

Education and Sustainable Development

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Abstract

The interconnectedness of education and sustainable development serves as the cornerstone of this research. In the pursuit of development, it is to be realized that progress should not come at the perilous cost of environment. The convergence of education and sustainable development is vital in order to address the burning issues like climate change, global warming and huge contraction of forest area. Where the human race is leading when growing human habitation has caused heavy damages to agricultural lands and habitat of other animals causing threat to extinct of animals and plants thereby leading to unsustainable development. It will be emphasized in the research paper that education plays a great role to achieve sustainable development.

The study shall also examine how educational institutions, educational program and curriculum can encourage people to practice sustainable methods and contribute towards achieving ecological balance in the planet, Earth. It will also be an objective that mere theoretical education cannot benefit the human race to achieve sustainable development and therefore at the same time people must realize the importance of doing real works for the purpose.

Keywords: Education, sustainable development, interconnectedness, environment, human

Introduction

It is appreciated by one and all that education has played a major role for worldwide development. Meanwhile, it is realized that the economic developments throughout the world are not sustainable and hence affects the environment. Public awareness, training and useful education are the key components to lead the society towards maintainable development. It is worthwhile to mention that the lands, which were yielding agricultural crops in the past have been used for human habitation. Concrete jungles have been constructed destructing agricultural land and forest areas and vast urbanization has deleterious effect on environment. We find trouble to imagine a sustainable world but we can quickly cite a long list which have created hazardous environment like soil erosion, soil, air and water pollution, increase of automobiles, establishment of large-scale industries, etc. "India ranks 116 in achieving Sustainable development Goals." [1] Unfortunately, we do not have any easy solutions to overcome these problems.

The basic aim of sustainable development is to ensure progress without any hindrance and

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prosperity must bring forth the socio-economic and environmental needs. Development in 21st century cannot remain stagnant because change is a continuous process of development. We must modify our thinking and mould the ways for social and economic upliftment by maintaining eco-friendly atmosphere. This can be achieved through good education programme and education syllabus has to be devised in all stages underlying the importance of maintaining environment. There is no denying fact that education lays the foundation of human development. People enhance their skill, knowledge by acquiring education and they can cultivate values so, that the perception of the world can be shaped for the welfare of humanity.

Education is a powerful weapon that propagates information as well as helps to mould attitudes, behaviours, and views. Education for sustainable development is a true attempt for conservation of ecology, but it has to be made more revolutionary since environment education in the curriculum is only theoretical. Education policy with emphasis on importance of environment and sustainable development is to be implemented and students need to be educated from the primary standard till higher level of study so that they can work and carry on their duties for sustainable development in the coming years.

“Incorporating important sustainable development matters into teaching and learning may consist of teaching on climate transformation, disaster risk decrease, biodiversity, poverty decline and sustainable utilization of food and water. It also requires participatory teaching and learning techniques that motivate and allow learners to change their behaviour and take action towards sustainable development.” [2]

1. Education's Contribution to Sustainable Development

“B.R. Ambedkar has held that education should be co-related to the social; political and economic needs of a developing nation.” [3] Relationship between Education and Sustainable Development is a complex issue and needs to be understood in totality. A nation has to set goals for sustainable development because development at the cost of environment will set the lives of the future generation at stake. The goal must have a plan and that plan has to be implemented through imparting proper education. Thus, education being a powerful tool can help improving quality of life, ensuring women safety, generating employment and above all protecting the much important environment.

Education provides people with knowledge, skill and abilities so as to enable them to take judicious decisions, engage in purposeful practices and accept and adapt changing situations. People understand from education that socio-economic injustice, biodiversity loss and climate change are inter-connected and these are to be dealt effectively. “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) empowers people to change the way they think and work towards a sustainable future.” [4]

2. Sustainable Curriculum Development

The international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF etc. have been encouraging to include environmental education in the educational curricula since 20th century. World Environment Day is

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also observed on 5th June which was started in 1974. Education policies formulated by various countries worldwide thus contained environment education as an essential subject. In a country like India, many educational institutions have included sustainability issues in the curricula in primary, secondary education and the sustainable development subject has been incorporated in the textbooks from science and engineering to social sciences and the humanities

Experiential learning is considered as a useful strategy for involving students in current sustainability challenges. Project-based learning is also discussed. Case examples of productive educational projects with a sustainability focus are looked at.

