

# UNDERSTANDING ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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## ABSTRACT

*EE enables a learner to develop a structure of knowledge about the world. So a person can understand and be able to explore environmental issues. It Possesses a variety of components like sensitivity, awareness, problem-solving, motivation and a positive attitude. EE enable a learner to develop ideal citizenship with the feeling of national and international integration. EE is the key instrument of bringing about the changes in the knowledge, values, sustainability and stability within and among societies and nations. EE consolidates the national policies on education in a nation. EE also plays a vital role in the overall social and economic emancipation of women and children. EE is vital for our survival on earth. The natural recourses and cultural heritage need to be protected not only for this generation but for future generations also. So it should be taught pre-primary to a higher level of education.*

**KEYWORDS:** Environment, Environmental Education, Natural Recourses, Sustainability

## INTRODUCTION

Environmental Education is a part of the holistic concept of education. In the present world, every country is suffering from environmental issues. India is a vast country both in population and geographic landscape. Our country has a variety of geographic locations. We think that EE is important and valuable because without learning and understanding the global environmental complexes, we can't understand and survive in this Complex world. EE is an organized process that allows a person to understand and explore environmental issues. It gives activeness and ability in problem-solving and takes proper actions to improve and enhance our environment. EE enables us to think deeper and develops a thought understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to get informed and responsible decisions. It is a multi-disciplinary field integration of many disciplines such as mathematics, biology, ecology, physics, earth science, geography, atmospheric science etc.

## KEY COMPONENTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

- General Knowledge and understanding about the environment and its issues.
- Sensibility and awareness towards the environment and its challenges.
- Attitude, motivation and willpower to improve or maintain environmental quality.
- Full Participation of every individual in the activities related to environmental issues.
- Dexterity to identify the issues and problems related to the environment and ability to resolve them.

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## NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

The environment is vital for all life. So it's our combined duty to care and preserve it properly. If our environment is menaced continuously, we have to face numerous problems. We must understand that any danger to our environment is a danger for all the species on the earth. Our environment is also part of cultural heritage. So the environment should be not only preserved but also enhanced to prosperity. We can't replace some recourses of our environment, so they should be managed on a sustainable basis. EE is based upon a comprehensive view of various environmental systems. It aims to make the citizen able and competent to do scientific work and find out practical solutions to meet the current environmental problems.

EE make the citizen acquire knowledge about the environment and make able them to analyze the environmental parameters like the terrestrial, aquatic and atmospheric system and their interactions with the biosphere and atmosphere. The need and importance can be pointed out as follows-

- EE enable a learner to improve academic achievement with engaging lessons about the nature that can be applied to all the grades and subjects.
- EE get learners outdoor and become active. It helps them to address common health issues in the present scenario such as obesity, depression and attention deficit disorder.
- EE enables a learner to take personal initiatives and social participation. It helps to achieve sustainability. EE is vital to understanding the basis of our existence in nature.

➤ EE helps the learners to break indoor habits. Students who experience the playground in their school with diverse natural settings are more physically active, more aware of good nutrition, more creative and possess more civic sense to one another.

➤ EE Supports STEM. It enables and engages a learner to gain and apply the knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). This field of subjects is very essential to meet the challenges regarding the environment, especially in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

➤ EE enables a learner to develop and modify the knowledge, behaviour, values and lifestyle required to achieve sustainability within and among societies and nations.

➤ EE helps us to meet the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century especially related to our environment. It emphasizes essential skills for succeeding in tomorrow's worlds such as questioning, investigating, defining problems, analyzing, interpreting reasoning, developing concepts and solving the problem.

➤ EE has a multi-disciplinary approach to the study of interactions between humans and the natural environment.

➤ EE promotes and cultivates leadership qualities in a learner. It emphasizes critical thinking and discussions, cooperative learning with others, action strategies with real words issues.

➤ EE enables a learner to understand the complexities of the environment and needs for the students to adopt appropriate activities and peruse sustainable development regarding our environment.

➤ EE cultivates the abilities of a learner to focus and improve their cognitive abilities. Students with attention deficit disorder also get benefited from more exposure to nature. They become more manageable and systematic towards the environment.

Thus, EE deals with every issue that affects an organism. It is essentially a multidisciplinary approach that brings about an appreciation of our natural world and human impacts on its integrity. It is an applied science as it seeks practical answers to make human civilization sustainable on the earth's finite resources.

#### MAJOR AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

➤ There must be an interdisciplinary approach to EE. So EE must touch all the areas and dimensions of knowledge and subjects' like- local, national, international, current issues and others.

➤ Our environment should be considered and studied as a whole, like-Social, Political, historical, cultural

technological etc. It should be given proper weightage because it's a life-saving process from pre-primary to a higher level.

➤ EE must enhance the learners' ability to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. It also enables a learner to discover the root causes of environmental issues.

➤ EE must play an active role both in society and government to make or generate their plans of development and growth with environmental considerations.

#### RESTRAINTS IN THE WAY TO IMPLEMENT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

➤ There is stiff specialization in the higher education field.

➤ There is a natural tendency to resist the changes in human beings. It affects new ideas, new thoughts, and innovations. So, EE is also being affected.

➤ The approach of inter-disciplinary is complex in itself.

➤ Lack of qualified teacher teachers and trainers of EE.

➤ High teacher-pupil nation in EE.

➤ Lack of resources like-equipments, materials and reference sources.

➤ EE is not emphasized in educational institutions as in other subjects. Usually, governments and educational institutions underestimate the EE.

#### CONCLUSION

In a present global environmental scenario, we can easily understand the indispensability of EE. It is estimated that by 2030, the world population of 7 billion will demand twice as many resources as the planet can supply. So meeting the needs of our vast global population, we have to make a concrete strategy. And a complete strategy needs excellence in understanding and creative problem-solving qualities. EE equips a learner with the proper knowledge, skill and motivation to address complex environmental challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. So EE should be studied and promoted at every level of the educational institution. Thus we will be able to cultivate qualitative human resources who will be able to meet global environmental challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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