

Nurturing Eco-friendly Life Sustainability in learners through Enhancing Pro-Social Environmental Behaviour.

“Sustainability is about Ecology, Economy and Equity”. By Ralph Bicknese

Abstract

Pro-social environmental behaviour refers to the voluntary social behaviour that is intended to help or benefit another individual, group or society. In this era of environmental degradation, we need to nurture Pro-social environment behaviours in learners. It can be possible only through experiential learning and understanding nature. This thematic paper discusses the need for enhancing the pro-social environment behaviours in us and in our children, for nurturing eco-friendly practices which helps us in attaining life sustainability.

Full Paper

In this era of global Environmental problems and different types of Pandemics, there is an urgent need to enhance the pro-social environmental behaviour in our learners and in our society. Pro-social environmental behaviour refers to the voluntary social behaviour that is intended to help or benefit another individual, group or society. It is the conscious action performed by an individual. When we sincerely help others, we often feel self-satisfied. So as to lessen the negative impact of human activities in the environment, we must deal with its enhancement also. It includes all activities favourable to the earth as well to the society. According to Ramus & Killmer, Pro-social environmental behaviour is a special type of behaviour that is directed towards performed with the intention of promoting the welfare of the natural environment and society. Our intrinsic motivation makes us to do such things. It is often associated with high level of psychological well-being, positivity, and better physical and mental fitness. Now Environmental psychology concentrates more on the increasing harmful impact on the environment caused by the changing life styles of human beings. It also observes the interaction between man and his natural surrounding environments. It includes those behaviours which inhibit torturing nature and fostering sustainable eco-friendly, positive,

nature enhancing behaviours which lead to pro-social environmental behavioural patterns.

Pro-social behaviour is associated with many factors related to personal well-being. It is often found associated with high level of inter-personal intelligence and high level of social interaction. It also depends upon the person's level of intrinsic motivation, self-esteem, self-concept, peer relations, acceptance level etc. Moreover such persons are good problem solvers, critical thinkers with a good level of intra-personal intelligence also. At the same time, the development of Pro-social environmental behaviour is a complex act as the individual has to balance their own physical and psychological needs along with the development of social relationships. Usually some children have very high level of interpersonal skills but in the case of opposite version, proper opportunities, appropriate social environment, effective guidance and regular supervision needed to meet this challenge.

Nurturing of Pro-social environmental behaviour

- ✓ Always provide unconditional love and self regard to the child
- ✓ Try to become a good support system to them in all activities
- ✓ Give positive reinforcement to them to enhance their life skills as well as environmental consciousness
- ✓ Consider the children based on the innate nature and capabilities, as we know that each child is unique in nature.
- ✓ Impart them with effective moral instruction
- ✓ Give them opportunities to handle simple situations, solve minor problems, etc within their limits.
- ✓ Be good Scaffolders / Support systems to learners
- ✓ Try to give positive rewards or comments to the learner, when we observe a positive pro environmental behaviour.
- ✓ Modelling: Children mainly learn through imitating the behavioural patterns of parents or others they observe from their immediate environment. So we can model their behaviour by acting as good role models before them. The behaviours of the models are observed by the child and this perception helps in inculcating the expected positive environmental behaviours in them.

- ✓ Provide clear expectations about the expected environmental behaviour based on the principles of growth and development. It should be based on the nature of the learner, his abilities, opportunities, prevailing situations etc.
- ✓ Research has pointed out the importance of empathy, care and love in moulding the pro-social behaviour in children.
- ✓ Nurture Eco-friendly life styles in learners through providing direct experiences
- ✓ Provide them with simple activities in outdoors which in turn develops love for nature in them
- ✓ Encourage them in reading books about nature and experiences written by great environmentalists. Also motivate them to write papers on places of nature visits or on nature.

Pro-social environmental behaviour depends upon a number of factors such as demographic factors, environmental factors, social factors, economical factors, psychological factors, degree of environmental awareness, positive attitude towards nature, environmental values, internal locus of control, one's own abilities and skills etc. A number of models are available on Pro-environmental behaviour. The simplest model was based on a linear scale pattern. It says that the extent of environmental knowledge in a person gradually leads him to environmental awareness and attitudes, which in turn ultimately results in creating patterns of behaviour related to pro-social environmental behaviour. According to this model, making people aware about immediate environment problems and issues in a systematic manner will lead to the formation of desired behaviours. (Burgess.et., 1988). But later, research studies discarded this concept. Studies showed that in most cases, increase in awareness of environmental knowledge did not lead to pro-environmental behaviour. Now recent studies in the area reveals that the following attributes are associated with Pro-social environmental behaviour.

- ✓ People with strong internal locus of control- feel that they can bring forth changes for the betterment of the environment and society.
- ✓ Deep knowledge/ awareness and consciousness about environmental issues and problems. If an individual is familiar with the natural issues in his neighbourhood, he acts upon to maximum to find a solution for it.

- ✓ Awareness of strategies: Tries to track out the action strategies to solve the problem. With ones divergent thinking skills, need to chart out a blue print to select appropriate strategies.
- ✓ Higher level of positivity: People with high level of positive attitudes towards nature, usually expresses pro social behaviour. But attitude alone doesn't work. It should be accompanied with innate motivation and other needed cognitive skills.
- ✓ High level of Inter personal intelligence: To search, Identify and tackle environmental issues, strong relationships are needed with the society.
- ✓ Strong sense of Responsibility: Studies often proves that groups with strong sense of personal responsibility express Pro-social environmental behaviour in their actions (Hines, et.al. 1986).

At the same time, social pressures, peer pressures, financial problems, lack of proper cognitive powers etc decreases the intensity of environmental behaviour.

Types of Pro-social Environmental Behaviour:

As far as the types of Environmental behaviour are concerned, a number of classifications are available. One among them is the broad categories of behaviours proposed by Clayton and Myers (2009). They identified three types of behaviours:

1. Curtailment: Behaviours are based on the value that maximum reduction in usage of resources, resulting in the conservation of resources as well as energy for the benefit of the environment and society. Here one reduces the use of electricity, water and other resources. Also purchase only what is urgently needed. Here an individual need to reduce his personal comfort zone to sacrifice to the environment.
2. Behavioural Zone: This category of behaviour includes not reducing the use of something, but how or the way he do it. One does an action in a manner, friendly to nature. Using organic products, reusing, recycling, depending on public mode of transportations, etc. Here also the individual needs to sacrifice his personal interests for bringing forth eco-friendly life practices.
3. Technology Choice: This set of behaviours includes purchasing or using technological innovations so that eco-friendly impact can be nurtured. Use of

hybrid cars, energy efficient bulbs, etc is some examples. These behaviours do not need much sacrifice from the he person as in the previous two cases, because technology advancement is considered as a strategy that improves our quality of lives.

As mentioned earlier, since this behaviour is consciously choose by a person, a number of barriers also accompanies this behaviour. They are mainly classifies into Psychological, Financial, Social/Cultural and Structural. Psychological behaviour is internal, related to one's life space such as our knowledge, beliefs, thoughts and attitudes which forms our basic behaviour. Financial behaviours include lack of sufficient money to follow sustainable practices. Social behaviours are related to inter personal relationships. Structural barriers are external factors which were not under the control of the individual, managed by external forces.

So in the present situation, it is the duty of teachers, to foster Pro-social environmental behaviour in our learners, as we are going through a highly critical and dangerous situation related to Environmental degradation. It is high time to restore out Ecosystems.

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