

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND ITS CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT:

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, individual 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 an Environmental challenges.
- Attitudes of concern for the Environment and motivation to improve or maintain Environmental quality.
- Skills to identify and help to resolve Environmental Challenges.
- Participation of Environmental does not advocate a particular view point or course 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 scope of environmental education and awareness or Environmental extension services cover all fields of environmental science. This include the effects of man on environment – how he has exploited and devastated it polluted, but more importantly how man can save itself from the problems which he has caused through the abuse, misuse and over – use of resources provided by the nature.

INTRODUCTION:

Environmental Education among the public and policy makers has been growing since 1960's, after the recognitions of the human activities that were harming the Environment on the large scale. Scientific research have played an important role in both understanding and protecting the Environment. The need to have a knowledge of Environmental issues is not confined to Environmental scientists, Engineers and policy makers. In our society all educated citizens need to have a working understanding of the fundamental principles involved for Environmentally responsible decision making through Environment Education. Environmental Education has a mission to achieve. It aims at creating the society of motivated citizens committed to conservation, preservation and protection of the Environment and striving towards a life in protect harmony with Nature.

DEFINITIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION.

1.The most Authoritative and comprehensive definition of Environmental Education is that contained in the draft of the US Environment Education Act, “Environmental Education is an integrated process which deals with men’s in a relationship with his natural and man made surroundings, including the relation of population growth, pollution, resource allocation and depletion, conservation technology and urban and rural planning to the total human Environment, Environmental Education mental and physical health living and working conditions and population pressure and the awareness and understanding of the Environment, our relationship to it, and the concern and responsible action necessary to assure our survival and to improve the quality of life”.

2.According to UNESCO, “Environmental Education is a way of implementing the Environmental protection, it is not a separate branch of science but lifelong inter disciplinary field of study”.

3.According to T bilisi declaration 1978, “Environmental Education is a learning process that increase people knowledge and awareness about the Environment and associated challenges, develop the necessary skills and expertise to address the challenges and posters, attitude, motivations and commitments to make inform decisions and to take responsible action”.

Objectives:

1. The objectives Of Environmental Education are part of the general objectives of Education which have been defined variously by different thinkers, classicists ,humanists and scientists. Herbert Spencer “Education should prepare for complete living, which does not mean leaving in the material sense merely but in the widest sense”.
2. For the accomplishment of most of these objectives Environment Education is an important medium. Zakir Hussain said that “there are three centres of correlation in Gandhi’s basic Education:Natural Environment, Social Environment and Craft Work.These centres should be used to draw out the best in child and man”.
3. Environmental Education is indeed very important for child and adult for self fulfilment and social development. It helps in the maintenance of life and health in self preservation of human race.
4. It helps to understand different food chain and the ecological balance in Nature, it helps understand and appreciate how Environment is used for making a living and for promoting material culture.
5. It helps appreciate different social institutions and regulate relationships in primary groups like family and secondary and tertiary groups like place of work political institutions etc.
6. It directs attention towards the problem of population explosion, existing of natural resources and pollution of Environment and sheds light on the methods of solving these problems.
7. Another. Objective of Environmental Education is relate to creating interests ,forming attitudes fostering values, developing appreciation and making adjustment.
8. To create concern for Environmental quality and conservation and to foster understanding the main relationship and interactions with the Ecosphere.

9. To awaken appreciation of the aesthetic quality of Nature in order to encourage its uses for recreation.
10. Finally Environmental Education is very essential for the successful formulation, implementation and evaluation of its program.

Scope of Environmental Education: The scope of Environmental Education and awareness covers all fields of Environmental Science. This includes the effects of man on Environment - how he has exploited and devastated it, polluted it, but more importantly how man can save himself from the problems, which he has caused through the abuse, misuse and over-use of the resources provided by the Nature. Environmental Education should not only focus in the effects of Environmental degradation, mainly the scope of Environmental Education can be described as "Education from the Environment, Education about the Environment and Education for the Environment".

Environment as a medium of Learning.

It is trite to say that a primary school child has been so much burdened with books that he has no time to enjoy the thrills of childhood. He is made to work always, his daily schedule is very tight, then if we teach children through Natural Environment, then it's very easy to learn for children. One other important objective of studying the Environment is that, students can learn through it a lot of Botany, Zoology, Sociology, History and Economics, there are many advantages of Educational excursions, those relating to Social Environment will be dealt with separately. For making teaching – learning a pleasant and enjoyable job. It is hoped teachers would not miss using it as they can.

