

ROLE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN CHANGING LEARNER BEHAVIOR

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Abstract

This paper aims to the usefulness of research for improving practice in environmental education and to identify the effect of environmental education program on the youth. Environmental education is the teaching of how natural environments function and how we as human beings effect the environment through our behavior. Consideration is given to the kinds of research ideas that are used by government to improve environmental awareness. Environment based education is relatively new, innovative and dynamic form of cross curricular education that is focused on the study of the environment. The paper ends by suggesting that questions of research utilization need to be seen within the context of wider debates about professional learning, research-engaged schools, pedagogical change and collaborative inquiry.

Keywords- *environmental education, professional learning, pedagogical change, cross curricular education, research –engaged schools.*

I.INTRODUCTION

1.1 WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION?

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

The components of environmental education are:

- Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges
- Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
- Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality
- Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
- Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

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.

1.2 GOAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

"The goal of environmental education is to develop a world population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations, and commitment to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems.

Education encourages people to use energy and water more efficiently and recycle household waste. By increasing awareness and concern, education can encourage people to reduce their impact on the environment through more efficient use of energy and water supplies, especially in areas of resource scarcity.

II. EDUCATION INCREASES AWARENESS AND CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

Education can help poorer communities respond and react to the impact of climate change. That, by improving knowledge, instilling values, fostering beliefs and shifting attitudes, education has considerable power to help individuals reconsider environmentally harmful lifestyles and behavior.

The completion of higher levels of education does not automatically translate into more responsible behavior towards the environment. But as the influential Stern Review on climate change noted: 'Educating those currently at school about climate change will help to shape and sustain future policy-making, and a broad public and international debate will support today's policy-makers in taking strong action now'.

2.1 EDUCATION ENCOURAGES INDIVIDUALS TO PROTECT THE ENVIRONMENT.

People with more education tend not only to be more concerned about the environment, but also to engage in actions that promote and support political decisions that protect the environment. Such pressure is a vital way of pushing governments towards the type of binding agreement that is needed to reduce greenhouse gases and control emission levels.

In almost all countries participating in the 2010 International Social Survey Programme, respondents with more education were more likely to have signed a petition, given money or taken part in a protest or demonstration, in relation to the environment, over the past five years. In Germany, while 12% of respondents with less than secondary education had taken such political action, the share rose to 26% of those with secondary education and 46% of those with tertiary education.

An analysis of the Global Warming Citizen Survey in the United States also showed that the higher a respondent's education level, the greater his/her activism in terms of policy support, environmental political participation and environment-friendly behavior.

2.2 EDUCATION ENCOURAGES PEOPLE TO USE ENERGY AND WATER MORE EFFICIENTLY AND RECYCLE HOUSEHOLD WASTE.

By increasing awareness and concern, education can encourage people to reduce their impact on the environment through more efficient use of energy and water supplies, especially in areas of resource scarcity. In semi-arid areas of China, for example, educated farmers were more likely to use rainwater harvesting and supplementary irrigation technology to alleviate water shortages. Educated households are also more likely to use different methods of water purification through filtering or boiling. In urban India, the probability of purification increased by 9% when the most educated adult had completed primary education and by 22% when the most educated adult had completed secondary education, even once household wealth is accounted for. Such behavior becomes increasingly important as people in high income countries are called upon to modify their consumption and take other measures that limit environmental harm.

2.3 EDUCATION, HOWEVER, IS NOT A SILVER BULLET. IT MUST BE SUPPORTED WITH GLOBAL POLITICAL LEADERSHIP.

As it becomes increasingly clear how much human action has impacted environmental degradation and climate change, especially through the release of greenhouse gases, attention must turn to education and the need to tap its potential. We are all learners when it comes to the environment and better ways to protect it and the planet we inhabit. In this sense, the notion of lifelong learning is especially apt. This trend will be further supported by the new Sustainable Development Agenda, in which education for global citizenship and sustainable futures is explicitly prioritized in one of the new education targets.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, AWARENESS AND TRAINING (EEAT)

PROGRAMS

Environment Education, Awareness and Training (EEAT) is a central sector Scheme of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched during financial year 1983-84.

