

Environmental Pollution and Education

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ABSTRACT

Every creation of God is functioning and enchanting. The nature is full of bright and beautiful things. Nature the embodiment of the spirit of the creator God is admired, adored and worshipped by poet, aesthetics and sages since ages. The most unique creation of God is human beings, unique in the sense that it is man who has made the world so beautiful and lustrous. Man has converted forests into parks, gardens, orchards and cities and deserves all the praise for that. But in doing so man jumped head long towards environmental pollution and crisis of environment just to satisfy his needs. The increasing population along with growing poverty has further worsened the condition. Today man has misused a variety of skills, which he possesses and has ruined the natural environment without understanding the rebounding repercussions even on his own existence. So environmental education will help to improve the quality of life of people and will conserve environment. Environmental Education is also a part of adult education because it is needed by all citizens at all ages, to make their lives better, systematic and prosperous.

Key Words: Pollution, Environmental Education

ENVIRONMENT

Environment literally meaning surrounding has a wide connotation including within its purview physical, biotic and human aspects of the earth. It includes the earth surface with all its physical features and natural resources, the distribution of land and water, mountains and plains, minerals, plants and animals, the climates and all cosmic forces that play upon the earth and affect the life of man. Thus, all the surrounds a designated Eco-system is called environment.

The life on the planet EARTH has evolved to its present stage through millions of years of interaction between the organism and its environment. It, therefore, goes without saying the very existence, survival and progress of man on earth depends on the quality of environment. As the most enlightened species, Homosapiens, man has paramount responsibility to preserve the environment and improve is qualitatively, not only for himself but also for the posterity. The environment for the man kind can be divided into two types, via, social environment and natural environment.

The society in which man lives, the customs and traditions, beliefs and habits, attitudes, occupations and industries, the political, religious, social and cultural institutions created by man all these and the standard of life achieved on the basis of these make up his social environment. The human life is closely linked with the natural elements. The human existence and progress depends on natural environment. The natural environment consists of four factors Lithosphere, Hydrosphere, Atmosphere and Biosphere. However, for peace, progress and prosperity of human race both types of environment are essential social as well as natural.

Life on earth exists in a thin layer of soil, water and atmosphere near the surface of earth. This layer of life comes from the biosphere [The sphere of life on earth]. The biosphere is a complex system consisting of many related variables. Man not only lives with other organisms of the biosphere but he lives with human beings also. Thus, man makes environment by his own activities. In general, the term environment refers to the surroundings to which one reacts and which in turn, affects the individual.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

The history of human civilization is the story of unique contradiction. On the one hand we have developed agriculture, medicine and industry and on the other hand tempered with environment and over used it. As technology based civilization grew in, it started creating environmental problems. Each year we are discharging millions of tons of toxic particles into air from motor vehicles, factories and power plants. This has forced man to wonder whether to applaud the benefits he has acquired or to hear the bells of doom ringing and wait for this ultimate death. It is a bare truth that for the first time in his entire cultural history, human being is facing one of the most horrible ecological crisis- the problem of pollution of his environment which sometimes in the past was pure, virgin, undisturbed and basically quite hospitable for him. Soil, water and air are the basis of life. Man is a part and parcel of his environment. Due to his interaction with nature on a large scale the balance of nature has been upset and environmental decadence occurred in most parts of the world. This might be because of environmental pollution or improper and unscientific exploitation of natural resources.

Pollution has its origins in the Latin word *Pollure* means ‘contamination of any feature of the environment.’ Pollution is an undesirable change in the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of air, water and land that may harmfully affect the human life. Unscientific and careless urbanization, industrialization and agriculturalization are the major threat to the biosphere stability.

Environmental pollution may be defined as “The unfavorable alteration of our surroundings, wholly or largely as a by-product of man’s actions, through direct or indirect effects of physical constitutions and abundances of organisms. These changes may affect man directly or through

supplies of water and of agricultural and other biological products, his physical objects or his opportunities for recreation and appreciation of nature.”

Pollution has the following characteristics:-

1. It is the addition of substance at a faster rate than the environment can accommodate.
2. Pollutants are not only chemicals, but also forms of energy like heat sound and radioactive rays.
3. To be a pollutant, a material has to be potentially harmful to life.

Further, man in spite of so much of the development of science and technology, has not learned how to live a healthy life. People don't have health consciousness; they throw all the unwanted things on the streets and roads. People have no other go except to live in the midst of impure and unclean areas succumbing to all sorts of diseases. It has been rightly observed that man in his own enemy. All his inventions all discoveries have improved his lot but at the same time, they threaten his very existence.

