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Education: A catalyst for ensuring sustainable development

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Abstract

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence”.

- Rabindranath Tagore

The necessity of sustainable growth is crucial in all fields. Development that is sustainable means that it satisfies present-day requirements without sacrificing the ability of future generations to satisfy their own demands. Every individual can get the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values essential to sculpt a sustainable future through education for sustainable development. Education is an essential area that can help to attain the intended objective of sustainable development when we think of (SD) sustainable development. A rapidly developing and crucial component of the educational system is research and innovation in education for sustainable development. In order to attain the clearly defined aim of sustainable development, education, research, and innovation in this area are therefore necessary and can play a significant role. A nation's capacity to create and meet sustainability goals depends heavily on its educational system. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has gained prominence as a social issue. In almost every academic and non-academic environment, there have been extensive disputes on what SD means and how it works. Sustainable development was first introduced in 1987 by the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED), also known as the Brundtland Commission. Its simple definition is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has gained prominence as a social issue. The United Nations' decade for education (DESD, 2005-2014) promoted creative educational strategies to support societal shifts towards sustainability. Several trends are emerging in the important sectors of education and higher education. With education, the necessary methods and means for sustainable development are recognised. Therefore, it is important to encourage high-quality education that is focused on developing sustainable values and abilities. Also, as learning does not occur in a vacuum, ESD views the collaboration of various stakeholders as essential. ESD activities have multiplied during the past ten years at all societal scales.

Keywords: Education, sustainable development

Introduction

Education entails teaching and learning specialized skills, as well as imparting knowledge, clear thinking, and well-developed knowledge. One of its fundamental aspects is the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. It is a form of pedagogy, which is a body of applied and theoretical research on teaching and learning. The primary goal of the education system for sustainable development is to 'educate a new man,' a man with a sustainable viewpoint. Education in its modern development should be oriented towards the future, should "predict" and shape in a specific way, and should meet the needs of future generations of people. Education is essential in fostering sustainable development and boosting people's ability to tackle environmental and development concerns.

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For effective public engagement in decision-making as well as the development of values, attitudes, skills, and behaviours associated with sustainable development, it is essential. The idea of sustainable development calls for deeper participation in the contemporary world than it does for mere awareness or knowledge.

To make the globe a better place to live for both the current generation and the generations to come, all developed, developing, and underdeveloped nations must engage in sustainable development principles. The era when man first began to live in caves, lead a nomadic lifestyle, and settled for practising agriculture is when nature and natural resources began to be depleted. When man's basic needs gave way to his greed and he began to exploit the environment by cutting down trees, destroying forests, destroying land, building houses, depleting non-renewable resources, using various forms of transportation, developing new technology, etc., the depletion of these resources reached its peak. This insight led to the birth of "education for sustainable development" (ESD), which was motivated by the urgent need to protect and conserve our environment and natural resources. The four autonomous systems of the environment, economy, society, and politics form the foundation of sustainable development. It covers topics including poverty, biodiversity preservation, agriculture, capacity building, disaster mitigation and management, energy, finance, forests, fresh water, health, international law, poverty, sanitation, hazardous chemicals, and waste management, among others. To influence people's lifestyles and responsible behaviours and aid them in creating a sustainable future, the ethical questions and problems of sustainable development must be addressed through education at various levels. While education may play a very large role in sustaining the economic, cultural, and ecological vitality of the expanding human world communities, it is essential to refocus many existing educational policies and programmes to prioritise ESD issues. Investigating what education can do to promote sustainability is urgently needed. In this research paper, an effort is being made to study the concept of ESD, with a focus on its considerations and issues in teaching learning process as well as how to carry out ESD.

Sustainable Development

Development that is sustainable is one which satisfies existing demands without jeopardising the capacity of future generations to satisfy their own needs. Environment, society, and economics are typically regarded to make up sustainable development. These three areas' health are interconnected, not distinct from one another. For instance, a healthy ecosystem is necessary for a flourishing society to provide its people with resources, food, clean water, and fresh air. Sustainability is a paradigm for envisioning a future in which societal, economic, and environmental concerns are balanced while pursuing growth and better quality of life. If you visualise the three elements as identically sized circles that overlap, the human well-being is the region of overlap at the centre. The area of overlap grows as society, the economy, and the environment converge, and so does the quality of life for people. According to the human rights community, sustainability can only be achieved and fostered by justice, democracy,

and peace. Sustainability, according to economists, is pursuing interests rather than principles.

