

## Education with Environmental Awareness: Need for Bright Future

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Received: 24 Oct 2024 Accepted & Reviewed: 25 Nov 2024, Published : 30 November 2024

### Abstract

India is one of the largest populous country in the world which is facing various problems like terrorism, increasing population, unemployment, health issues, disobeying rules and regulations of the country etc. Polluted environment is one of them which no exception of the same. Increasing routine activities of human being and industrialization have polluted environment at a large extent, which force to people for facing various problems like flood, draught, accommodation problems, increasing various diseases etc. It has, therefore, become a challenge to us. It is very necessary to overcome these problems and find some strong solutions against it to maintain human life. But how? In author's opinion, only education is a tool that can overcome these problems as Nelson Mandela has said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" similarly environmental awareness can be aroused among people by education. It is a powerful medium of addressing environmental issues. In this article, author tried to highlight the crucial role of education, social media, traditions and customs, Swachh Bharat Mission and other different ways and activities by which people may aware to healthy environment which may lead to bright future of India.

**Keywords:-** Swachh Bharat Mission, Formal education, Informal Education, Social media, etc.

### Introduction

Education plays an important role in the lives of human beings as it provides intellect, critical thinking and many more to shaped physical body of human being. Human Beings found this world with different beauties like dense forest with beautiful greenery, mountain, rivers etc. Natural beauty heals various mental diseases and fills our heart with happiness and joy as **John Keats** in his famous Ode 'Ode on Endymion' has said "**A thing of beauty is a joy for ever**" which means that beautiful sources or objects are always the sources of joy and happiness. But, unfortunately, this phenomenon is going on disappearing day by day. Inventions and innovations of science and technology have brought a great change not only in lives of human being but also in environmental resources. Now-a-days, materialism prevails in every aspect of life which results in to unhealthy environment. People are going on cutting trees rapidly to fulfil their desires of various luxuries. Plantation is not being made as per the ratio of cutting trees. Also, water pollution, air pollution, soil pollution, e-Kachra pollution etc. add their role in making environment unhealthy. There is a great imbalance in environment, which force to people face different types of problems like pollution, flood, draughts, global warming etc. It is going on increasing pollution day by day which may produce dangerous outcomes in future so it is very necessary to save environment for sustaining life.

Life can be better sustained in a healthy environment. Environmental awareness has been focused for a long time and today it is a great concern for workers, teachers, students, policy makers etc. So, environment awareness has become a central concern in curriculum and teaching-learning process. Environmental awareness should be aroused through education at its every level directly or indirectly. Environmental awareness deals with the needs to protect environment from global warming, pollution etc.

**Environmental Awareness through Education-** Environmental awareness is a process and product that enables human being to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving and take action to improve the environment. It deals with the issues of environment and there to give remedies to resolve these issues.

Environmental awareness through education includes:

1. Sense of awareness among students about environment and its various problems.
2. Enable to students in realizing the inter relationship between human and environment.
3. Inculcating knowledge about environment at levels of education while emphasis should be given on practical approach with basic knowledge on higher classes.
4. Facilitating students in creating positive attitude to environmental awareness.
5. Inculcating skills required for the fulfilment of the aims of environmental education.

By education, environment can be preserved as 'Nelson Mandela' has said, "Education is a powerful weapon which you can use to change the world". So, environmental awareness should be part and parcel of current curriculum in teaching-learning process. Environmental awareness is being provided in a curriculum directly or indirectly, still aim and objectives of environmental education is not fulfilling. Environmental awareness should be inculcated as following:

**Formal Education:-** Formal Education plays an important role in environmental awareness. Environmental awareness should be providing like other subjects. It should be weightaged same as other core subjects are given. It should be more practical. A rich curriculum should be designed and implemented to achieve its objectives.

**Co-curricular activities:-** Co-curricular activities play a crucial role in achieving aims of education. Environmental awareness is no exception of it. There are many co-curricular activities that enhance environment awareness. Environmental camps and lectures, environmental awareness programmes like exhibitions and movies on environmental awareness, environmental discussion like seminars, conference, debates etc. focus our attention to environment. This will help to impart the environmental awareness.

**Informal education:** - Informal education also helps to create environmental awareness among people. People may form eco clubs and may have discussions about the serious aspects of environment so that it may handle properly.