Developing countries face the obvious life threatening challenges of desertification, deforestation and pollution, and endure most of the poverty associated with environmental degradation. The entire human family of nations would suffer from disappearance of rain forests in the tropics, the loss of plant and animal species and changes in rainfall patterns. All nations may suffer from the releases by industrialized countries of carbon dioxide and of gases that react with the ozone layer, and from any future war fought with the nuclear arsenals controlled by those nations. Every nation will have a role to play in changing trends. Apart from these problems, one another problem very dangerous to mankind is that of population explosion.

Pollution is an undesirable change in the physical, chemical and biological characteristics of air, water and land that may harmfully affect the human life. Pollution then can be regarded as primarily a result of human behavior that largely disregards, consequences, one that unwisely uses and discards resources. Seen in this perspective, pollution is not something apart from humans but is inherent in their very biology and culture, it is a result of their peculiar adaptations and attributes. Constant noise destroys a man physically and mentally. It can cause the blood vessels to contract, skin to become pale, muscles to constrict and adrenaline to be shot into blood stream with consequent rise in blood pressure. This can produce tension and nervousness.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental Education is education through, about and for environment. It is both a style and subject matter of education. Style is concerned with an approach to education while subject matter or content is concerned with teaching about the components and constituents of

environment. Environmental Education is to improve all ecological relationships including relationship of humanity with nature.

Environmental Education is an approach to learning. It endeavours to create a way thinking requiring people to overcome prejudices. It helps in programming learning experiences ranging from the simple to complex. The principle of environmental education is that it makes the pupil's education problem related to understanding the environment and hazards of its pollution. The environmental education is socially relevant as it helps us how unchecked and unplanned development pollutes air, water and soil and thereby threatening our subsistence and existence. Therefore, environmental education means the educational process dealing with man's relationship with his natural and man-made surroundings and includes the relations of population, pollution resource allocation and depletion, conservation, transportation, technology, energy, urban and rural planning to the total biosphere.

Environmental Education helps the learner perceive and understand environmental principles and problems that enable them to identify and evaluate problems and assess their benefits and risks. Environmental Education includes conservation of natural resources and everything that related man to his environment. Environmental education is life long process should aim not merely at imparting knowledge and understanding of environment and its methods and their application of improving but it should also aim at inculcating skills, attitudes and values necessary to understand, to appreciate and improve our biosphere.

- There are various sources, which are functioning at war foot level to create awareness about environment.
- The ministry of environment is the central government and department of environment in different states produce posters, films, hold seminar, workshop exhibition and observe special day like world environment day, Vana Mahotsav etc. to do help in creating awareness.
- The voluntary organization, non-government organizations organize various camps, numerous innovative projects and special drive to create awareness. They are successful in it much more than the governmental bodies.
- Educational authorities have also made certain efforts in this direction. The national policy of education stressed the need for creating consciousness to permeate all ages and sections. NCERT developed a curricular frame work to achieve the objective of National policy of education (1986) W.W.F. has initiated 'nature camp' movement and promote nature club activity collection of natural and historical specimen, organization of exhibition. Street plays etc. are some such activities, which create and promote the environmental messages and develop awareness among people/students.

- Another section of society engaged in creating environmental awareness is the media such as newspaper, radio and television which have wider scope can reach vast audience in short time. TV programmes such as ‘Earth file’ on BBC ‘Head and Tail’ on Doordarshan, ‘Wild discovery’ and Track in wild world’ etc. on discovery channel have great impact on human mind about environmental awareness.

It is primary responsibility of inhabitants of earth, not only to preserve the environment but also to improve it qualitatively. However, the contemporary environmental scenario presents a picture of dismay and gloom. The intensive application of science and technology combined with man’s greed to over exploit the natural resources, the unprecedented rapid population growth, modern process of production and consumption, change in human life styles all these have brought serious environmental problems. It seems that man has forgotten the fact that the earth does not belong to him but he belongs to earth.

The concept of development without destruction is slowly gaining ground all over the world. In the last few year awareness about environment has increased rapidly. More and more people are becoming conscious of the consequences of environmental degradation. Ecology and environment have found a place in the school curriculum. Environmental awareness campaigns by government and voluntary agencies have spread far and wide.

We all know that the present world is in a mess, the mess is getting worse, and we are responsible for both. Human beings perhaps are the only species that knowingly continues to foul its own nest, when it already has a fair idea of what damage it is causing. The paper is also significant is one more dimension. The present generation needs environment awareness as badly as never needed by previous generation. They will be facing consequences of ill-treatment of environment by their forefathers and themselves. They cannot afford to ignore environment.

**“Environmental pollution is a dangerous enemy of
Humankind. If we do not kill it, it will kill all of us.”**

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