



Available online at <http://ijasc.pasca.unand.ac.id>

## International Journal of Agricultural Sciences Graduate Program Universitas Andalas

Journal homepage: <http://ijasc.pasca.unand.ac.id>

---

# Environmental Education to Mitigate Environmental Decay and Promote Sustainable Development

*Tonia Grace Ganta<sup>a\*</sup>, K. Vijaya Rachel<sup>b</sup> and SatyaRaoUppuleti<sup>c</sup>*

---

<sup>a</sup> Department of Education, Andhra University.

<sup>b</sup> Department of Biochemistry and Bioinformatics, GITAM University, Visakhapatnam.

<sup>c</sup> Department of Linguistics, Andhra University.

---

### ARTICLE INFO

#### *Article history:*

Received 24 August 2017

Revised form received 25 June 2018

Accepted 10 July 2018

---

#### *Keywords:*

*Environmental education,*

*Environmental decay,*

*Conservation*

*Sustainable development.*

### ABSTRACT

At Present our Planet is grappling with disastrous consequences of man-made environmental problems such as industrialization, urbanization, over-exploitation of natural resources, disruption of natural ecological balances, destruction of a multitude of animal and plant species for economic reasons, etc. It is observed that most of our environmental problems are manifestations of our developmental activities. Although there is no dearth of legislations on environmental protection in India, it is clearly evident that the enforcement of these legislations has been far from satisfactory. The present study tries to establish education as a useful tool for environmental conservation and sustainable development, ensuring clean air to breathe, safe drinking water and adequate supplies of clean renewable energy. This paper is mostly based on secondary data from books, research articles, periodicals and websites. It discusses the role of teacher and school in the protection of environment and promotion of sustainable development by bringing awareness on the efficient and responsible usage of the natural resources namely air, water, land, soil, forests, rivers, oceans etc. It tries to expound the ways and means to sensitize students and make them environment conscious in order to build a vibrant, healthy and pollution free India as future citizens.

---

\* Corresponding author

E-mail address: [toniagrace@gmail.com](mailto:toniagrace@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction

Environment is bestowed with abundant natural resources to support, develop and enrich human life on this planet. Enormous amounts of these resources are exhausted unethically to create a few islands of prosperity leaving behind seas of poverty which later become the dumping ground for all the waste thereby leading to environmental imbalances. Owing to forest clearance, construction of huge multi-purpose dams the daily life and human rights of the subaltern groups are adversely affected giving rise to socio-economic glitches. Today the world is grappling with disastrous consequences of man-made environmental problems such as industrialization, urbanization, explosion of population, over-exploitation of natural resources, disruption of natural ecological balances, destruction of a multitude of animal and plant species for economic reasons, etc.. It is observed that most of our environmental problems are manifestations of our developmental activities. The problem of environmental pollution and soil degradation has acquired mammoth like global dimension. The constant raise in population and changing lifestyles are adding to the menace of environmental pollution and making it more and more critical. The conservation, protection and improvement of environment are major issues all over the world. The most basic, inherent human rights of breathing fresh clean air, drinking unpolluted water and eating unadulterated food seem to be the worst affected. Mahatma Gandhi rightly pointed out “The earth provides enough to satisfy every man’s needs, but not everyman’s greed.”

## 2. The beginning of Environment Education:

Oxford English Dictionary defines Education as “systematic training and instruction designed to impart knowledge and develop skill” (OED, 2015). Education therefore gives an individual a grounding to comprehend, contemplate,

question, judge and be wise in decision making. In addition, it raises one’s standard of living and consequently makes life worth living. Environment is the utmost important part of our lives. It is concerned with the surroundings in which we live and cherish our life. Protection of environment is everyone’s duty. Subsequently environment education is needed. Environment is a school subject of learning and is termed as Environment science or Environment studies. The term Environment is derived from the word ‘environ’ which comes from the old French word ‘environner’ and it means everything that surrounds the world. It denotes the sum total of all living beings and non-living beings and their interactions. According to Boring (2006), “A person’s environment consists of the sum total of simulation which he receives from his conception until his death.” Douglas and Holland (1947) point out that “The term environment is used to describe, in the aggregate, all the external forces, influences and condition, which affect the life, nature, behavior and growth, development and maturity of living organisms.” Considering this the scope of the term Environment is widening with the passage of time and it now has social, economic and political dimensions in its fold.

