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ESD: Education for Sustainable Development

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Abstract
Education is an important tool for achieving sustainability around the world. It is the only medium that enables people to understand work for and benefit from sustainable development. Sustainable development is a development that addresses the needs of the present without compromising the abilities of forthcoming generations to meet their specific needs. The basic principle behind sustainable development is a combination of economic, social and environmental conditions that are shared by all of us. Education for sustainability utilizes the entire education system to provide students with what they need to do to transform our societies to achieve a sustainable future. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a dynamic concept that includes a new vision of education that seeks to balance human and economic well-being with cultural traditions and respect for the earth's natural resources. It emphasizes the importance of learning in the build-up to the transition towards sustainability with additional education in citizenship education, education for a culture of peace, gender-equal opportunity, respect for human rights, health education, population education, education for protecting and managing natural resources and education for sustainable utilization. Consequently education needs to be transformed into a constructive tool for creating awareness among students and citizens of the world. ESD uses trans disciplinary educational systems to develop ideas for permanent learning, nurtures respect for human needs that are compatible with sustainable utilization of natural resources and encourages an awareness of global solidarity. ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education. It enhances the cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself.

Keywords: Development, education, Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), people, society, environment, generation, need, world

Introduction

Good quality education is an essential tool for achieving a more sustainable world. This was emphasised at the UN World Summit in Johannesburg in 2002 where the reorientation of current education systems was outlined as key to sustainable development. Education for sustainable development (ESD) promotes the development of the knowledge, skills, understanding, values and actions required to create a sustainable world, which ensures environmental protection and conservation, promotes social equity and encourages economic sustainability. The concept of ESD developed largely from environmental education, which has sought to develop the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviours in people to care for their environment. The aim of ESD is to enable people to make decisions and carry out actions to improve our quality of life without compromising the planet. It also aims to integrate the values inherent in sustainable development into all aspects and levels of learning. There are a number of key themes in ESD and while the dominant focus is on environmental concerns, it also addresses themes such as poverty alleviation, citizenship, peace, ethics, responsibility in local and global contexts, democracy and governance, justice, human rights, gender equality, corporate responsibility, natural resource management and biological diversity. It is generally accepted that certain characteristics are important for the successful implementation of ESD, reflecting the equal importance of both the learning process and the outcomes of the education process (adapted from 'UN Decade of Sustainable Development' UNESCO Nairobi Cluster, 2006).

Education for Sustainable Development means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning; for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction, and sustainable consumption.

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It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and act for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way. Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practiced today."

The SDGs became very famous since they have been announced in 2015. Tremendous efforts and resources were made in anattempt to increase awareness about the importance of SDGs. SDGs were not seen from the economic perspective only, it focuses on 5P's - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships. This was also identified a lot has been tried to done through policy making efforts and technological innovations, but it is very crucial to develop the positive attitude, bring the behavioral change and mass awareness about and towards sustainable development. As a result, education and its outreach activities such as training and capacity building, communication, public awareness, scientific and applied research, information sharing and access, networking, and collaborations, among others, play an important role in achieving SDGs.

Apart from the above behavioral change, it is very important to understand the role of psychological perspective and approach in achieving SDGs. Many Education for sustainable development (ESD) Programmes aims to improve people's attitudes and beliefs toward nature. Contextual support, social norms, action difficulty, and habitual behaviour, among other things, are all elements that influence behaviour, according to psychological studies. If people's views are to change, education must go beyond that to help them act in ways that are consistent with their values. The study had put efforts to show that there are weak links between attitudes and behaviour through Psychological Research and this shall be taken into consideration while designing Educational Programmes for Sustainable Development in Schools.

Meaning and Definition
Education is a purposeful activity directed at achieving certain aims, such as transmitting knowledge or fostering skills and character traits. These aims may include the development of understanding, rationality, kindness, and honesty. Various researchers emphasize the role of critical thinking in order to distinguish education from indoctrination. Some theorists require that education results in an improvement of the student while others prefer a value-neutral definition of the term. In a slightly different sense, education may also refer, not to the process, but to the product of this process: the mental states and dispositions possessed by educated people. Education originated as the transmission of cultural heritage from one generation to the next. Today, educational goals increasingly encompass new ideas such as the liberation of learners, skills needed for modern society, empathy, and complex vocational skills.

