



Environmental Education - An Instrument for Inculcating Healthy Attitudes Towards Environmental Development

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *Environmental Education aims at developing awareness and knowledge about environmental issues and helping individuals to develop proper attitudes and skills in this regard and also enlisting their participation in protecting the environment. Hence environmental education for every level of education may be an appropriate way to help us face our environmental problems. So this paper highlights importance and different approaches in environmental education, role of class teacher in inculcating environmental education and different activities to increase environmental attitude and practice in their daily life activities.*

Introduction

The development of science and technology makes the human to lead a sophisticated and luxurious life. Human beings are utilizing environmental resources to meet their ever-increasing wants for a better living. It leads to serious ecological and environmental imbalances. "Nature can meet all the needs of men, not the greed"- Mahatma Gandhi said. But today our global universe face a great problem in the means of pollution, deforestation, industrialization, acid rain, ozone layer depletion, environmental stress related illness and health problems etc. So it is a urgent need and strategy to think of human's survival in this universe. To overcome this exiting condition, younger generation should have knowledge, awareness, attitudinal change and related skills it overcome the environmental related consequences. This can be done only with the help of environmental education and environmental knowledge. Awareness is essential for action and education can play a vital role in this direction.

Environmental Education

The main focus of Environmental Education is to expose students to the actual world they live in. They have to be acquainted with the environment related issues and problems. They must also be able to look at the environmental problems and concerns, analyze, evaluate, draw inferences, and equip themselves to solve them.

"Environmental Education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the inter-relatedness among man, his culture and his bio-physical surroundings. Environmental Education also gives practice in decision making and self-formulation of a code of behavior about issues concerning environmental quality.

Objectives of Environmental Education in the Education

UNESCO (1988) has identified the following objectives in Environmental Education.

1. To make the child aware of his environment in a very simple manner and his / her place in it.
2. To arouse interest in the people around in him/her and develop understanding at the environment.
3. To develop skills for learning about environment, i.e., observation, collection and classification.
4. To foster development of positive attitude in pupil towards environment.
5. To develop willingness to work individually and in groups to maintain and preserve the environment.

Naturalistic Intelligence as Environmental Education

Howard Gardner in his research findings on Multiple Intelligences clearly states that Naturalistic Intelligence (NI) is the prime factor for creating environmental attitudes among children. NI is an ability to recognize plants, animals and other parts of natural environment such as rocks, trees, flowers clouds etc Children with NI have a strong connection to the outside world or to animals and enjoy outdoor activities. They notice patterns and things from nature easily. They are interested and care about animals, plants and environmental products. Those with this intelligence enjoy the earth's physical and biological environment and are good at distinguishing among, Classifying and using features of environment. They are able to recognize flora and fauna, makes consequential a distinction in the natural world, capacity to classify, interest with living creatures and discerns patterns of life and natural resources. So the prime important of Environmental Education is to elicited and creates NI among our children.

NCERT and Environmental Education Curriculum:

The council conceived environmental studies at the primary stage for the first time in 1977 and since then the syllabi and textbooks have been prepared for Environmental Education.

Contents to be included in the Primary Stage:

Familiarization with one's own body - Awareness about immediate surroundings - Need for food, water air shelter, clothing and recreation, Importance of trees and plants - Familiarization with local birds, animals and other objects - Interdependence of living and non-living thing -Importance of cleanliness and sanitation - Awareness of sunlight, rain and water - Awareness about air, water, soil,, and noise pollution - Need for the protection of environment - Knowledge about the source of energy - Importance of the conservation of water resources and forest - Soil conservation forest protection - Nature and structure of eco system - Necessity of clean air for healthy living - Effects of environmental pollution - Dependence of the community on the 'environment - Population and environment care and protection of livestock - Impact of deforestation - Impact of industrialization on environment.