The first IUCN conference in Paris, held in 1948, was the first time that the term environmental education was used (Palmer, 1998). The World Conservation Union (IUCN) in 1970 first defined Environmental Education and expressed the idea that through knowledge changes in behaviour at a personal, societal and global level will occur. In the same year UNESCO working committee defined Environmental Education as, “the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitude, necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. It also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulation of a code of behaviour about problems and issues concerning environmental quality.” UNESCO seminar at Jammi (1976) defined Environmental Education

as, “a way of implementing the goals of environmental protection. It is not a separate branch of science or field of study. It should be carried out according to the principles of lifelong integral education. ”Conservation of environment is not taken seriously by people. There is a “who cares” attitude or “the little I pollute, how does it matter much?” attitude. These attitudes are because of the lack of awareness of how precious our environment is and how our small actions of ours whether deliberate or ignorant force us to pay a big price. Awareness on how our negligence and sloppiness affects not only our own selves and our neighbours but the whole world at large with the help of environment education. Effective learning happens in childhood to make environment education effective. The people who shoulder this responsibility are to be trained. The Bhopal Disaster of 1984 sounded the wake-up call for India to take note of the crisis situation and realize the need of environmental awareness and education at all levels of the society. In the year 1991 the Central Government was issued a directive by the supreme court for the introduction of common course on Environment at the under graduate level for various streams of Arts, Commerce and Science in all the colleges of all the universities.

### **3. Environment protection policies:**

Stockholm Declaration of 1972 was perhaps the first major attempt to conserve and protect the human environment at the international level. It was followed by Belgrade (1975) and Tbilisi (1977) conferences on environmental education. In 1992, the governments of the world, at the United Nations conference on Environment and development, held in Rio de Janeiro, signed a series of historic agreements, pledging their support for the move towards sustainable Development. This comprehensive action plan signed by 179 nations was called AGENDA 21, it is an expression of collective aspirations and commitment of the signatories to push it forward from a statement of hope to a pragmatic blueprint for organizing a sustainable society out

of the existing economically and environmentally inequitable world. The National conservation Strategy and Policy statement on Environment and Development, adopted by the government of India in June 1992 laid down strategies and actions for integration of environmental considerations. Apart from that the Indian Government also enacted certain laws for environmental protection and sustainable development namely, The wildlife (protection) Act, 1972 amended in 1983, 1986 and 1991. The Water (Prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1974 amended in 1988. The Water (Prevention and control of pollution) cess Act, 1977 amended in 1991. The Forest (conservation) Act, 1980, amended in 1988. The Air (Prevention and control of pollution) Act, 1981 amended in 1988. The Environmental (protection) Act, 1986. The Motor Vehicle Act, 1938, amended in 1988. The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991. A Notification on Coastal Regulation Zone, 1991.

The clean India movement (Swachh Bharat Abhiyan) launched on 2 October 2014 by the Government of India is the largest cleanliness drive with 3 million government employees and especially school and college students from all parts of India participating in the campaign.

Although there is no dearth of legislations on environmental protection in India, it is clearly evident that law is not enough as the enforcement of these legislations has been far from satisfactory. Awareness on civic duty and an attitude for complying with the laws and stringent enforcers of law when they become administrators must be inculcated in the minds of young generation

### **4. Role of Education in Environment Protection:**

Environmental Education or conservation education aims to provide learners with the opportunity to gain an awareness or sensitivity to the environment, knowledge and experience of the problems surrounding the environment, to acquire a set of values and positive attitudes, to obtain the skills required to identify and solve environmental problems and, the motivation and

ability to participate (Jacobson et al., 2006). The UN has declared 2005 to 2014 the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development; the overall goal being to employ education as a means of integrating the principles of sustainable development with human values and perspectives in order to create a sustainable society (UNESCO 2005).

The key to Environmental protection, management of earth resources and sustainable development is education, both formal and informal. It intends to raise public awareness on the need for environment protection and motivates them on sustainable development. The teachers and the school should take up activities to alert the students towards environmental problems and also assist them to find solutions to tackle them. Environmental education should be included in the curriculum from an early stage. National Curriculum Framework for school Education (2005) also stressed the importance of Environment studies for primary classes.

