

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION – A STUDY

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1. Introduction

Awareness of environmental protection is never a recent idea. Since the dawn of human civilization, man has become a part of his environment. The observed nature is beauty and mystery. He was influenced by the piquantly rivers; the towering snow peaks of the Himalayas, the boundless seas, the ineffable splendour of the seasons and the vast green meadows. The people of Aryavarttha developed a deep, introspective mind which separated them from the rest of the world. During the Vedic period the seers and sages of India Song-hymns to nature being deeply stirred by sum aspects of nature. Nature in ancient India was worshipped by the people in form of Mitva - the sun, Varuna (the God of night and blue sky), Dye and prithivi (the sky and the earth) and Agni (fire). This proves that primitive man never polluted nature rather he protected it in form of worship. The modern man never accepts nature as a personified being. What we think of this mysterious power is rather difficult to say in simple language, but as the world “nature” has become one of the significant concepts in science and philosophy, it is worthwhile to see whether we can form a few, clear notion as to what we mean when we use it. Nature is another word for “law”. It means “Birth without a bias.” We see that it is not correct to peak of nature as something that lies for behind us in the past. When we speak of nature, we are thinking of a continuous process. This is a basic concept of modern thinkers in the study of nature and environment. Nature is in the going forward of the physical universe.

2. Environment

So far the natural situations around living beings is called environment on “the natural situation around living being which influences the existence, growth development and activates of living is called environment.” The components in environment are of two types: living components and non-living components. The living components in environment include producers, conservers, scavengers, decomposers and transformers. The non-living components include land, water, sunlight, light, heat and pressure.

3. Environmental pollution

There is close relationship between increasing population and environmental pollution. Increasing population means increasing use of natural resources. This has had its ill-effects on environment. Environment pollution is of two types namely due to poverty and due to prosperity. Environmental pollution takes place in developing countries due to poverty. Pollution problems are mostly being faced by developing countries because in the process of developments, the use of scientific equipment and industrialisation, there is danger of environmental pollution. Environmental pollution in developed countries takes place due to prosperity. The cause of environmental pollution is not the repaid growth of population. Environmental pollution has now become a serious problem both for the developing and developed countries. In the modern society, the environment is being polluted in the following ways: air pollution, water pollution, sound pollution, chemical pollution, pollution due to radioactive wastes, and soil pollution.

4. Meaning of environmental education

According to the environmental specialists, any solution to the environmental crisis is called environmental education. It develops an awareness and understanding of environmental protection among the people in the society. Environmental education provides that skill and attitudes needed to play a productive role in improving life and values. Environmental education teaches people that natural environment and man-made environment are profoundly interdependent and links the acts of today to the consequences for tomorrow. It demonstrates the economic, political and ecological interdependencies among national communities and the need for solidarity among at a kind. Environmental education provides the foundation for a new international order which will guarantee the conservation and improvement of the environment. Environmental education is a way of implementing the goals of environmental protection. Environmental education is not a separate branch of science or subject of study.

5. Components of environmental education

Regarding the components of environmental education, the Education Commission recommends the following: The school curriculum in a state of flux all over the world today. In developing countries, it is generally criticized as being inadequate and outmoded and not properly designed to meet the needs of modern times. A new reform movement has been started which may bring in sweeping curricular changes in school education. The tremendous explosion of knowledge in recent years and the reformulation of the basic concepts in the physical, biological and social sciences have brought into sharp relief the inadequacies of existing school programmes. Against the background of the striking curricular development that are taking place abroad, the school curriculum in India will be found to be very narrowly conceived and largely out of date.

6. Recommendation of the Education Commission

The aim of teaching science in the primary school should be to develop proper understanding of the main facts, concepts, principles and processes in the physical and biological environment. In the lower primary classes, the focus should be on the child's environment social, physical and biological, in Classes I and II the accent should be as cleanliness, formation of healthy habits and development of the power of observation. These should be emphasized again in Classes III and IV; but the study should include personal hygiene and sanitation. The child may also be introduced to formal areas of science such as the plants and animals in his surrounding, the air he breathes, the water he drinks, the weather that affect his daily life, the earth he lives on the simple machines that are being used in his environment the body of which he should take care and the heavenly bodies he looks on at night. School gardening is an activity that should be encouraged especially at this stage, as it provides students with direct and valuable experience of natural phenomena.

