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Environmental Problems: Causes and Solutions

- Editors -

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ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: A TOOL FOR PUBLIC AWARENESS

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Introduction - In the modern age of development with the progress of industrialization, urbanization and adoption of modern technologies in agriculture, environmental problems have become a concerning issue for human society. By considering the importance of environmental education for creating an awareness among the students, it has been widely accepted that environmental education is an important tool through which the goals for environmental awareness can be achieved easily (Stockholm, 1972).

With considering the urge and importance of Environment education, it has been thoroughly discussed and widely accepted at international level (Tiwari *et al.*, 2007). The environmental education is considered as an indispensable tool in the battle against the degradation of environmental components. In this accordance the appealed to launch a programme for environmental education (**United Nations, 1972**).

The environmental education plays a key role in the protection, conservation and improvement of the global environment. (Tbilisi Declaration, 1977). The public education,

awareness and training for environmental education having the importance in perspective of sustainable development (Rio, 1992).

Goals of Environmental Education

Goals of EE are to develop a world population that is aware of and concerned about, total environment and its associated problems, and commitment to work individual and collectively towards solution of current problems and the prevention of new ones (UNESCO, 1975).

Objectives of Environmental Education

A number of new objectives and guiding principles for developing environmental education at all levels in both formal and non-formal level were formulated at the Tbilisi Conference (UNESCO, 1977).

- **Participation** - to provide individuals, groups and societies with opportunities to be actively involved in exercising their skills of environmental citizenship and be actively involved at all levels in working towards sustainable development.
- **Knowledge** - to help individuals, groups and societies gain a variety of experiences in, and a basic understanding of, the knowledge and action competencies required for sustainable development
- **Values** - to help individuals, groups and societies acquire feelings of concern for issues of sustainability as well as a set of values upon which they can make judgments about appropriate ways of acting individually and with others to promote sustainable development
- **Skills** - to help individuals, groups and societies acquire the action competence or skills of environmental

citizenship - in order to be able to identify and anticipate environmental problems and work with others to resolve, minimize and prevent them

- **Awareness** - to create an overall understanding of the impacts and effects of behaviors and lifestyles - on both the local and global environments, and on the short-term and long-term.

The environmental education can imparted through both Formal and Non Formal methods.

a) Formal Environmental Education

The process of Formal Environmental education has started with the directives issued by Hon'ble Supreme Court in response to Writ Petition Case No. 860 / 1991 of M. C. Mehta vs. Union of India to make the environmental education from school to higher education level for all faculties. In pursuance of this, NCERT and UGC has constituted a committee and drafted a course on Environment Education and introduced in syllabus (Mehta, 1991).

The formal environmental education consists the various levels of education viz. Primary, Secondary, Higher Secondary and College level. It is achieved through well planned and designed curriculum, teaching-learning process, examination and evaluation system. Through formal environmental education the awareness among the students regarding the environmental issue is inculcated.

b) Non-Formal Environmental Education

This method has no limitations of structure of curriculum, language, age, gender, duration, place etc. The awareness can be imparted through various modes viz. organizing popular talks of experts, poster competition, drawing competition, World Environment Day, Eco-Development Camps, National Service Scheme, street plays, skits, short films, slide shows, folk songs, drama, message on public transport vehicles, radio,

television, newspapers etc. It can be imparted through Youth, Tribal peoples, Social activists, Women's NGO's, Public Representatives, Administrative Officials,

Conclusion: In order to inculcate the public awareness in context to protection, and conservation of environment the environmental education has got importance at various levels. The policy makers should give more emphasis on imparting the value regarding conservation of environment and natural resources management.

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