Need For Sustainable Development

A complicated idea with roots in both the environmental and social sciences, sustainable development was created through international discussion in response to the problems the world is currently facing. A basic tenet underpinning sustainable development is the idea that economic, social and environmental factors play a major impact. Education A formal curriculum for sustainable development should cover the following five topics: knowledge, skills, perspectives, values, and teaching difficulties. The fundamental goal of the United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) is to create a society where everyone has access to education and can learn the morals, ways of living, and values that are necessary for a sustainable future and for societal transformation. Some of the suggested DESD goals include promoting connections, networking, sharing, and connection among ESD decision makers; providing a forum and possibility for developing and promoting the concept of sustainable development and its transition through all forms of education and public awareness; encouraging higher educational and teaching standards in ESD; and formulating appropriate plans at all levels to enhance ESD capacity.

ESD study important environmental issues from local, national, regional, and global perspectives to give students an understanding of environmental circumstances in different countries, a focus on possible and current environmental conditions while keeping in mind historical context; In order to avoid and solve environmental problems, it is important to emphasise the importance of local, national, and worldwide cooperation; Allow learners to participate in the planning of their educational experiences and give them the chance to choose their path and accept the implications of their choices. Relate environmental sensitivity, knowledge, problem-solving skills, and value clarification to all ages, with a focus on environmental sensitivity in the learner's own community in the early years. Assist students in identifying the symptoms and root causes of environmental issues. In order to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, emphasise the complexity of environmental problems. Use a variety of learning environments and educational approaches to teach/learn about and from the environment, with a focus on practical activities and first-hand experience.

Education for Sustainable Development

As a subfield of education and a conceptual instrument to help policymakers create educational policies that take into consideration the current environmental, social, and economic concerns, education for sustainable development (ESD) is both. It is based on all levels and forms of learning, including learning to know, learn to be, learn to live together, learn to do, and learn to transform oneself and society, according to the UNESCO. It further argues that, "Maybe ESD can be understood as the complete sum of diverse strategies to arrive at a 'learning society' in which people learn from and with one another and collectively become more capable of withstanding setbacks and dealing with sustainability-induced insecurity, complexity and hazards. According to this perspective, ESD is about "engaging people in sustainable development issues through

education and learning, developing their capacities to give meaning to SD and to contribute to its development, and utilising the diversity represented by all people—including those who have been or feel marginalized—in generating innovative solutions to challenges".

ESD and School Curriculum

Since the middle of the 1980s, attempts have been made in India to integrate environmental education (EE) into all levels of formal education. The Honorable Supreme Court of India ordered that EE be become a required subject at all educational levels in 2003. It additionally stipulated that the NCERT create a sample curriculum for grades I through XII, which each state is required to use in its own schools. The Pacific Education for Sustainable Development Framework (2006) identified formal education and training as a priority area, focusing on structured learning initiatives for better knowledge and understanding to support the implementation of sustainable practices, with the goals of promoting quality education in all member countries being given focus. A conceptual knowledge of the phenomenon of change, the issues with sustainable development, the development of adaptable minds, and practical methods for doing so must all be included in the materials and experiences provided. So, ESD should be included in every subject from early childhood to higher education and should be taught in a relevant way.

Education affects sustainability plans in three areas

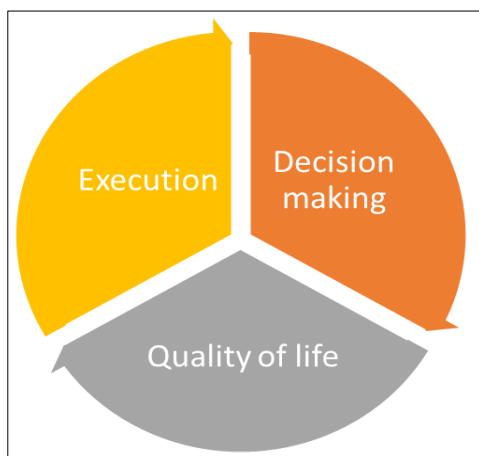


Fig 1: Show execution, decision making and quality of life

Execution: Ensuring informed and sustainable development requires an educated populace. In reality, the level of education that the populace of a country attains can either improve or limit a national sustainability plan. Low-skilled workforces and high illiteracy rates limit the possibilities available to a country for growth. These countries are typically compelled to use hard currency to purchase energy and manufactured goods on the global market. These nations require foreign trade in order to gain hard money; typically, this results in the exploitation of natural resources or the conversion of lands from self-sufficient family-based agriculture to cash-crop agriculture. The answer to leaving behind an extractive and agricultural economy is to have educated workers.