Parents and guardians should tell the importance of environment and they should inspire their wards to programmes that may create awareness to environment like Environmental Education. Awareness and Training (EEAT), is a flagship scheme of a Ministry for enhancing the understanding of people at all levels about the relationship between human beings and environment and to develop skills to improve and protect the environment. Also, Swachh Bharat Mission is also another flagship which was launched on 2nd October 2014 by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India with the view to bring about improvement in the general quality of life by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation, to accelerate sanitation coverage in rural areas to achieve the vision of Swachh Bharat, to motivate communities and Panchayati Raj Institutions to adopt sustainable sanitation practices and facilities through awareness creation and health education, to encourage cost effective and appropriate technologies for ecologically safe and sustainable sanitation, to develop community managed sanitation systems focusing on scientific Solid & Liquid Waste Management systems for overall cleanliness, to create significant positive impact on gender and promote social inclusion by improving sanitation especially in marginalized communities. ODF programme, Solid Waste Management, Wet Waste Processing, Dry Waste Processing,

Sanitary Landfills. Legacy Dumpsite Remediation, Clean Green Campaign, Indian Swachhta League, Swachhta Ke Do Rang, Swachhta Talks, Swachhta Startup Conclave, Swachh Amrit Mahotsav, Swachh Sehar Samvad etc. are some initiatives and programmes under Swachh Bharat Mission which are proved to be a milestone in making clean India and healthy environment. Further, Swachhta App and Swachhtm Portal are some ICT enabled platforms which facilitate grievance redressal platform to public for submitting any complaint regarding cleanliness and integrated interface between Ministry, State and Urban Local Bodies for all activities respectively. Similarly, other non-government organizations should start such programmes that may create environmental awareness and may prove fruitful to protect environment.

**Customs, traditions and environmental awareness:** - Traditions and customs have profound influence on environment and its various components. Their influence on environment may be both positive and negative. Negative in the sense that many festivals are celebrated in all over the world like Diwali, Christmas, Eid, etc. And these are deep rooted in human soul so they solemnized these festivals with great pomp and show, but their ways of celebrated create pollution very much, that affect our environment. On Diwali in India and New Year in world, people lit the fire crackers which pollutes environmental gases very much and produces dangerous diseases like cough, asthma, eye diseases etc., but on contrary there is also a positive aspect that is worshiping tree like Peepal, Banyan tree, Tulsi etc. which have medicated influence. These are considered god/goddess in Hindu mythology and it should be emphasised on the plantation of these trees. Scientific reasons are that Peepal gives more oxygen than those of others. Similarly, wood of mango tree are used in Hawans on various occasions like marriage, naming ceremony of the child etc. which purifies the air. But in present era, fulfilling the increasing demand of people, trees are being cut which cause global warming, flood, draught etc. Although environmental awareness is being provided at every level but theoretically not practically more. In most of the universities, it is optional paper while in graduation level, in most of the universities, it is qualifying. So, it is very necessary that modifications must be made for curriculum of environmental education. Firstly, it should be compulsory subject at every level of education. Evolution of environmental education should be based on practical like plantation of trees, community awareness work etc. It should be more weightaged rather than theory portion. Students should be given first-hand experience by taking them to Nature and its beautiful objects like mountain, trees, rivers etc.

**Social media:** - Present era is the era of science and technology. It has become the part and parcel aspect of human being's life. Therefore, people are connected through technology, generally known as social media. Social media occupies a significant place in awareness of environmental awareness. It is, generally, seen on World Environment Day that there is a great spread of pictures and videos of environment activities on social media which prompts awareness among citizens to environment. Social media is a source of information for many of us and it may be the best way to create environmental awareness among people.

**A brief structure for providing environmental awareness:-**

- a. At primary level, students should be given the basic knowledge of environment and its elements like, atmosphere, trees, rivers etc. It should be done with real situation or real objectives as possible e.g. If a teacher wants to teach about tree, one should take their students outside the class to see the trees to students, so that they may grasp properly the concept and also learn the concerned.
- b. Students should be made aware to neighbourhood environment at upper primary level and they should be asked to seek the problems and be motivated to give the solution of the problems. They should be known about different type of element of environment and their relation and effect on human being.

They should be felt this sense while studying environmental education. They should be made familiar with the dangerous outcomes if environment polluted.

- c. At secondary or senior secondary level, there should be more practical and less theoretical evaluation. Practical evaluation should be more weightaged in overall evaluation of environment subject. They should be assigned small projects that prompt environment awareness and should be evaluated accordingly.
- d. At higher level, environment subject should not be optional or elective. This should be compulsory subject in syllabus. It should be divided into two sections - (i) theoretical, (ii) practical. Theory should be appropriate weightage for both the sections. Theory must include seminars/conferences/workshops conducted by higher education institutions while in practical, there should be project like ODF (Open Defecation Free, clean village, Green village etc.) programmes to create environment awareness. Criteria must be to qualify in both the sections by students.

**Conclusion-** Environmental awareness is very necessary among citizens of the country to keep environment clean and healthy for wellbeing of human being. Although, it is a difficult task in this age of science and technology, yet attempts can be made for the same having a ray of hope. And in this task, education can play a significant role to resolve the environmental issues. So, this is a great matter of concern where everyone should focus. Without proper environment, human life cannot be sustained and how education can achieve its aim ignoring the issues of environmental awareness. So, it has become a great challenge to us, and if it should not be sort out soon, there will be dangerous outcomes to us and our future generation. So, in present education system, environmental education occupies a significant place as other subjects occupy and we are going on trying to achieve the real objectives of the environmental education. Government, Public, NGOs etc. must have understand their role in spreading environmental awareness.

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