IMPORTANCE AND NEED OF EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract:**

Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education, and training are key to moving society toward sustainability. This paper is trying to focus on some of the important issues like global warming, inefficient use of energy, and scarcity of water, increased pollution, and abuse of human rights, terrorism, naxalism, and consumerism and suggested various solutions which will be useful in solving these problems. Education is the only way by which we can inculcate the value of sustainability, peace, harmony and love for ecosystem. People are the agent of transformation and they should be included in decision making process. This paper also tries to focus on teacher training and revising education from nursery school through university to include a clear focus on the development of knowledge, skills, perspectives and values related to sustainability which is important to current and future societies.

(**Key words:** Sustainable Development, biodiversity, renewable energy, global warming, quality education etc.)

**Introduction:**

The concept of sustainable development emerged as a response to a growing concern about human society’s impact on the natural environment. The concept of sustainable development was defined in 1987 by the Brundtland Commission (formally the World Commission on Environment and Development) as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’(Brundtland, 1987)*.*This definition acknowledges that while development may be necessary to meet human needs and improve the quality of life, it must happen without depleting the capacity of the natural environment to meet present and future needs. The sustainable development movement has grown and campaigned on the basis that sustainability protects both the interests of future generations and the earth’s capacity to regenerate. (Global Education)

Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education, and training are key to moving society toward sustainability. (McKeown)

Education encompasses teaching and learning specific skills, imparting of knowledge, positive judgment and well developed wisdom. It has one of its fundamental aspects of imparting culture from generation to generation. It is an application of pedagogy, a body of theoretical and applied research related to teaching and learning. The basic aim of the education system for sustainable development is ‘education of a new man', ‘a man of a sustainable type of thinking’ a man of Cosmo-planetary consciousness with a holistic world outlook, who has a culture of sustainability, high socio-cultural needs and deep moral ethical values, who is capable to solve global tasks facing by the mankind and to promote the forming of sustainable society. (Education for SD)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) means the use of education as a tool to achieve sustainability. Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

All education serves a purpose or society would not invest in it. Driver education, for example, seeks to make our roads safer for travellers. Fire-safety education seeks to prevent fires and tragic loss of lives and property. ESD promises to make the world more liveable for this and future generations. This ESD will be giving people knowledge and skills for lifelong learning to help them find new solutions to their environmental, economic, and social issues. (McKeown)

The overall objective of the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development is to equip people with knowledge of and skills in sustainable development, making them more competent and confident while at the same time increasing their opportunities for leading healthy and productive lifestyles in harmony with nature and with concern for social values, gender equity and cultural diversity. (UNECE)

Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way. (Education)

Sustainable development cannot be achieved by technological solutions, political regulation or financial instruments alone. We need to change the way we think and act. This requires quality education and learning for sustainable development at all levels and in all social contexts.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is about enabling us to constructively and creatively address present and future global challenges and create more sustainable and resilient societies.

**Need for Sustainable Development:**

Sustainable Development is a complex concept with its origin in the natural and social Sciences that has been developed through international dialogue in response to the challenges facing the world today. According to Brundtland Commission (1987), Sustainable Development is “development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”.

A core principle behind sustainable development is the idea that economic, social and environmental conditions play a major role. ESD has five components; knowledge, skills, perspectives, values and teaching issues which are to be addressed in a formal curriculum for sustainable development.

**Why do we need Education for Sustainable Development?**

* Inefficient use of energy
* Lack of water conservation
* Increased pollution
* Abuses of human rights
* Overuse of personal transportation
* Terrorism
* Naxalism
* Consumerism, etc.

***SOLUTIONS***

**Improving Basic Education:**

Basic education means the education which teaches individual to read, write and do some basic mathematical problems. Government is giving more importance to basic education. Every year government is spending lots of money for education. When we talk about quantity of education, in term of literacy rate, that is increasing; but when we talk about quality of education that is in a very bad condition. We need to take this issue as challenge and try to address this issue with a very perfection and strong way.

Simply increasing basic literacy, as it is currently taught in most countries, will not advance sustainable societies. Indeed, if communities and nations hope to identify sustainability goals and work toward them, they must focus on skills, values, and perspectives that encourage and support public participation and community decision making. To achieve this, basic education must be reoriented to address sustainability and expanded to include critical-thinking skills, skills to organize and interpret data and information, skills to formulate questions, and the ability to analyze issues that confront communities.

Basic education needs to focus on sharing knowledge, skills, values and perspectives throughout a lifetime of learning in such a way that it encourages sustainable livelihoods and supports citizens to live sustainable lives.

**Reorienting Existing Education:**

Our education system is not bad at all; but it needs to change according to changing global scenario. Today is a world of globalization and in this globalized world, responsibility of citizen has increased as well as expectation from the education system has also increased. There is a wide gap between demand and supply of skilled and value oriented educated person, and we need to fill this gap by quality education.

An appropriately reoriented basic education includes more principles, skills, perspectives, and values related to sustainability than are currently included in most education systems. Hence, it is not only a question of quantity of education, but also one of appropriateness and relevance. ESD encompasses a vision that integrates environment, economy, and society. Reorienting education also requires teaching and learning knowledge, skills, perspectives, and values that will guide and motivate people to pursue sustainable livelihoods, to participate in a democratic society, and to live in a sustainable manner.

