



## Environmental Awareness through Education

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### ABSTRACT

**Environmental Education according to the Annual Report (2004-2005) of the Ministry of Environment and forest, the Government of India; can be defined as 'a process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and added tools necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelationships among man, his culture and his biophysical surroundings.'**<sup>1</sup> Through this definition, it is clear that environmental education can play a most significant role in building Awareness about- the relation between modern development and environment; and the impact of developmental practices on the surrounding environment among masses, if imparted properly. It is the educations which can enable a person know about everything.

**Keywords**— Environment, Forest, oil

### I. INTRODUCTION

Some of the important merits of education are being listed below-

- (i) Education enables a person to know about his rights and duties;
- (ii) It enables to know him about the impacts of his activities on environment;
- (iii) It makes him know about different processes going on in the natural environment and their importance in keeping up the natural balance;
- (iv) It is through education that a person becomes able to have the knowledge about the status of different natural resources, needs and modes of their conservation etc.;
- (v) Education enables a person know about various processes of development and their impacts on environment;
- (v) Education enables a person to understand the phenomenon of Globalization and its impact on environment, economy and the social equality.

### II. WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS?

To define environmental awareness we must first understand the environmentalist movement.

Environmentalism is an ideology that evokes the necessity and responsibility of humans to respect protect, and preserve the natural world from its anthropogenic (caused by humans) afflictions.

Environmental awareness is an integral part of the movement's success. By teaching our friends and family that the physical environment is fragile and indispensable we can begin fixing the problems that threaten it.

Numerous resources are available "to promote environmental awareness: group teaming (in or outside of class), informational and inspirational seminars, such as our. The Dreamer Program, and environmental books and brochures are just a few of the tools that can get you involved in promoting the environment.

### III. HOW TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENT AWARENESS

When learning about the environment's declining health it is easy to feel discouraged, but what keeps us fighting for a healthy world is the future of our children. They should not have to inherit our environmental problems and in order to keep their future bright, spreading awareness is imperative.

Before you can begin promoting environmental awareness in your own community you must first make sure that you have a thorough understanding of environmental issues Staying up to date on environmental news and reading comprehensive books about environmental threats are both great, resources, but it you're the type of person who prefers a more interactive approach, attending environmental seminars is a great option.

Our awakening the dreamer Symposium is an inspirational and informative seminar that discusses man-made environmental issues, while also instilling a sense of hopefulness for the future.

Join the 1000s and Kickstart Your Environmental Awareness Campaign with The Awakening The Dreamer Symposium.

A 4-minute introduction to the experience that wii crisis and opportunity of this time in history.

Our Awakening the Dreamer Symposium, created by Pachamama Alliance is an invaluable

resource to help you become environmentally aware. Specifically, the symposium demonstrates that environmental destruction is the result of a flaw in the modern world's belief system, in which our actions lack consequences. Meanwhile, our partners in the Amazon forest, the Achuar, (along with the rest of the world) are experiencing our consequences daily with the continued threat of big oil destroying their home. In order to keep their rainforest pristine we need to stop our dependence on fossil fuel and begin using environmentally sustainable resources.

The symposium makes a joint that the environment is in critical condition and while there is still hope to change our course, time is of the essence. During the symposium a desire and urgency to become an environmental steward is inspired; the symposium appropriately calls this desire as being in a state of "blessed unrest".

Once the participant has *awakened* into this state of "blessed unrest", they are supplied with courses of action and resources to begin promoting environmental awareness in their community.

#### IV. MAKE A DIFFERENCE

After you have become environmentally aware you can begin teaching those around you. The symposium acts a catalyst for you to begin your role as an environmental steward and provides online courses and other resources to keep you on track,

A good course of action that ensures your continued participation as a global citizen is to pick an environmental issue that strikes you as most urgent. The amount of environmental issue seems limitless and while they are all important it is best to initially focus on one cause. You will soon see that all environmental issues are intertwined and will find your niche of interest. After your decision is made you then explain its importance and urgency to your community, friends, and family, create beneficial communal projects, and find more causes to become apart of.

#### V. EXAMPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES THAT NEED FIXING

Here are several cause-and-effect problems that harm our environment:

- **Oil Drilling :-** This issue is one that causes a great deal of environmental destruction. Our dependence on fossil fuel is a global addiction that affects every aspect of the world. Oil spills and offshore drilling poison marine life, oil drilling (on land) suffocates the earth, and the combustion of fossil fuels add to the increased atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>, which in turns causes the progression of global warming and ocean acidification. This is a multifaceted issue and is a good cause to get involved with because it covers such a broad spectrum of issues.

