



## A PROCESS DOCUMENTATION OF TEACHING LEARNING OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES AT PRIMARY LEVEL

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### ABSTRACT

Over the years environmental education has become an important topic of discussion all over the world. It can be defined as a process of developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total 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 and prevention of new ones. There have been studies on it related attitude, awareness, knowledge etc. The researcher, through this study, aimed to observe the Environmental studies classrooms in order to see the implementation of policies laid down of government related to the subject. It will discuss the challenges, methods of teaching environmental studies at primary level.

**KEYWORDS** : Environmental Education, Environmental Studies, Observation, Skills

### INTRODUCTION:

The term 'Environmental Education' appeared for the first time in 1948 at the meeting of the International Union for the conservation of Nature and the Natural resources. Gough (1997); Palmer (1997,1998) and Sterling and Cooper (1992) date the appearance of the definition of Environmental Education to the end of the 1960s when the term began to be used and discussed on the international level.

According to Stappet. al., (1969) 'environmental education is a process aimed to produce a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems; aware of how to help these problems and motivated to work toward their solution'.

According to Hungerford, et. al., (1980), the goal of environmental education is to aid citizens in becoming environmentally knowledgeable and, above all, skilled and dedicated citizens who are willing to work, individually and collectively towards achieving and/or maintaining a dynamic equilibrium between quality of life and quality of the environment."

In the last two decades, EE has been synonymously used with many phrases like Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD), Environmental Studies (EVS), Education for Sustainable Future (ESF), etc. Although these phrases vary subtly in their connotations, however, what is common in all these is that they have a consistent commitment to changing knowledge, attitudes, values and skills favoring protection and conservation of the environment (Ravindranath,2007).

### The categories of environmental education objectives are:

**Awareness:** to help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness of and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.

**Knowledge:** to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associate problems.

**Attitude:** to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment, and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.

**Skills:** to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

**Participation:** to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems (UNESCO, 1978, pp.26-27).

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

There have been studies on knowledge, attitude and awareness of

environmental education. Most of them focused on evaluating these parameters.

Sahaya and Raj (2005) conducted a study on environmental awareness among high school students. The study showed that the high school students had better environmental awareness. The medium of instruction in the school and locality of the school influenced the environmental awareness among the high school students. Gender, type of the family and size of the family did not affect the environmental awareness among the students.

From the review the researcher concluded that there have been many studies on evaluating environmental knowledge/awareness and measuring the environmental attitude of primary school students in many countries. There have been few studies on the process of transaction of environmental studies in primary schools.

According to the researcher, there was a need felt to document the process of transaction of environmental studies in Indian classrooms. The aim was to observe whether/how the transaction strategies and monitoring tool prescribed by the government is being implemented.

### OBJECTIVES:

1. To study the Environmental Studies skills at primary level of school education
2. To study the methods of teaching Environmental Studies at primary level
3. To study the challenges faced by teachers teaching Environmental Studies at primary level

### POPULATION:

In the present study the target population comprised of Kendriya Vidyalaya schools of Delhi (Primary classes III-V).

### SAMPLE:

Cluster sampling involves identification of cluster of participants representing the population and their inclusion in the sample group. In a sample of primary school children, instead of listing all primary school children in Delhi, from all primary classes of Kendriya Vidyalaya, a random of 12 percent were selected.

Thus, according to the sampling procedure 5 schools were selected as a sample for this study. The 5 selected schools were:

- Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Lal Nehru University, Indian Institute of Technology
- Kendriya Vidyalaya, Pushp Vihar
- Kendriya Vidyalaya, Vasant Kunj
- Kendriya Vidyalaya, Badarpur NTPC
- Kendriya Vidyalaya, Jawahar Lal Nehru University

**TOOLS:**

Observation schedule, lesson plan/monitoring tool and "Back to Basics" book by Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan.

**ANALYSIS:**

The data was analyzed qualitatively.

**SKILLS:****OBSERVATION AND RECORDING**

Out of all the 3, this was being used the most. The reason for this was probably that in every chapter pictures/images were there for observation like different plants in the school, people found on railway station, utensils used at home, different types of fuel, observes pollution around, parts of plant, animals on land and water, different currencies of countries, different types of bridges, Sunita's experience in space, reading of electricity and water bill, preventive measure of malaria, observes his or her own house to those of others, observes the food eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner, various organs involved in digestion, people helping during disaster etc.

**IDENTIFICATION AND CLASSIFICATION**

This skill was developed most after observation and recording. Under this skill identification of sources of water, uses of water, the need for growing plants, classification the plants based on different sizes, different types of houses-kutchra and pakka, classify staple food of different regions of India, different ways of cooking, identifies difficulties faced by displacement, causes of pollution, balanced diet, behaviour of animals, identifies various musical instruments, importance of water conservation, recognises people at a railway station, identified utensils used at home, techniques for food preservation etc.

**DISCOVERY OF FACTS**

This skill was developed the least among the three. In every chapter there was mention of this skill but it was not covered properly by the teacher or not covered at all. E.g. use of first aid box, carnivore's plant, endangered animals, using a map, visit to a railway station, use of ORS and glucose drip etc were not taken up properly. Among these skills specified for the lesson plan, the observation and recording were developed the most. The reason for this can be that all the chapters mostly contained pictures. Recording was also performed well by the students as it involved drawing and collecting things which students generally like to do. The researcher during the observation concluded that the tasks which were easy for "discovery of facts" were taken up the teacher.

**CHALLENGES:**

1) The most important challenge faced by the teachers while teaching was not being able to use the projector for showing power point presentations and videos related to the content like seed dispersal, story of town and country mouse, various super senses of animals

2) Learning was limited to classroom interactions and activities, for example, community lunch, visit to railway station, poems related to seed, preparation of a dish etc were not taken up.

One of the possible reasons for above point may be due to the large syllabus. The number of chapters in grade III is 24, 27 in grade IV and 22 in grade V. Therefore, the teacher might not have been able to plan such outing as syllabus completion still is the most important part of the curriculum.

3) Due to large size of the class, the teacher was not able to focus on every student or rather the ones who did not participate were left behind in classroom discussions and hands on activities. As a result, there was no record of such students. Maintaining such records would surely help in improving the classroom interactions and discussions.

In general, the researcher observed that there was no input by the teachers to extend the learning beyond the lesson plan.

**TRANSACTIONAL STRATEGIES:**

Among the different strategies like classroom discussions, field visits, role play, project-based learning, games and simulation, the mostly commonly used was class room discussions. The researcher didn't observe any role play and field visits during the classroom discussion.

Among the environmental activities listed by charts, models, group work, map reading, home assignment, written task, oral testing, scrap book were being used to deliver the content

Apart from the above like interviews, play way method, standardised test, personality tests were not being used as a part of transactional strategy. All these have been suggested in the monitoring tool/lesson plan

**CONCLUSION:**

It was necessary to study the teaching learning process of Environmental studies. Merely evaluating the knowledge, attitude is not going to help us in building environment sensitive citizens. Unless we assess the skill development of Environmental studies, we will not be able to figure out the gap in today's citizen of not caring about the environment.

Evaluating the knowledge and attitude has not given us authentic results. If it would have been authentic, then by now in today's world we should have less of environmental problems but the scenario is actually opposite. Therefore, it was necessary to observe EVS classrooms, find the gaps, rectify them. In order to evaluate attitude and knowledge, it is first advised to observe these classrooms by the researcher.

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