



ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS EDUCATION

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Introduction

Environmental Education basically provides knowledge about the awareness about issues pertaining to the environment, environmental problems and its protection. Off late, it is considered as one of the most important field of knowledge wherein individuals are able to analyze from various angles the environmental issues to find suitable solutions to environmental problems. Creation of awareness about one's own environment through Environmental Education and training is a means to increase the level of understanding of the people at all levels about the relationship between human beings and the environment to improve their life and protect the environment.

The first landmark in the history of Environmental Education was the United Nations Conference on Human Environment at Stockholm in 1972 followed by International Workshop on Environment Education at Belgrade, 1975 and the launch of the International Educational Programme jointly by UNESCO and UNEP. The public awakening to environmental pollution and general environmental problems culminated in the first Earth Day in 1970, which can be seen as the root of modern Environmental Education. Environmental Education has compulsorily been introduced in all the educational institutions with many specific objectives to develop among students 1) awareness, 2) knowledge and understanding, 3) attitude, 4) skill and 5) volunteering tendency in participation. Recently, the Environmental Education focus has been particularly on education about environment with reference to Sustainable Development (ESD) and Sustainable Future (ESF), which have complex and manifold objectives. A scrupulous appraisal of objectives of environmental education different levels was carried out such as historical, socio-developmental, policy making and magnitude of environmental degradation at present Environmental Education in India

Similarly, Indian educational policies of different periods from 1952 to 2008 have stressed increasingly the need and importance of Environmental Education. Several Environmental Laws have also been enforced for very strict and stringent measures to cope up with challenges of human interference with environment. Hence, the future education should be mainly for saving humankind from man-made environmental catastrophe and the future slogan and the objective for Environmental Education is "Education for Life Long Living with Nature".

Kothari Commission (1966) emphasized that the prominent aim of education was to inculcate moral values. National Education Policy (1986) expressed its concern towards environment. Environmental values are to be inculcated through the process of appreciating our environmental assets and their functioning. Article 51 of the Constitution expects that every citizen of the country must “protect and improve the natural environment, including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have compassion for all living creatures.”

The goal of Environmental Education is to develop in the world population the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivation and commitment to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current environmental problems and prevention of new ones. In order to create a thoughtful and informed citizenry which is knowledgeable about the environment, we must focus on the impact Environmental Education has within our educational system. Since teachers serve a critical role in our educational systems, knowing their level of understanding of environmental concepts will be helpful of assessing the magnitude of their impact on society which is aware of its environment.

Education is the most powerful tool to mould a nation. Educating the youth about the environment in which they live is a real concern of India today. Environmental Education even though occupies a major place in school curriculum; little importance is given to its effective transaction. This has led to a failure of achieving the goals of Environmental Education

The concepts of Environmental Education at different levels have to impart adequate knowledge about environment and environmental issues and also develop their attitudes, skills of environmental preservation. Hence, the transactional process of Environmental Education should be participatory and interactive based on some activities which have an impact on the attitude of children.

Our goal should be that Environmental Education in our country should reach every individual who has multifaceted role to play as an occupant of a specific dwelling, and finally as a citizen of the world.

Objectives of Environmental Education

With the adoption of problem-oriented and action-oriented approach, Environmental Education becomes a continual and forward-looking affair. The Universities may be able to do the following activities in the area of Environmental Education: 1) teaching, 2) training, 3) research and 4) extension.

The objectives of teaching Environmental Science should focus to develop perceptual, conceptual and attitudinal abilities of the learners for insightful learning about their environment. The prime duty of teachers is to sensitize children and society to environmental issues and involve them in environmental protection through curricular and co-curricular activities with a suitable transactional approach.

Environmental Education is inevitable in order to meet the demand of every day life and maintain mental equilibrium for the fulfillment of needs of every citizen on the earth, and for balance and harmony between humanity and environment. It envisages the environmental approach as a way of learning rather than as a subject. For better living students of all the levels must have knowledge about the environment and the issues of the environment. The environmental awareness study helps to comprehend environmental conditions at different levels of consciousness so as to plan for effective curriculum framing and classroom

transaction of multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary subjects.

Need for Environmental Ethics Education.

Our actions are based on the values we nurture and the dominant values influencing contemporary societies

The greed, which is reflected in our consumeristic life style, the will for domination, which are manifested in the power of economic globalization, and the fear, which gets expressed as violence.

“An Environmental Ethics is basically a human ethics based on social justice for all without discrimination of caste, creed, race, colour, sex, ideology, religion or nation” – UNESCO. There are two opposed schools of thought regarding the attitudes of people toward the use of natural resources and environmental problems- the Frontier Ethics and Sustainable Development Ethics.

Frontier Ethics is the belief that earth's resources are meant for human consumption and the economic growth is more important than conservation of nature. Contrary to this is the idea of Sustainable Development Ethics. People believe that resources are limited, humans are a part of nature and do not have a right to control nature. So, we have to use them judiciously and carefully.

Ethics vs Human Needs – need for a new Ecological Morality

However, disturbing questions may be asked when ethics conflicts with equally valuable goals. For example, environmental ethics demands that we have to leave a decent environment for the future generations. Does it mean that we should not feed people who would otherwise die of famine or is it justifiable to protect a national park or a rare animal amidst millions of hungry people? In such situations it is natural that people cut down forests to grow more food. But unfortunately such acts will increase the chance of more people starving to death in the future.