Secondary Stage

Biosphere – Green house effect – ozone layer depletion. - Use of fertilizers and pesticides - soil chemistry - Management of domestic and industrial waste, management of non-degradable substances, sewage disposal and cleaning of rivers - Different types of pollution and its effect and its control measures - Nuclear energy - radiation hazards - Wind power, bio energy - Environmental laws and acts

Higher Stage:

Environment and sustainable development - Atmospheric

pollution - strategy for controlling pollution - Economic growth and development - importance 'of protecting the environment - Environment and behavior - reducing environmental stress - Understanding life on earth - Natural hazards and disaster - Population and biotic community- eco system and species - Conservation of natural resources - Growth of human population and its effect on environment - Damage to environment by over exploitation of natural resources - Impact of ill planned industrialization -Conservation of energy and alternate source of energy - Role of government and community in conservation

Teaching Learning Strategies in Environmental Education

Environmental Education is both 'style' and 'subject matter' of education Style of education means using environment as a teaching aid and as an approach to education. Subject matter or content means teaching about the components and constituents of environment Teaching methodologies or teaching learning strategies used in Environmental Education are as varied as objectives in various subjects

1. Class discussions
2. Small group projects assignments
3. Field trips and outdoor studies
4. Exhibits
5. Debates, readings, inquiry material guides,
6. Narration of events, experiences and stories
7. Establishing Eco clubs
8. Brain storming and quizzes, role play and drama
9. Community resources
10. Case studies etc.

Different Approaches in Environmental Education

Environmental Education's epistemology should be to equip students with creative, theoretical and critical reasoning abilities that would foster the development of an environmental ethos. There are mainly two approaches in environmental education.

1. The Infusion Approach:

This approach integrated Environmental Education into existing lessons or units or topics focusing on other subjects, such as history Science and Social sciences. Ideally, infusion results in the incorporation of EE inherently interdisciplinary field into all aspects of the curriculum at every grade level.

2. The Block Approach:

This approach consists of offering separate and distinct environmental courses. This offers depth knowledge and understanding about environment.

Role of Class Room Teacher in inculcating Environmental Education

Effective Environmental Education is successful only with the help of resourceful and devoted teacher. So he has to perform useful activities and methods to inculcate environmen-

tal attitude among children.

1. Try to avoid practicing throw away culture
2. Teach the practice of waste management technique and recycling mechanism.
3. Try to practice used materials as far as possible
4. Try to adopt learning by doing method
5. Try to maintain pollution free school environment
6. Campaign against the use of plastic bags and implement the habit of using alternatives of plastics
7. Teacher should arrange the students to visit places such as polluted areas
8. He can ask students to take up certain projects like rain-water harvesting, recycling of waste materials etc.
9. Try to celebrate important days of environmental concern
10. Use video clipping and films to create awareness about environment.

Different Activities to increase Environmental Attitude :

Environmental Education is not merely providing information only. It is the way of practicing environmental protection through different activities inside the school and outside. The activities have been planned based upon the grade level and needs of the students. Various activities included are-Making the student to clean the classroom regularly watering the school garden - Avoiding sound pollution - Using water carefully.

Encouraging students to use bicycles; Competitions based on environmental issues, Exhibition of posters cartoons etc showing environmental threats, Nature study camps, tracking. An environmental news board in the campus, Maintaining 'recharge pits' at home and in school, Use different multimedia approach to encourage environmental attitude.

At the higher-level Environmental Education activities include preparing students for environmentally related careers such as environmental science natural resource management, environmental designs, environmental engineering and environmental career training, Find a special spot in nature, near the house/school and visit to each day. Nature meditation and visualization. Creating an organic culture garden system.

Conclusion:

Education is the sole force to create awareness and healthy attitudinal change in our younger generation. So our education system as whole is oriented and equipped with environmental and natural way of inculcating environment values in our children. To defend and improve the environment for present and future generations has become an imperative goal for mankind. Environmental attitude is the axis for the economic development and the peaceful existence of humanity on the surface of the earth 'Environmental Stewardship is the sole motto to protect our existence.

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