Decision making: Knowledgeable citizens are also necessary for making sound community-based decisions that

will impact social, economic, and environmental well-being. For instance, a city with a large pool of technically skilled workers may be able to convince a company to build a new information technology and software development centre close by. By examining reports and data, citizens can also take action to defend their neighbourhoods. For instance, local residents began keeping an eye on the water quality of adjacent streams after hearing reports of water contamination in a nearby watershed.

Quality of life: The key to raising quality of life is education. Education increases a family's financial position, enhances living conditions, reduces infant mortality, and raises the educational levels of the following generation, increasing the likelihood of their achieving economic and social success. Both individual and societal ramifications can be found in improved education.

Education with a focus on the future that promotes an awareness of how ecological, economics, and social equality are interconnected is known as ESD. The following are the five main elements of ESD that direct and inspire people to look for sustainable livelihoods, take part in a democratic society, and live sustainably:

1. Knowledge: To grasp SD's guiding principles, one must have a foundational understanding of the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities. ESD is supported by knowledge derived from conventional areas.

2. Values: ESD is based on values, with respect at its core. Respect for the current and future generations, respect for cultural variety and distinction, and respect for the environment are only a few examples. The greater societal values that surround the school should be reflected in the values that are taught in the classroom. Since social justice addresses basic human needs, respect for other communities' customs and beliefs, and consideration for the rights, dignity, and welfare of all people, it is also a key component of ESD.

3. Issues: Educators need to be able to guide students in recognising and considering the intricacies of issues from the viewpoints of various stakeholders. Older students and university students need to learn how to assess problems and solutions that have been put forth, comprehend the principles supporting competing viewpoints, and evaluate disputes that have resulted from those problems and answers.

4. Perspective: A key component of ESD is the capacity to view a problem from the perspectives of several stakeholders. Each problem has a past and a future. ESD includes identifying the causes of a problem, predicting potential futures based on various scenarios, and seeing how many global issues are interconnected. For instance, over consumption of consumer products like paper causes deforestation, which is assumed to be connected to climate change on a worldwide scale.

5. Skills: ESD must provide people with the practical skills they need to continue learning after they graduate from high school, have a sustainable income, and lead sustainable lives. Especially students, to think, act, and re-act as responsible citizens and develop long-lasting solutions to

problems that arise in real life on a local, national, and global scale.

Suggestions

The importance of education in sustainable development cannot be underestimated. The following ideas are for ESD:

1. Encourage networking, communication, and interaction between ESD stakeholders.
2. Encourage higher standards of instruction and learning in the field of sustainable development.
3. Assist nations with their efforts to promote education for sustainable development so that they can achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
4. Provide nations additional chances to include ESD in initiatives to transform education.
5. Education for sustainable development requires adequate resources and support. The importance of education in advancing sustainability, reducing poverty, preparing people for sustainable lives, and generating the essential public support for sustainable development efforts must be made clear to important decision makers.
6. Measures to increase women's and girls' access to basic and higher education, as well as training and capacity building, must be promoted. The mainstreaming of gender should be prioritised.
7. More cooperation between research institutions, the corporate sector, NGOs, and the government is required to increase capability in science and technology. Improved partnerships and collaborations are required for scientific research and development and its wider application between and among scientists, the government, and all other stakeholders.
8. Mechanisms must be put in place to make the newest technologies affordable for developing nations.

Conclusion

Development that satisfies current demands without jeopardising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs is referred to as sustainable development. Key sustainable development issues must be incorporated into teaching and learning in order for education for sustainable development to be effective. Participatory teaching and learning methods are also necessary in order to promote skills like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios, and collaborative decision-making while also inspiring and empowering students to alter their behaviour. This paper looks at the steps the government has taken to eradicate illiteracy and the status it has given schooling in India.

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