmental problems. The United Nations Education Scientific and cultural organization UNESCO and UNEP made three major announcements that guided the flow of environmental education.

Stockholm Declaration

05-16 June Declaration of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child. This manifesto contained seven declaration and twenty-six principles designed to inspire and direct the world of people toward the protection and improvement of the human environment.

Belgrade Charter

13-22 October 1975 the Belgrade Charter was the result of the International Workshop on Environmental Education held in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. The Belgrade Charter was built on the Stockholm Declaration and sums up the goals, objectives, and guiding principles of the environmental education program. It defines the audience for environmental education, which includes the general public.

Georgia announces

14-26 October 1977 Tbilisi Declaration by Unanimous Acceptance of improvement and conservation of the environment across the world, as well as a significant role in environmental education with the robust and moderate growth of communities around the world.

Broad Guidelines for Environmental Education:

The report of the First-Inter-Governmental Conference on Environmental Education, Tbilisi, USSR (1977) provides the following broad guidelines for Environmental Education.

Environmental education should:

- i. Be interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary in its approach.
- ii. Consider the holistic environment.
- iii. be continuous, beginning at the pre-school level and continuing through all the formal and non-formal stages.
- iv. examine the major environmental issues critically from the local, regional, national and international point of view;
- v. dwell on the current and future environmental trends and scenarios;
- vi. help learners discover the symptoms and real causes of environmental problems and plan accordingly;

Curriculum for Environmental Education:

The Government of India announced a National Policy on Education in 1986. While recognizing the guidelines for imparting environment education, it emphasizes that, “there is a paramount need to create an environmental consciousness.”

NCERT approach for environmental education NCERT lays emphasis upon the following aspects:

- (i) Population
- (ii) Land and its uses
- (iii) Different types of resources and their uses
- (iv) Food and nutrition
- (v) Pollution
- (vi) Man and Nature relationship.

Environmental education at the Pre-primary and primary level :

The environmental education in India has a traditional base and its starts from early childhood at home and in immediate neighbourhood. During early childhood manipulative skills are developed through helping in the home and at play. Knowingly and unknowingly one receives informal training in personal hygiene, problems of food and water contamination.

At the pre-primary level the basic objectives should be to address the child's emotional orientation to nature and to the environment of home and neighbourhood. However, at the primary level the students should be molded to understand the importance of environmental protection and should be exposed directly to the nature and environment.

Hence, formal environmental education can be introduced with the subjects like hygiene, study of nature, population education and values.

Environmental Education at the Secondary Level:

Education at the secondary level must emphasize at least one of the following approaches to study nature and environment:

- (a) Involving children in out-of-school activities, problem solving and community activities related to environmental problems.
- (b) Giving them inputs on basic environmental factors such as ecology, resource distribution, population dynamics, population balance, and the problems of hunger and starvation.

Environmental Education at college and University level:

Universities and Colleges should celebrate the following programme for enhancing environmental awareness for example;

1. World environment day- 5th June
2. World forestry day- 21st March
3. World Soil day- 5th December
4. Wildlife week- 1st-7th October
5. National Cleanliness day- 30th January

What needs to be done?

1. Teachers can play a pivotal role in transmitting knowledge and creating awareness about the environment through curricular activities.
2. Teachers should take initiatives in designing the program of environmental education.
3. Collaborative ventures could be created between the teachers and community.
4. Technology mediated learning can play a major role in dissemination of knowledge.
5. Non formal channels of education like T.V. Radio, Press and Satellite technology can be effectively utilized for capacity building of environment educators.
6. Various co-curricular activities related to environmental awareness such as essay competition, debate, drama, song, etc should be organized through out the year.
7. Swach Bharat Abhiyan" should be implemented in all universities.
8. Afforestation with selective tree species like Albizia lebbeck, Zizibhus jujuba, Cassia fistula should be initiated as they are tolerant to air pollution.
8. Some tree species are mitigating the air particulate like Mango, Tamarind, Ashoka, Pongamia, Ficus religiosa and Azadirachta indica .
9. Proper waste disposal mechanism should be adopted in Universities
10. Smoking and chewing tobacco and Gutka and alcohol should be prohibited in the campus.
11. Polythene bags in the campus (Hostels, staff quarters, office) should be totally banned .
12. Parking zone for two and four wheelers for preventing sound and air pollution.

Methods for Environmental Education

1.Explanation process (Lecture Method) – The method of discussion is a form of group work in which the instructor and the students collaborate to jointly identify the issue at hand and come up with a solution to it. This approach may only be utilized with students who already possess a fundamental understanding of the material. The storytelling approach is one in which the instructor tells the students a series of tales that are centered on a particular theme .

2.Debate Method (Discussion Method) – The discussion approach to teaching is a group activity that involves both the instructor and the student to clarify the issue at hand and find a solution to it. The method of discussion can also be regarded as a productive process that requires the learner to demonstrate their abilities in listening, thinking, and speaking.