At the higher primary stage (Classes VI – VIII): Environment activities will lead to the study of natural and physical sciences, history, geography and civic constructive and creative skills will provide the basis for the practice of simple arts and crafts. The practice of healthy living is to be served as the foundation for physical education.

At the secondary stage: The needs of democratic citizenship will require the development of certain skills, attitudes and qualities of character such as the capacity for clean thinking, the ability to communicate easily with one's fellowmen, scientific attitudes of mind, a sense of true patriotism and as appreciation of the value of productive work.

For science in the secondary school: The changing character of the science should be the major factor in curriculum development. The concept of biology as a method of inquiry by means of accurate and confinable observation qualitatively and mathematically analysed, and controlled experimentation should be impressed on the minds of your learned. Each science should be introduced in the secondary school. Geology and geography are to be taught as an integrated subject.

7. Environmental education in the national curriculum (1974-77)

With the acceptance of the Report of the Education Commission (1964-1966) the necessity of evolving a national consensus on a new curriculum with emphasis on environmental education became manifest. It was accepted all round that the curriculum, especially in science and biology, by way of its objectives, content and mythology had to serve the current and the emerging needs and aspiration of Indian society. A Framework (1975) was developed as a result of two years sustained labour of quite a large number of educationists. These documents underline the needs for emphasising environmental education which, according to these documents, should cut across the entire gamut of school education through the relevant subject disciplines. Since the science in general

and biology in particular are more directly linked with environment and environment problems, more and more learning experiences should be brought to the learners through these disciplines. For the primary stage document recommended: The child should learn the method of inquiry in science and should begin appreciating science and technology in the life and world around it. The child should develop habit of cleanliness and healthful living and an understanding of the proper sanitation and hygiene of its neighbourhood. The child should acquire a taste for the good and the beautiful and should take care of its surroundings. On science and mathematics, the student should have competency to apply his knowledge in the solution of problems around him. He should have an understanding of the psychological process in agriculture and industry in his surroundings. He should be able to contribute meaningfully to environmental conservation, reduction of pollution development of proper nutrition, health and hygiene in the community.

8. Environmental Education in the Report of the Review Committee

Based on the curriculum for the ten-year school, NCERT developed syllabuses, textbooks and other instrument materials through the active involvement of experienced teachers and representatives of state institution of education and science education. The syllabuses and text books prepared by NCERT specially those for classes IX and X evoked criticism for the public, teacher, parents and children. The main criticisms were: The scheme of examination continued too many subject for study, text books were too many and too voluminous and therefore, there was no time for self-study and physical activities. To make an in-depth study of the public criticism a review committee was constituted in which in addition to the shedding of content land, re-emphasized the need for stressing more the environment based education for the first ten years schooling. The committee recommended that besides sciences in general and the science of life in particular, socially useful productive work should be made environment oriented with emphasis on problem related to the environment. The objectives of education should enable an individual to acquire knowledge, skill habits, attitudes and values necessary for the capacity to appreciate the splendour of life revealed from communion with nature and man with man. The curriculum has to be built round local situation through there must be a core of basic content for comparability of educational attainment and the acquisition of further skills and knowledge. Environmental education should be considered as a lifelong system of education. It should be accepted as an integral part of the education process for environment protection and the pollution control.

9. Conclusion

Now it has been realised that the teaching-learning situation should be planned by the teacher in such a way that the students can develop awareness about environment protection and pollution control. The objective of environmental education is essentially to make children knowledgeable about their environment and enrich their knowledge by developing abilities to seek information and draw meaningful conclusion. To provide direct experience, environmental changes and diversities excursion and field trips should be undertaken by different educational institution. The development of abilities to investigate an experiment, takes various forms from reading textbooks and reference books, conducting interviews, using apparatus and performing experiments to the recording of results, drawing of conclusion and reporting them. There should be scope for developing problem solving ability among the students. The activities requiring the development of problem solving ability are the basis of any insurrection aimed at developing abilities particularly demanded for effective improvement of the environment. Due to scientific and technological development, the modern man has to become conscious not only to him but also for the rest of the living world. To save him it has to save the whole world of the living.

10. Reference

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