- **Deforestation:-** Millions of acres of forest are cut down for industrial benefit, such as large scale farming, oil mining, and the production of paper goods. Deforestation causes wildlife and biodiversity extinction. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has a Red List of environmentally threatened species with up-to-date information. Oftentimes, the cause for their threatened existence is listed as loss of habitat as it is for many Amazonian species.

- **Production of Plastic Goods :-** Currently our society creates a great deal of waste and much of that waste is comprised of plastic. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2010 alone 31 million tons of plastic waste was created. This waste ends up all over the globe in both land and water. A good example is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. Not only is plastic waste an issue, but the production of plastic is also dependent on fossil fuel combustion. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) in 2010 191 million barrels of liquid petroleum gases (LPG) and natural gas liquids (NGL) were used in the U.S. alone to produce plastic goods.

#### VI. PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH FORMAL EDUCATION

The system of education in which education is carried out in accordance with some established or prescribed rules, is called as Formal Education System. In India, the formal education is the mandate of the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), However, the Ministry of Environment and Forests has been consulting and infracting with MHRD, National Council of Educational Research and Training- the apical body of shaping education in schools in India, and HRD- departments of different states to include the Environmental Education in the curricula at various levels.

##### I. Environmental Education in Schools Systems :-

A vast section of population is found in different schools and colleges. Minds of these people remain ready to learn and curious to know about what is happening and what is likely to happen around their surroundings, These people can be motivated through proper formal education to take actions for environment. In view of these facts the MHRD had also been interacting with the University Grant Commission (UGC) to take appropriate steps for the inclusion of environmental education at the University Levels.

After the directives issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the MHRD as well as State Departments of HRD have included the environmental education as a separate and compulsory subject in the education curricula framed by NCERT, at all levels of formal education, that is at primary, Secondary, Senior Secondary and College levels.

##### II. Environmental Appreciation Courses :-

A course module has been prepared by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India, under the direction of the Ministry of Human Resources

Development for Environmental Appreciation Courses. The Environmental Appreciation Courses are conducted through the mode of Distant Education with the help of various study centers located across the country. In pursuance of the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, the course module developed by IGNOU for appreciation courses is being used as compulsory component of its Undergraduate Courses also.

### **III. Environmental Concepts in Management and Business Studies :-**

The Central Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India launched an initiative in the year 2002, through which it integrated the environmental concepts and issues in the syllabi of Management and Business Studies. Accordingly, the experts were assigned duties to examine the course content and to conduct workshops to sensitize the faculty of Management Colleges towards the issues of environment. A new curriculum was developed in a Curriculum Development Workshop in which a Resource Base for Teaching Materials was also developed by the experts. After it, an inventory of courses offered in India and other countries of the world was developed which was followed by the development of an inventory of the Resource Materials for the Management and other professional courses.

## **VII. PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

The system of education in which education is carried out without any pre-established and prescribed rules and the body concerned with educating the public is free to design the course module, the activity schedule or the programme concerning environmental awareness, is called as Non- Formal Education.

The Non-Formal Environmental Education for building of Environmental Awareness is imparted through various means like- through Eco- clubs, Population Education Programmes, Environmental Campaigns, and through other means.

### **Public Awareness through Eco- Clubs:-**

Public Awareness Programmes for conservation of environment can be done by students at school or Mohallah (residential colony) level also. For this, students can form eco- clubs of like minded, responsible and disciplined students.

What is an Eco- club<sup>7</sup> An eco-club is a group of people who meet at regular intervals for planning, designing and implementing activities for generating awareness among masses and for identifying and solving ecological problems at the local levels.

At school level, students can form Eco- clubs by organizing students from different classes. Some Non- governmental organisations like WWF that are busy in generating environmental awareness since long, are running Nature -Clubs in some schools in different states of India and abroad. The National Council of Science and Technology Communications (NCSTC) is also generating Environmental Awareness through its

various eco-clubs running across the country under different names.

## **VIII. THE NATIONAL GREEN CORPS**

The Ministry of Environment and Forest started National Green Corps (NGC) Programme in the year 2001 - 02. The objective of this National Programme is to generate Environmental Awareness amongst school children through establishment of Eco-clubs in all the districts of different states and Union Territories of India. The programme is being implemented by different nodal agencies. The principal focus of the NGC Programme is the introduction of action oriented studies of the problems of environment on different levels and finding out easy solutions of these problems through students under the guidance and supervision of their teachers. Though a State Govt. / UTs is free to open any number of such eco-clubs in its districts, the Central Government provides financial assistance to 150 best performing eco-clubs in each district.