3.Project Method - The project method includes several different steps: first, the instructor and the students investigate a particular environmental topic; then, the students select a problem that is significant to them; finally, the students create and carry out an action plan. The pupils gradually take on the responsibilities of a manager who is competent to deal with issues about the environment as each phase is completed.

4.Sightseeing Method (Excursion Method) – A trip taken by a group of individuals, in this case for the aim of gaining knowledge, is known as an excursion. It adds variety to the classroom, which is helpful for both the students and the teachers, and it enables various learning methodologies for the teachers to implement in their classes.

5.External study process (Out - door Study Method) - External study means pupils leave school to study in nature, like a river, cave, mountain, or forest. Raglan, village e.t.c environment of study for take gone go is, the external study of complete programmers to caution before ready did go is by which student external study of duration in desired observation do to be able.

6.Exhibition Method– Exhibitions create the expectation that all students, not just a small number of students, are capable of generating high-quality work and will share that work with people outside of their classroom. This expectation applies to both the students and the teachers who oversee the exhibitions. They inspire all of the kids to perform to the best of their abilities so that they can be proud of the work that they have accomplished [14].

7.Play process (Game Method) – Building the students' capacity for self-determination through the use of games that focus on environmental protection and a positive attitude can be accomplished. A significant role can be played by the younger children of education providers. Environmental education can also be utilized in this process.

Role of Teacher in Providing Environmental Education:

The need to have personnel who will be able to integrate environmental education into formal and non-formal education programmes and further implement these programmes calls for the training of teachers in Environmental Education.

The teachers should create awareness for environment pollution and remedial measures. He should organize debates, competitions, discussions and dramas to enlighten the students. Visits to dense forests are organised so that students should develop a taste for natural beauty and acquire knowledge of flora and fauna.

The teacher should organize different co-curricular activities. The treatment of environment pollution along-with prevention of environmental pollution is taught to the students in detail, in order to make them a way of life for the students.

Need of Environmental Education

The purpose of the Environmental Education is not to add burdens to the school and higher education curriculum. It aims at building a responsible human that thinks for life and acts for safeguarding the environment.Environmental education does not advocate a particular viewpoint or course of action. Rather, environmental education teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision-making skills.The National Environmental Education Act of 1990 requires EPA to provide national leadership to increase environmental literacy. EPA established the Office of Environmental Education to implement this program.Environmental Education activities in India may be funded by a variety of sources, including government grants, foundations, and corporate social responsibility initiatives. Environmental Education is compulsory by directive of the Supreme Court of India. The National Council of Educational Research and Training is the nodal agency to oversee the directions.

Environmental Education

- Increases public awareness and knowledge of environmental issues
- Provides facts or opinions about environmental issues

- Does teach individuals critical-thinking
- Does not necessarily teach individuals critical-thinking
- Does enhance individuals' problem-solving and decision-making skills
- Does not necessarily enhance individuals' problem-solving and decision-making skills.
- Does not advocate a particular viewpoint.
- Environmental education helps to spread public awareness about the alarming stage of the environment.
- With environmental education, it is possible to project unbiased responses towards the environment.
- You will automatically start analysing your actions in terms of its short-term and long-term impact on the environment.
- Environment Education grants a gift of problem-solving and decision making to an individual.

Each one of us has an equal right on the Environment, Don't you think we possess equivalent duties too?

For a better understanding of our roles and responsibilities towards the environment, Environment Literacy is a must.

Does Environmental Education Help to Save Our Planet?

Education in India does not limit to subjective knowledge anymore. It is all about the comprehensive study of your interest and validation of your existence.

The focus is on the overall awareness and development of an individual. For supporting the same, Environment education became a compulsion in 2003.

As a matter of fact, educators reveal that environmental education is highly beneficial. It behaves as a catalyst to set reasonable short-term and long-term goals for the protection of the environment.

Say, for example, A person with complete awareness of the environment, will:

- Keep his/her surroundings clean
- Take no steps that can add to pollution
- Share his or her knowledge with others
- Motivate their friends and family to become environment friendly
- Not only protect a tree from being cut but plant two other trees, if we observe destroying of a single plant

It can never be valid for a person who does not know the ABC of environmental issues.

So, Yes, Environment Education helps to save our planet in all ways. This study makes us build a strong bond with nature, and we can never think to cause any harm to it.

We should not do anything that causes harm to our mother nature. We all should develop a sense of respect towards our mother nature.

Conclusion

Environment Education is the key to creating sustainable transformations in the environment. It is essential to maintain a balance between technological advancements and ecological harmony. The basic purpose of eco-education and the community building of this method is that it is a storehouse of accurate information on the interrelationships of nature and organisms, and the way our conduct leads to the natural norms of well-adjusting. It is for the environment that environmental education is achieved by making decisions. Advanced environmental education includes cognition, development, skills, assessment, skills, and emotional involvement. Environmental education is the primary need today to save the total humanity that is suffering and fears the problems of the environment and the problems of prevalence and expansion and to make the future happy.. In avoiding all crises and issues and in human security, environmental education is essential to mankind. So, **let us pledge** to opt for **environmental education** to improve our human behavior towards the environment.

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