Teachers play a dominant role in environment education as their contribution is crucial in forming, changing and establishing attitudes and values that are important for environmentally responsible behavior. The teachers can help the students to be sensitive to the environment and its allied problems, acquire skills for solving environmental problems and develop values and strong feelings of concern for the environment by actively involving them in environment protection activities. Apart from creating awareness and imparting knowledge teachers and the school should cultivate the right attitude towards environment protection and see that they make it a practice to get habituated to saving resources, reduce pollution, reuse/repeatedly use and recycle by behavior regulation and modification especially among the younger generation who are future inheritors. As Edgar Dale in his Experience and Learning cone elucidates that we tend to remember 50% of what we see and hear by means of a video or watching a live demonstration while the experience of only hearing is at lower level of 20%. So it is essential to set a live example when

it comes to management of earth resources in our daily routine. Thus the nature of their lifestyle can have a greater impact than their teaching. Without a good teacher, the best curriculum can remain ineffective, so the teachers ought to take a leading role in pursuing the actions on environmental education. The teachers can also inspire the student by throwing light on events like the Versova Beach cleanup which won accolades from the UNEP, the Prime minister of India, Government Officials and all the Mumbaiites. Mumbai's Versova beach was considered the world's dirtiest beach but with the initiation of Afroz Shah a Thirty three year old lawyer and the cooperation of 150 Versova resident volunteers in October 2015 the world's largest beach cleanup was started. 5.3 Million Kilograms of trash was removed from the beach over a period of Eighty five weeks. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has awarded Afroz Shah the UN's top Environmental accolade 'champions of the Earth award' at Cancun Mexico making him the first Indian to achieve such a feat. Solheim.E, termed the event as 'a Global Inspiration'. Afroz Shah and the Versova resident volunteers proved that it is about ordinary People standing up and taking control.

## 5. Conclusion

All natural environments are affected directly or indirectly leading to environmental degradation. Intervention of academic communities and the constant support of diverse disciplinary background play a crucial role in creating eco-sensitivity among the citizens and thereby contribute to equitable and sustainable development. Various stakeholders such as teachers, school, children, parents, society, education department and the state should work in partnership, with cooperation and coordination for maximum effectiveness and a long term behavioral change towards sustainability. One should bear in mind that Environment is a precious gift of nature and is a common heritage of mankind, so it is everyone's responsibility to safeguard and also educate

others to leave it uncontaminated so as to mitigate Environmental decay. We need to inculcate a value based culture that uses the natural resources namely land, soil, forests, rivers, oceans, mineral deposits etc. in a responsible manner in order to promote sustainable development. It is high time to stop tampering with the natural order, keep aside personal economic gains and be environment conscious in order to build a vibrant, healthy and pollution free India for generations to come.

[versova/story-E75vbhoKUJXSJECsIncYkK.html](http://www.versova.com/story-E75vbhoKUJXSJECsIncYkK.html)

## Reference

- Bahuguna, Sunderlal; Shiva Vandana; Buch, M, N.,(1992) '*Environment Crisis and Sustainable Development*', Natraj Publishers, Dehradun.
- Bakshi, S., (2010) '*Community Livelihood and Natural Resources*', Perl Book Publishing Company, New Delhi.
- GhantaR,Dash.B.N (2005). *Foundations of education*.Hyderabad: Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Krishnamaracharyulu, V. & Reddy, G.S. (2005).*Environmental Education*.Hyderabad: Neelkamal Publications Pvt. Ltd.
- Kumar, Arvind,(2009) '*Environmental Ethics*', Shree Publications: New Delhi.
- Mappin, M. & Johnson, E. (2005).Changing perspectives of ecology and education in environmental education. In E. Johnson & M. Mappin, eds., *Environmental Education and Adovocacy: Changing Perspectives of Ecology and Education*, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- NCERT (2001), *Environmental Orientation to School Education*, New Delhi: GitaOffset Printers.
- Palmer, J.A. (1998). *Environmental Education in the 21st century*. London: Routledge.
- Wangari.M,(2003) '*The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the Approach and the Experience*', published by Lantern Books: New York.
- Versova Beach Clean-up a global inspiration: UN Env't Head, retrieved on June 10,2017 from <http://www.hindustantimes.com/mumbai-news/this-lawyer-spearheaded-the-world-s-biggest-beach-clean-up-at->