## **IX. THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF NGCS ARE**

- (i) To provide Environmental Education opportunities to school children and to make them understand their local environment and Environmental Problems.
- (ii) Stimulating awareness amongst school children through physical programmes of activities about the Environmental Conservation and Protection Issues.
- (iii) Visualizing the role of children as agents of change and dissemination of environmental information among public.
- (iv) To facilitate participation of school children in decision making in the areas of development and environment.
- (v) To involve children in action based programmes designed by them for solving environmental problems at local levels.

## **X. PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH POPULATION EDUCATION PROGRAMMES**

Educating students about human population; relationships between economic, social, cultural and biological processes that influence a population; impacts of the growth of human population on these processes, and Reproductive Health of men and women is called as population education. The science of population is called as Demography and one who is the expert of demography is called as a Demographer.

## **XI. Importance of Population Education**

The Population Education is a very important part of education which acts as a powerful agent of building awareness regarding development and

environment. It encourages the learners to understand the impacts of population growth on environment in general and about the impact of population growth on natural resources in particular. It teaches about the impact of population on civic amenities and spread of various types of general and Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) like Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The population education incorporates Sex Education which is essential for good reproductive health, maintaining the size of the family and keeping away from STD.

## XII. IMPACT OF POPULATION GROWTH ON DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

The growth of human population has great impacts on development. On the other hand development too, has great impacts on the growth of human population. Hence it is important to generate awareness about the impacts of development and population on each other and also about the collective impacts of both of these on the natural environment. This can be done through various population education Programmes conducted on different levels. It is through population education Programmes also that awareness regarding the impact of rapid growth of population on environment and development can be built.

How does the Growth of human population affect development? Well, the production which is essential for the economic development depends on Natural Resources and Human Resources. Human resources are the Active Resources that help in the exploitation and utilization of natural resources. The exploitation and utilization of natural resources finally lead to production and economic development. Thus, human resources have greater importance in the overall process of development.

When human population grows beyond a certain limit, the pressure on natural resources increases due to the fact that the production is to be raised to meet the demands of the increasing population. On the other hand, all the produce is finished in meeting the demands of the growing population and savings become zero or very less. This condition does not allow the formation of Capital and without capital there cannot be any production in future.

The economic development too, has great impacts on the growth of population. The per capita increase in income of people leads to the rise in their living standards. When the living standards of people rise, they start realizing the need and importance of keeping smaller families. This thought encourages them to control the birth rate and the further growth of population is stabilized.

## XIII. PUBLIC AWARENESS THROUGH AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS

A series of planned activities that are intended to achieve a particular social, commercial or political aim- is called as a campaign.

Campaigns in environmental context are intended to generate awareness regarding the urgent needs of the conservation of environment and its resources as well as to take up appropriate steps through different activities for the recovery of the lost health of environment of a particular area or locality, Environmental Awareness Campaigns are very important for generating awareness regarding the actual status of various resources of the natural environment, the impacts of ongoing processes of development on these resources and the effective measures to be taken up for the recovery of that which has been lost during the course of development,

The environmental campaigns are usually conducted by government agencies or by non-government bodies by making provisions of funding and by ensuring the participation of the public.

## XIV. NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

The Multi-media Campaign launched during the mid-1986 by the Ministry for Environment and Forest, Government of India, for the generation of environmental awareness with active components for the recovery of the lost health of environment is called as National Environmental Awareness Campaign,

The National Environmental Awareness Campaign is a large scale programme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, which was started during mid-1986. It is organized every year on a particular theme decided by the ministry. This campaign is designed to disseminate environmental messages to a wide range of target groups utilizing conventional and non-conventional methods of communication.

**(i) Financial Assistance and Institutions that carry on Awareness Campaigns :-**

Under the NEAC nominal financial assistance is provided to registered NGOs, schools, colleges, universities, research institutions, women and youth organizations, army units, state governments' departments etc. through Nodal Agencies, These institutions organize awareness activities fixed by the ministry for a particular year.

Presently, the campaign is implemented through 29 regional resource agencies (RRAs) for specific states or region of the country. These agencies are responsible for the physical monitoring of activities of different organizations. In the year 1986 the number of participating organizations was 115 which increased up to 7588 in 2004. Up to 2005 the number of participating organizations rose up to 9566. The RRAs help the ministry in the conduction, supervision and monitoring of the NEAC Campaign across the country.