The scheme aims to promote environment awareness amongst school and college level students aim to create awareness on various aspects of environment, climate change and connect to nature and are being implemented across the county.

3.1 ADMINISTRATIVE SETUP: Ministries at central level through National Steering committee under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, MoEF&CC guide, oversee and monitor the implementation of programme. The programmes are being implemented in decentralized manner through identified *State Nodal Agencies* across the country.

The major components of scheme, namely

1. National Green Corps (NGC) – “Eco club” Programme
2. National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP)
3. Capacity Building Activities.

About 90,000 Ecoclubs wherein school students are actively involved in 18 - 20 states/UTs in environment related activities like waste segregation, celebration of important environment days, cleanliness drives and plantation drives in and around the school campus. A financial assistance of Rs 5,000/- per school/college with the ceiling of 250 schools per district is being provided under NGC programme for the aforesaid activities.

Under the scheme, an environment awareness initiative has been launched named as “Prakriti Khoj – online Environment Quiz” on 5th September 2017 with an aim to reach out to young aspiring minds of school students through a fun filled interactive learning mode for triggering a sense of awareness towards environment protection and conservation. A separate web portal www.pkeq.nic.in containing information on the quiz has been developed by the Ministry wherein registered students of the Eco clubs of the age group 8-12 years, 13-15 years and 16-18 years are eligible to participate. The first round began on 25th September 2017.

Under National Nature Camping Programme, field visits are being organized in different protected areas of the country for 3 days to create awareness amongst school/college students on environment and nature. In every state/UT, twenty camps each of 50 students are being conducted under this programme with the financial assistance of Rs 20 lakhs per state/UT. Under Capacity Building Activities, training is being provided to teachers as well as students on various thematic areas like Bio-diversity conservation, Waste Management and concept of 3Rs – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Climate Change related issues with focus on Adaptation and Mitigation and Control of pollution etc.

3.2 OUTCOMES

- Sensitization of students (schools as well as college) on various environmental issues.
- Promoting environmentally sustainable practices.
- Creating environment awareness among masses.
- Engagement of target groups in environment friendly action and thereby inculcation of proper attitudes towards the environment and its conservation through community interactions.

3.3 MONITORING MECHANISM:

Monitoring of the programmes is carried out by the Ministry, using the services of Regional Offices/autonomous bodies of the Ministry and Monitoring and Coordination Cell established in the Ministry.

Besides, a third party Evaluation is also there. A MIS portal is also under development in order to bring transparency and accountability.

The objectives of this scheme are being realized through implementation of the following programmes launched over the years:

1. National Green Corps (NGC)
2. National Nature Camping Programme (NNCP)
3. Capacity Building Activities.

IV. DIFFERENT SURVEYS ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In 47 countries covered by the 2005–2008 World Values Survey, the higher a person's level of education, the more likely she was to express concern for the environment. Furthermore in the 2010-2012 World Values Survey, when forced to choose between protecting the environment versus boosting the economy, those respondents with secondary education favoured the environment more than those with less than secondary education. Data from the International Social Survey Programme on 29 mostly high income countries similarly showed that the share of those disagreeing that people worry too much about the environment rose from 25% of those with less than secondary education to 46% of people with tertiary education.

V. CONCLUSION

We all know that it's difficult to change attitudes and practices overnight. Completing education courses, both formal and non-formal, takes time to complete. Therefore, we must also see it as our responsibility to communicate what we think about these global issues. The multiple threats of environmental degradation and climate change have assumed an unprecedented urgency to which we are all obligated to respond. It's time to join hands for change. Multiple goals in the new sustainable development agenda link back to energy, the environment, consumption, lifestyles and ecosystems.

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