The Key to the Future

“The future of the environment, locally and planet wise, will be shaped not so much by sweeping governmental actions but by each of us, individually in how we use the earth and how we share, how efficient our car, how few our trips, how careful are our farming practices, how controlled is our industrial effluent”.

Environmental Education is the proof of recognizing values and ethics with clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surrounding. Our goal should be that Environmental Education in our country should reach every individual who has multifaceted role to play as an occupant of a dwelling, and finally a citizen of the world.

Objectives of Environmental Ethics Education

The objective of imparting the knowledge and understanding of the various values and sub values are achieved by imbibing the five human values truth, peace, right conduct, love and non violence in the form of story telling, based on the concepts of environment. Today, man possesses more knowledge as well as has acquired more power than ever. In earlier eras, his knowledge was perfectly balanced with his ethics and the old ethical systems were making his power harmonized with the environment. But after the industrial revolution, on the one hand, his knowledge power has tremendously increased, and on the other hand, the ethical systems almost remained at the same old level. So, man has huge and uncontrolled power and the maintained balance has entirely been disordered. To rebalance the current situation we should utilize our old experience. Control of empowered knowledge needs the

same empowered ethics. One of the functional ways to achieve powerful ethics is to share the whole ethical systems around the world to empower the individual ethical systems. This may empower today man's ethics and rebalance the new empowered knowledge in order to bring about eco-friendship attitude for sustainable future.

General Approaches:-

Massive campaign for Environmental Ethics Education awareness at all levels to enlighten all the masses, agencies, business houses and government about the urgency of protection of environment and save the life on the earth.

By focusing the importance of Environmental Ethics Education by creating awareness among the mass about sanitation, healthy behaviour and community health.

By emphasizing on efficient use and wise management of natural resources, including human excreta and domestic waste.

By creating gainful rural employment leading to self sufficiency of food, clothing and shelter.

By exploring the possible ways and means of generating awareness among the masses on disaster preparedness.

By planning activities that help to attain the objectives and Environmental Education and enriching domains for the total life of human beings.

By introducing modernized application of Information Technology in the schools and colleges.

By suggesting the better ways for individual to practice, so that every one's life style becomes eco friendly.

By inculcating activities like Vana Mohatsav, protection of animals, tree plantation,

Because of growing environmental concern, there will likely be a worldwide increase in the demand of Environmental Ethics. In meeting that challenge, the use of information technology (IT) as flexible and innovative tool of learning could be vital. IT has already been applied in monitoring, managing digitizing, recording, analyzing, communicating and synthesizing environmental affairs. The schools, educational institutions research organizations, non-governmental organizations and others could be brought together through Inter-net. The goals of EE network are to promote awareness and understanding of environment, to provide a forum for members to network and discuss issues related to environment and to provide programmes and resources for multidimensional ecological interaction. Certainly, electronic networks have a positive impact on learning and attitudes towards environment.

The Environmental Education should be given at all levels right from the primary education through story telling, tree planting, watching birds and animals, watching T.V. channels about plants and animal. It creates a great love among the children on environment, strengthens the pro-environmental behaviour and courage to prevent anti-environmental activities when they grow up. The spread of these values like truth, love, right conduct, peace and non-violence through Environmental Education, builds a great love and respect for nature for a better world, which ushers a healthy, happy and harmonious sustenance of mankind. In this way we are all kith and kin; man, beast, bird, insect, plant, stone, stream all bound by mutual love, Vasudhika Kutumbakam; the world is one family knit by the one reality which becomes many.

The paper briefly deals with an approach to Environmental Ethics Education at different levels.

By changing Environmental attitude of human beings, action through Environmental Ethics Education such

as

Strategies of Environmental Ethics Education Specific Strategies

To impart knowledge and to develop positive attitude towards environment – by organizing different environmental programmes in all schools and colleges regularly.

To conduct pro-actively adopted activities related to environmental protection.

To ensure personal commitment and action towards protection of environment

To organise educational programmes and focused group discussion about environment in all grades and levels.

To motivate others to be environmental friendly and to create healthy attitude towards environment.

To organise Eco-clubs and their activities in the different levels, to develop positive attitude among Teachers and Students towards the environment.

To create active participation, developing scientific thinking, and enabling to find solutions to the issues of environment.

By propagating and sensitizing the society to participate in environmental conservation strategies such as preventing carbon emission, etc.

To create slogans, cartons and compose poetry on the ways of reducing pollution in small ways, which can make a big difference.

To conduct contests, paintings and visually attractive posters, articles on pollution, collection of pictures, articles from News papers, etc.

To interact with different agencies and organization working for Environmental Education.

To develop Environmental Education based interesting attractive teaching aids to help expressing greater creativity and flexibility in teaching learning process

Conclusion:

Environmental awareness and attitude could be inculcated as good habits at tender age. Hence, young age is the right time to start Environmental Education and “CATCH THEM YOUNG” should be our slogan.

The ability of discovering the cause and effect of relationship among the components of environment, feeling of cooperation, the sense of belongingness to the earth are the essential requirement for desirable attitudinal changes of children to participate in environmental conservation.

Environmental Education that fosters meaningful community participation and learning has been proclaimed as a requisite to sustain our natural environments in many of the global conferences, agreements, declarations and charters since the 1972 UN Conference on the Environment in Stockholm. Similarly the National Action Plan has explicitly recognized that Environmental Education is not confined to formal schooling but occurs in a wide range of non-formal educational settings, while at the state level the same should explicitly advocate, “energizing the community to act responsibly.”

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