3. Sustainable Development Goals

Heads of State and Government adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets on 25 September 2015 at a special UN summit. Out of 17 Sustainable Development Goals, 4 major areas are related to environment degradation, social and economic inequality, sustainable production and consumption and sustainable peace. Success of these goals are dependent on each other and a collective desired result comes out at the end.

A universal plan for guiding world countries to march towards 2030 agenda for sustainable development is a part of SDG. The root causes of poverty is tackled by this inclusive agenda and positive change for people and planet is induced. "UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner said "Poverty eradication is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda, and so is the commitment to leave no-one behind." [5]

4. NEP and Sustainable development

National Education Policy (NEP) introduced in 2020 in India is a hallmark in the 21st Century. It is expected that NEP will bring forth revolutionary changes in the educational programme of the country. It is basically aimed at enhancing quality education and emphasis is given on imparting education for achieving sustainable development. There was a need to re-structure the education system of the country and timely action has been initiated in the second decade of the 21st century so that environment education becomes part and parcel of education policy.

Some of the key points related to environmental education of NEP 2020 are mentioned below:

1. **Inclusion in Curriculum:** NEP 2020 has emphasized the integration of environmental education in the educational curriculum at all levels that includes primary education, higher education and vocational education.
2. **Sustainable Development:** The policy has revived for inclusion of topics pertaining to sustainable development and sustainable living in the curriculum. This is basically aimed to raise awareness about importance of sustainable practice and safeguarding the environment for future generation.
3. **Waste Management:** The NEP 2020 focuses attention on the education for management of waste. The motto of the education is to educate students about proper waste disposal and for

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adoption of recycling practices to reduce soil, water and air pollution.

4. **Environmental Protection:** The importance of environmental protection, particularly the preservation of natural resources and the avoidance of pollution, is emphasized by the policy. The need of environmental preservation is stressed to students.
5. **Biodiversity:** Conservation of biodiversity has become a huge challenge in the present context owing to rapid growth of infrastructure in the plains and hills. NEP tries to educate students to realize the importance of conservation of biodiversity and the need to protect ecosystem and species.
6. **Protection of Environmental and Biological Resources:** No one can deny that time is running out to protect environmental and biological resources. The NEP aims to educate students about the conservation of forest, wildlife and aquatic systems.
7. **Sanitation:** NEP lays emphasis on the importance of sanitation and hygiene education. It has promoted awareness about cleanliness, orderliness and healthy living practices inclusive of proper sanitation and hygiene.
8. **Climate Change:** The policy acknowledges and tries to address the burning issue of climate change. It encourages education on climate change and strategies to mitigate the hardships created by climate change and way of adaptation in the event of climate change.
9. **Teacher's education and training:** Realizing the importance of role of teachers in shaping the sustainable development, NEP has underlined training as a regular need and sensitized teacher, educators and trainers for the purpose. "NEP aims to provide education in a way that it shall provide and generate sustainable livelihoods and will boost the economy of the nation." [6]
10. **Sustainable Education:** Focus and efforts have been made in order to promote sustainable education before NEP. "Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework have already identified areas of priority in the field of formal education and teacher training to build their knowledge and understanding and to promote Sustainable Practices with special emphasis on promoting quality education." [7]

Conclusion

All said and nothing is done. If this is the consequence then in the name of sustainable development our future generation will live in planet Earth which shall not be livable. We can talk big, think big but if we do not do sincere efforts to protect the environment then the result will be a big zero and a time will come very soon that all living beings will disappear in this Earth planet. The planet, Earth will remain as it is but the living creatures and plants shall vanish.

We cannot even imagine the situation narrated above. Continuous efforts are to be made for the protection of environment and atmosphere. The solution to the above problem is to impart environmental protection education from the primary standard level and onwards. The young

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generation must be made aware about the necessity of protecting environment for their wellbeing in future. All stake holders irrespective of their occupation must work in unison to protect the environment. The ruling machinery has to make continuous efforts for promoting sustainable development only. Development destroying or damaging environment and atmosphere is to be discarded under any circumstances. Present human generation should learn lessons from global warming, climate change, untimely natural disasters like floods, droughts, landslides in hills, etc. We want to come to the end with the optimism that good sense will prevail among the human race and education shall equip people to protect the environment.

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