If government officials or school district administrators are unaware of the linkage between educations and sustainable development, re-orienting education to attain sustainable development will not occur. When people realize that education can improve the likelihood of implementing national policies, regional land and resource management programs, then education is in a position to be reoriented to help achieve sustainability. This awareness forms the first step in the reorienting process. Thus the importance of ESD must reach beyond the delegations and permeate the educational community and general public.

Rethinking and revising education from nursery school through university to include a clear focus on the development of knowledge, skills, perspectives and values related to sustainability is important to current and future societies.

**Public Understanding and Awareness:**

People participation is must in any planning and programmes. Plans and programmes cannot become successful until and unless it gets people participation. People are the agent of transformation of society and transmission of information from one place to another. When people understand present situation and its future consequences then only they will try to stop wasting natural resources and will start to search for alternative renewable resource.

Sustainability requires a population that is aware of the goals of a sustainable society and has the knowledge and skills to contribute to those goals. The need for an informed voting citizenry becomes ever more important with the increase in the number of democratic governments. An informed voting citizenry, which lends support to enlightened policies and government initiatives, can help governments enact sustainable measures. Citizens also need to be knowledgeable consumers who can see beyond the "green wash". In today's world, people are surrounded by media and advertisements. As a result, people must become media literate and able to analyze the messages of corporate advertisers.

Years of resource management has shown that a public that is aware of and informed about resource-management decisions and programs can help achieve program goals. In contrast, an uninformed public can undermine resource-management programs. Education has also been essential in many other types of programs, such as public-health efforts to stop the spread of specific diseases. Achieving the goals of sustainable development requires widespread community education and a responsible media committed to encouraging an informed and active citizenry.

**Fostering peace:**

After independence we saw an increase in conflicts inside the country as well as between the two countries. War is a state of extreme human rights violations, namely the right to life, and of deep country-wide disorganization, that destroys all social and economic progress. Without peace, no model of development will be possible. When laks of people struggling for one time food, children are undernourished and farmers are committing suicide at the same time we are spending large amount of money for maintaining peace, law and order in the country by using military power. Fostering peace is thus also working towards sustainable development.

From Primary school level we can keep lessons regarding patriotism. Teachers should play vital role in inculcating harmony among students. If importance of harmony and peace is told to students, their mind can automatically get diverted towards peace. The best way to implement peace among students is to give them their own examples in role play manner and we can demonstrate that how violence can be avoided and peace can be implemented. On 15th August and 26th Jan, we can keep one week patriotic programmes in the form of activity which include peace and harmony and avoidance of violence.

**Fighting against global warming**:

Experts from around the world study the causes and effects of greenhouse gas emissions that are the root of the planet’s global warming. The international community is mobilized to address this problem. Measures are taken to preserve the planet from the negative consequences of global warming caused by air pollution (transportation, factories and power plants) including climate change, rising sea levels, and modification of marine currents. We must, therefore, protect the planet in order to pass on a sustainable heritage to future generations.

At school level we should start a plantation drive. On birthday of every student we need to ask student to plant at least one plant in school and at home, taking care of that plant will be responsibility of that student. Water harvesting plant should be constructed in all schools and colleges. Practical training of how to construct water harvesting plant, its importance and usefulness should be given by teachers to students. Use of solar energy for lightning, cooking and transportation should be promoted. Teachers and elders can inculcate the habit among student to use electricity where it is needed. If there is no use of electric equipments, students should automatically go and switch of electric equipments, so that we can save electricity. This we can do everywhere.

**Training**

All sectors of the workforce can contribute to local, regional and national sustainability. Business and industry are, thus, key sites for on-going vocational and professional training, so that all sectors of the workforce can have the knowledge and skills necessary to make decisions and perform their work in a sustainable manner. Special training on education for sustainable development (use of renewable energy like solar, wind, and biogas, use of bio fertilizers, techniques to save energy and water, water harvesting plant etc...) should be given to teachers and parents, so that they can teach to children and young mind. As a result this knowledge will pass on from generation after generation.

**Suggestions:**

* Share the values and principles that underpin sustainable development.
* Be embedded in the curriculum in an interdisciplinary and holistic manner, allowing for a whole-institution approach to policy making.
* Promote critical thinking, problem solving and action, all of which develop confidence in addressing the challenges to sustainable development.
* Employ a variety of educational methods, such as literature, art, drama and debate to illustrate the processes.
* Allow learners to participate in decision-making on the design and content of educational programmes.
* Address local as well as global issues, and avoid jargon-ridden language and terms.
* Ensure that the content has a long-term perspective and uses medium and long-term planning.

**Conclusion:**

In the concluding remarks, the researcher wishes to say that education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. The need of hour is to implement and monitor it properly. The much awaited Right to Education Act which has been passed by the parliament of India is a welcome step but the quality of education should not be compromise. We should also think about the education which we are giving to children has any use in achieving sustainability and maintaining peace in society.

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