**(ii) Activities done under the NEAC Campaign :-**

The institutions that receive financial assistance for conducting Programmes under the NEAC,

disseminate information through various types of activities. Most of these activities are seminars, workshops, training programmes, camps, pad- yatras, rallies, public meetings, exhibitions, competitions, folk dances, and songs, street theaters, puppet shows, distribution of EE -resource materials etc. Activities- like tree plantation, waste management, cleaning of water sources etc., are also done during the campaign.

**(iii) Public Awareness through other Programmes :-**

**(i) Publication and Distribution of Resource Materials:-**

This programme has been designed to prepare resource materials for the utilization in various Environmental Education and awareness programmes. The expertise available with professional societies, voluntary organizations, institutions etc. is utilized for printing and publication of the resource materials.

**(ii) GLOBE:**

It is an International Science and Education Programme which was started in 1995 by USA. In expanded form, it is known as Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment. This programme is being conducted in 108 countries including India. This global programme facilitates the worldwide research through a worldwide research team formed by students, teachers and scientists.

The students of GLOBE carry out important researches and learn about scientific protocols. They perform environmental activities already taught to them in theory classes. This programme helps students to perform activities based on text book-contents and assists them in gaining complete knowledge of environment.

**(iii) Green Olympiad :-**

It is a written Quiz Programme conducted by Tata Energy Research Institute (TERI) New Delhi (India), on the Global Level. The number of participants in this global programme for students is increasing gradually. About 70,000 school children appeared in the quiz from India, Russia, and UAE during 2005. A televised quiz programme named TERRA QUIZ was telecast on the national channel of Doordarshan also. Thus, this programme is very important for sensitizing children about environmental issues.

**(iv) Seminars, Symposia and Workshops:-**

The Ministry of Environment and Forests provides financial assistance to universities, NGOs, voluntary Organizations (VOs) and other institutions for the organization of seminars, symposia, workshops and conferences etc. and for publication of their proceedings. These programmes provide platforms to scientists and researchers to share knowledge on the environmental issues. This facilitates the transfer of knowledge to people.

**(v) Awareness through Print and Electronic Media:-**

Positive changes in attitudes and behaviors of public are necessary for a sustainable development and balanced environment. For this, people should be made aware of different issues of environment and government programmes through print and electronic media. The governments conduct many

different programmes on radios and television for the mass awareness regarding developmental and environmental issues. Some organizations prepare films on different issues of environment. These films generate Environmental Awareness in big ways. Some of the important films made for generating Environmental Awareness are-Ozy Ozone (an animation film); Ecotoons (a cartoon film by WWF), Listen, the Nature is crying here( a film made by the children of a school of Himachal Pradesh), Navo Jamano Navi Harifai(an animation film produced by the Gujrat State Energy Development Agency), Waste Not Want Not, I care for the Environment, Littering, Cloth Bags are in, Plastic Bags are Out, Cans Add to Garbage, Garbage- Our Problem, and Clean up Kodagu etc.

**(vi) Media Action Plan :-**

The Ministry of Environment and Forests has formulated a Media Action Plan which comprises a number of activities.

**(vii) Environmental Information System (ENVIS) :-**

The Central Ministry of Environment and Forests has started an Environmental Information System which is responsible for the collection, collation, storage, retrieval, and dissemination of environmental information to decision makers, research scholars. The ENVIS has a network of 78 subject- specific and state-centers located across the country. Academicians, policy planners, environmental scientists etc. can receive information for their work from these centers. The networking of all these ENVIS centers have been made through a portal at URL <http://www.envis.nic.in>

Sponsoring of 'Bhoomi'- a weekly Environmental Magazine on Doordarshan,

Launching Awareness Campaign on selected environmental themes through different private TV channels, Launching of a 15 minute programme entitled 'Yeh Gulistan Hamara' in twelve languages on All India Radio, Supporting 'Vatavaran Film Festival' on Wildlife. The Ministry of Environment and Forests, Government of India, has signed a Memorandum of Agreements with the Public Service Broadcasting Trust (PSBT) for the production of 13 films per year on Environmental Issues and their telecast on Doordarshan.

The Ministry sponsors tours of national and international journalists to sensitize them on Ecology and Wildlife.

An annual vacation programme on Environmental Resources named as "Vacation Programme on Natural Resources.

For building awareness regarding environment and development among high school students, the Ministry has developed association with the Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and Environment (A Tree).

Various awareness programmes are being conducted by Tata Energy Research Institute in many different ways. Some of the important awareness programmes conducted by the institute are- Educational Trips, Enviro Club, SWISS (Sensitization on Water Issues for School Children), EduGreen, YEARN (Youth for Ethical Action

and Respect for Nature), CAMPS (Community Adoption and Monitoring Programme for Schools) etc.

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