



Chapter I

Introduction

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The advancement of science and technology made the human life easier. Human beings are consuming much of natural resources and their activities adversely affect the environment directly as well as indirectly. The ruthlessly consumption of natural resources as well as environmental pollution just for the development of society, may result in a number of problems in future.

National Policy on Education (1986) defines that “there is a paramount need to create a consciousness of the environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society, beginning with the child. Environmental consciousness should inform teaching in schools and colleges. This aspect will be integrated in the entire educational process”.

With growing concern toward environmental problems, we have begun to consider which type of activities and attitudes obligatory to understand the problem and take necessary measures. As we always lean to look towards education for solution to the situation. In present context education also has to play its role.

Today environmental education is an important section within the educational system. It includes all educational activities to overcome environment calamity by consciously and confronting as well as by attempting the same. The objective of environment education is to acquire awareness, knowledge, develop attitudes,

skills and abilities to participate for solving environmental problems.

I.1 Environment and its Utility

Douglas, Hugget and Robinson (1996) said that “Environment is the sum total of all external conditions which may not act upon an organism or community, to influence its development or existence. The surrounding air, light, moisture, temperature, wind, soil and other organisms are part of the environment of various living and non living objects happening and influence (both natural and artificial), the aggregate of which forms its environment and on which man depends for life and survival of life”.

Environment is everything that effect the individual except his genes (Anastasi, 1958). The component of environment is viewed in different ways with different angles by different groups of people but it may be safely argued that environment is an inseparable whole. It is constituted by the interacting systems of physical, biological and cultural elements which are inter-related, individually as well as collectively in many ways.

I.2 Environmental Education

The International Union for conservation of nature and natural resources (IUCN) defines environmental education as “the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop the skills and appreciate the inter relations among people, their culture and biophysical surroundings”.

Environmental education is a learning process that increases people's knowledge and awareness about the environment, associated challenges, fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions as well as to take responsible action (UNESCO report, 1978).

Environmental education, with its major goals of ecological sustainability and social justice within and “environmentally educated teacher” (UNESCO-UNEP) is crucial in transforming attitudes, values and actions that lead towards sustainable social and environmental relationship.

In essence, environmental education involves children, teachers and communities working collectively and democratically towards the resolution of environmental question, issues and problems. It is interdisciplinary section about values, attitudes, ethics and actions. It is a way of thinking, practice which involves positive contribution to counteract the doom and gloom.

The objectives of environmental education are given below

Awareness

To help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.

Knowledge

To help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experiences and acquire a basic understanding of the environment and its associated problems.

Attitudes

To help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feeling of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.

Skills

To help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

Participation

To help social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working towards resolution of environmental problems.

The Supreme Court of India (in 2004) directed NCERT and other concurred organizations to introduce the teaching of environmental education as a compulsory subject in all classes.

I.3 Elementary Education in India

Among the Indians elementary education, in the age group of 6-14 year, is essential for all. It is considered as fundamental right to all round development of the individual both at materials and spiritual

levels as well as acculturating role, to refine, sensitivities and perceptions towards contribution to national cohesion.

The period of elementary school (Class I to VIII) is now also recognized as the period of compulsory schooling side as well as the constitutional amendment also makes the education as a fundamental right. The beginning of this period marks the formal introduction of the child to reading, writing, arithmetic & culminating in the introduction of the formal disciplines such as sciences and social sciences towards the end of elementary school. This eight years period is one of tremendous cognitive development, shaping reason, intellect and social skills as well as the attitudes necessary for entering in to workplace.

The expression of the global concern for universalization of elementary education echoes India's preoccupation with universal elementary education, since the early age of its civilization. Provision of minimum standards of education to children evolved from ages of antiquity in India, emphasizing completion of 8 years of compulsory education of elementary education has evolved over the ages, enriching itself with learning experience of a rich amalgamation of indigenous (native born), indigenous (growing through internal expansion) and exogenous (growing by addition from the outside) systems. This has led to development of objectives of elementary education that are modern, egalitarian, democratic, relevant and socially. Major events of significance that have impacted the modern Indian educational scenario have been the national policies on education (NPF_s) of 1968 and 1986. The NPE (1968) clearly enunciated a national educational pattern of

10+2+3. The NPE (1986) further clarified that elementary education structure would comprise 5 years of primary education and 3 years of upper primary education.

I.4 Statement of the Problem

In present study, researcher deals with attitude towards environmental education and environmental practices of the students. In this study, statement of the problem is “Study of Attitude towards Environmental Education and Environmental Practices of elementary level students at Bhavnagar district.”

I.5 Objectives of the Present Study

1. To study the attitude towards environmental education of elementary level students.
2. To study the environmental practices of elementary level students.
3. To study the difference in attitude towards environmental education between boys and girls of elementary level.
4. To study the difference in environmental practices between boys and girls of elementary level.
5. To study the relationship between attitude towards environmental education and environmental practices of elementary level student.

I.6 Delimitation of the study

1. The study was delimited to VIII class students in session 2010-11.
2. The study was delimited to the private English medium school of Bhavnagar district.
3. The Study was delimited to school affiliated to Gujarat Board of Secondary Education, Gujarat.
4. The Study was delimited to attitude towards environmental education and environmental practices of VIII class students.

I.7 Definition and explanation of terms and variables

In this study, independent variable is elementary level students and dependent variable is attitude towards environmental education and environmental practices.

I.7.1 Attitude

An attitude is a hypothetical construct that represents an individual's degree of like or dislike for something. Attitudes are generally positive or negative views of a person, place, thing, or event. This is often referred to as the attitude object; people can also be conflicted or ambivalent towards an object, meaning that they simultaneously possess both positive and negative attitudes towards the item in question.

Fishbein and **Ajzen** (1975) define attitude as "A learned predisposition to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object."

With the above elements in mind, environmental attitude can be defined as “A learned predisposition to respond consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to the environment”.

I.7.2 Environmental Practices

“Environmental practices are one’s patterns of behavior in day to day life towards environment and its components.

I.7.3 Environmental education

It is a learning process that increases people’s knowledge and awareness about the environment, associated challenges, fosters attitudes, motivations and commitments to make informed decisions as well as to take responsible action.

I.7.4 Elementary education

It is considered as fundamental right to all round development of the individual both at materials and spiritual levels as well as acculturating role, to refines, sensitivities and perceptions towards contribution to national cohesion.

The period of elementary school (Class I to VIII) is now also recognized as the period of compulsory schooling side as well as the constitutional amendment also makes the education as a fundamental right.

I.8 Hypothesis

1. There will be no significant difference in attitude towards environmental education between boys and girls of elementary level.
2. There will be no significant difference in environmental practices between boys and girls of elementary level.
3. There will be no significant relationship between attitude towards environmental education and environmental practices of elementary level students.

I.9 Significance of the Study

Human beings exploited the natural resources available in their surroundings for their benefits. Air, water, land, atmosphere and living organisms each of these elements is of its own importance in various forms to human beings. However, technological advancement has made human beings voracious in their exploitation of natural resources.

World faces environmental challenges on two faces, poverty as well as economic development. Poverty and population pressures clearly result in over use of land, water, forests and other natural resources without thinking about future generations when it is so difficult to survive today? Uncontrolled economic development, overuse of ground water systems and pollution of natural resources has become the array of the day. So it is necessary to implement environmental education in full swing. Education can be the only way to develop attitude towards environment.

Environment education is important for everyone to solve the present problems regarding environment, but only knowledge and attitude towards environmental education is not enough to solve these problems. Positive attitude towards environmental education as well as environmental practices in daily life can lead to solve these problems.