



## **NEED FOR AND IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

**Dr. Santosh Koner**

Associate Professor in Commerce, Chatra Rami Pandit Mahavidyalaya, Chatra, Darapur,  
Bankura, West Bengal

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### **Abstract:**

We know that the world of today is suffering from the problem of environmental degradation. Some of these problems are at the global level while some are at the regional level. At the global level the problems are: global warming, depletion of ozone layer in the stratosphere, acid rain, deforestation, loss of bio diversity etc. On the other hand, regional level problems include: soil erosion, soil pollution, ground water depletion, water pollution, solid waste pollution, noise pollution etc. All these problems are the result of human activities. Whatever wrong has been done to the environmental needs to be rectified. To protect and manage the environment it is essential to have a sound environmental education (EE) system.

**Key Words:** Global Warming, Environmental Degradation, Depletion & Ozone Layer

### **What is Environmental Education?**

Environmental education (EE) is a process by which people develop awareness, concern and knowledge of the environment and learn to use this understanding to preserve, conserve and utilise the environment in a sustainable manner for the benefit of present and future generations.

It entails the will to take personal initiatives and social participation to achieve sustainability.

It is intended for all types of learners, students, out-of-school youth, community leaders, policy makers and the general public to develop appropriate environmental related skills.

Environmental education is concerned with subjects like the way in which natural environment works, how human beings should behave to manage the ecosystem to sustain the environment. It provides the necessary skills and expertise to handle the associated challenges. The main focus of environmental education is to impart knowledge, create awareness, inculcate an attitude of concern and provide necessary skill to handle the environment and environmental challenges. Environmental education gained importance at the global after the Stockholm conference on Human Environment, organised by UNESCO in 1972. Soon after the conference UNESCO launched the International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP).

### **Goals of Environmental Education:**

The main goal of environmental education is to develop concern and awareness among world population about the total environment and its associated problems. The specific goals of environmental education are as follows:

- ✓ To improve the quality of environment.
- ✓ To create awareness among the people on environmental problems and conversation.
- ✓ To create an atmosphere so that people participate in decision making and develop capabilities to evaluate the developmental programmes.

### **Objectives of Environmental Educations:**

The objectives of environmental education can be classified as follows:

- ✓ Awareness: One of the objectives of environmental education is to acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.
- ✓ Knowledge: Second objective of EE is to acquire knowledge through a variety of experiences and acquire a basic understanding of the environment and it's associated.
- ✓ Attitudes: The third objective of EE is to acquire a set of values and feeling of concern for the environment and the motivation for activity participating in environmental improvement and protection.
- ✓ Skills: The fourth objective of EE is to acquire skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.
- ✓ Participation: The fifth objective of EE is to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels working towards the resolution of environmental problems.

### **Aims of Environmental Education:**

EE has two main aims:

- ✓ The first aim is to provide different groups of people in a variety of professional fields with the knowledge needed to develop a sense of responsibility towards the environment and the rational utilization of its resources.

- ✓ The second aim is to make use of these knowledge and skills to preserve, conserve and utilize the environment in a sustainable manner for the benefit of present and future generations.

#### **Importance of Environmental Education:**

Environmental education is important for the following reasons:

- ✓ It increases engagement of students in different branches of science.
- ✓ It improves student achievement in core subject areas.
- ✓ It provides critical tools for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century work force.
- ✓ It helps to tackle “nature deficit disorder”.

#### **Why is EE necessary?**

Every country is trying to integrate environmental concerns with education. Conserving nature and environment will be much easier to children are taught about depleting resources, environmental pollution, land sliding and extinction of plants and animals. EE is one sort of investment that turns into a valuable asset over a period of time.

Moreover, because of changing social lives, children now-a-days are busy playing indoor games and electronic gadgets. They spend most of their time in watching T.V. programs, playing video games or surfing the internet with computers or smart phones. They have no time to travel around one to explore the nature world around them. This not only has adverse impact on the health of the children but also detaches them from their surroundings and nature. They are grown up into adults who are least bothered about conserving nature. Raising an environmentally conscious educated generation is the need of the hour and for this purpose EE is necessary.

Protecting the environment is the responsibility of everyone. Hence environmental education cannot be confined to one group of society. Every individual must be prepared for saving the environment. It must be a continuous and life long process. Above that environmental education must be practical so that teaching can be implemented directly. Environmental education should not only be a part of the education system but also a part of the political system where actions, policies and plans can be formulated and executed at the national level.

#### **Environmental Education in India:**

To promote environmental awareness in the county the Centre for Environmental Education (CEE) was established in August 1984 with a support from the Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India. One of the tasks of the CEE is to put efforts to give due recognition to the role of environmental education. The CEE runs many educational programmes in this regard. In many universities and institutes in India courses in Environmental Engineering, conservation and management of natural resources. Environmental Health are taught. Research and training are also conducted in these universities / institutes. Many attempts have been made to introduce environmental education at all levels in India. Ministry of Human resource Development launched a scheme of environmental orientation of school education in 1988. A variety of activities like nature study, preparation of instructional material, educating people about hazards of ecological problems were attempted. But a close look at the secondary level reveals that environmental education has been given a back seat and its basic objective of developing awareness, skill and attitude is totally ignored. Even the teachers do not have a very positive attitude towards these activities and the competitive career scenario makes them neglect these activities. Though environmental education is important at all ages, yet it is very important at the adolescent age, as at this juncture attitudes are formed for future. Not paying adequate attention at this stage caused immense loss to the purpose of environmental education.

The attitude development and value inclusion are neglected. The teachers do not develop right attitude and motivation for being environment friendly. The teachers training courses do not pay much attention to environmental education and skill development.

Though there are many governmental and non-governmental agencies engaged in organizing workshops, seminars, awareness campaigns, besides taking up projects for environmental preservation in identified areas, yet they could hardly touch the big mass of people. The mass media raising slogans, public awareness, advertisements interviews etc. are not sufficient.

What is needed is a passionate commitment for implementation of environmental education which holds enormous potential for conservation and improvement of environment.

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