Components of Environmental Education: The aim of Environmental Education is clearly to show the economic, social, political and Ecological interdependence of the modern world, in which decisions and actions by different countries can have international repercussions. Environmental Education should in this regard help to develop a sense of responsibility and solidarity among countries and reasons as the foundation for a new international order which will guarantee the conservation and improvement of the Environment. Necessary components for Environmental Education are :-

- Knowledge and Awareness,
- Attitude,
- Skills and capacity building,
- Evaluation and participation.

Classification of Environmental Education: Broadly Environment classified as Natural Environment and Social Environment.

Natural Environment: One other way of classifying Natural Environment is to conceive it as biotic and abiotic. The biotic one includes living being called living biological community, the abiotic one consists of the basic organic and inorganic components of the physical non living environment. Environment like water, carbon dioxide, oxygen etc

Social Environment: Social Environment consists of the social, economic, political and cultural relationship that exist among human beings. The proper appreciation of these relationship is very vital to man survival and development. It is more important now than it was ever before, for the world has relations within the family are also important if people have to live in a healthy social Environment.

Environmental Crisis: Crisis exist both in the physical and social environment. Man has to avert them and to improve his environment for the survival and welfare of his species.

1. One crisis which man has created for himself through his own action is that caused by land dereliction. Which has been taking place increasingly, for man needs land for his personal use.
2. He has also been setting up industries to produce an ever - increasing number of consumer goods which promise to make his life and living comfortable and has in the process been felling trees, destroying forest and despoiling pastures.
3. The reckless destruction of forests and despoliation of pastures have disturbed some food chains.
4. Found in nature and have caused extinction of some species of animals, creating their by an ecological problem.
5. Disposal of industrial and other wastes man has created problem of water pollution for himself. 5. More dangerous crisis is air pollution, for the same air sweeps across all the continent and all of us breathe the same air throughout the world.
6. Apart from these problem of land dereliction and environmental pollution, one other problem is very dangerous to mankind is that of population explosion.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION:

The rationale for Environment Education can be described as the following:

1. Knowledge about the changes that have altered the Environment - land, water, whether, vegetation, social, cultural and political environment are essential components of Environmental Education. Consequently, the general populace should be equipped with all these to be able to solve the problems of the Environment.
2. Land, water, forest and other mineral resources utilization is the dominant feature of Rural Economy with agriculture that driving force. Uncontrolled and improper exploitation of these resources having implications and the environment causing disruption in the living standard, starvation, displacement and human suffering. Environmental Education is therefore necessary to create awareness of the causes and effects of these problems viz: food and water scarcity, pollution, outbreak of epidemics and natural disaster such as flood, erosion and desert and encroachment and of course how to prevent them.
3. Environmental Education is needed to foster international co-operation and understanding.
4. Public enlightenment on the impact of government policies and local environment should be useful both to the government and the local people.
5. Awareness of such global Environmental issues is an essential component of Environmental education which ordinary citizen should be aware of.
6. Environmental education for the over-all social and economic emancipation of women and children. These form a substantial percentage in the utilization of natural resources especially at the rural setting.
7. Environmental education is very essential for our survival on the Earth. The natural resources and cultural heritage need to be protected not only for this generation.

8. To foster clear awareness and concern about economic, social, political and ecological interdependence in urban and rural areas.
9. To create new patterns of behaviours of individuals ,groups and society as a whole towards environment.
10. To provide every person with opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment and skills needed to protect and improve the Environment.

Challenges in implementing environmental education

1. Rapid specialization.
2. Complexity of inter – disciplinary value of Environmental education.
3. High pupil – teacher ratio for organising pupil participation programs.
4. Paucity of qualified trained Environmental educator.
5. Lack of proper resources in terms of equipment, supplementary materials and reference materials.
6. Tendency to resist changes.

CONCLUSION:

Environmental Education is a dynamic process. The priority of such education is to develop cautious mind of people about their total surrounding. Its main task is to impart proper knowledge and training to solve various problems of our environment systematically. In order to enable people to enjoy good health and a high quality of life, it is vital to prevent harmful effects to human health or damaged the environment caused by pollution of air, water and soil noise,vibration, noxious smells etc. Environmental Education is a methodology in which people pick up familiarity with their surroundings, and secure learning, abilities, values, experiences, and passion, all of which will empower them to act separately and aggregately and to take care of present and future environmental issues. It is the study of relationship and interactions between natural and human systems. Environmental Education should constitute a comprehensive life – long education, one responsive to changes in a rapidly changing world .It should prepare the individual for life through an understanding of the major problem of the contemporary world, and the provision of skills and attributes needed to play a productive role towards improving life and protecting the Environment with due regard to ethical values.

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