Sustainable Development: Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The concept of sustainable development can be interpreted in many different ways, but at its core is an approach to development that looks to balance different, and often competing, needs against an awareness of the environmental, social and economic limitations we face as a society. All too often, development is driven by one particular need, without fully considering the wider or future impacts. We are already seeing the damage this kind of approach can cause, from large-scale financial crises caused by irresponsible banking, to changes in global climate resulting from our dependence on fossil fuel-based energy sources. The longer we pursue unsustainable development, the more frequent and severe its consequences are likely to become, which is why we need to take action now.
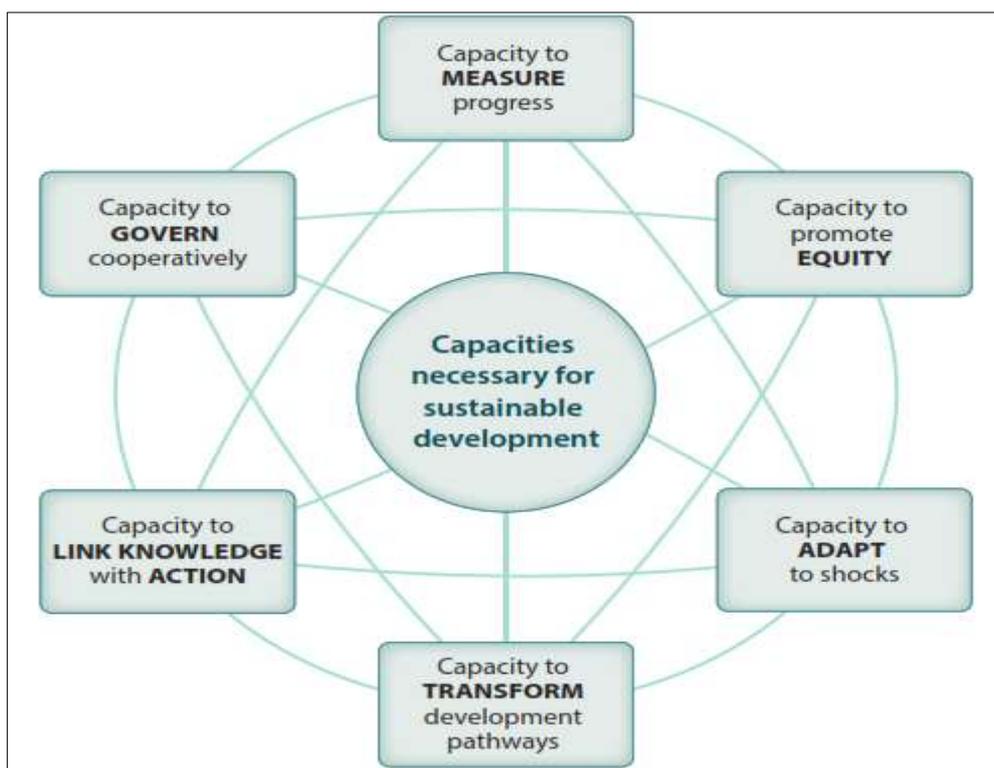
Role of Education in Sustainable Development

Education is a fundamental right and the basis for progress in every country. Parents need information about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries depend on skilled and educated workers. The challenges of conquering poverty, combating climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades compel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investments in education, we can transform individual lives, national economies and our world". — Ban Ki-Moon, United Nations Secretary-General. Education plays an important role in the social, spiritual and cultural development of our society. It contributes towards improving the standard of living and livelihoods of the community. Quality education should inculcate in people diverse skills and values that prepare them to participate actively in social, political and economic environments and make informed and responsible decisions. It has one of the basic characteristics of imparting culture from generation to generation. Education covers teaching and learning specific skills, exposure to knowledge, positive decisions and well-developed perceptions. It is the application of pedagogy, a body of theoretical and applied research associated with teaching and learning. The fundamental aim of the educational system for sustainable development is to 'educate a new generation of sustainable thinking', a world leader of Cosmo-planetary awareness with a universal world outlook, who has a culture of sustainability, high socio-cultural needs and deep moral-ethical values, who is proficient in solving global responsibilities faced by mankind and promoting the creation of a sustainable society. The goals of ESD are to promote awareness of the interdependence of natural, socio-economic and political systems at local, national and global levels to encourage analytical reflection and decision making. This is reflected in personal lifestyles encouraging the active participation of the citizenry in building sustainable development, developing interactive and participatory skills, developing appropriate environmental understanding based on an understanding of the independence of nature and skills of problem-solving. ESD increases civic capacity by enhancing and improving the workforce, social tolerance, environmental stewardship and participation in community-based decision making, which is enhanced by combining formal, non-formal and informal education. An attitude of concern for the quality of the environment is important to motivate people to develop skills and a willingness to take necessary decisions and actions to solve environmental problems. Thus education has become an indispensable element in achieving sustainable development. Education for sustainable development (ESD) offers opportunities for learners to take part in independent debates about what is important to them
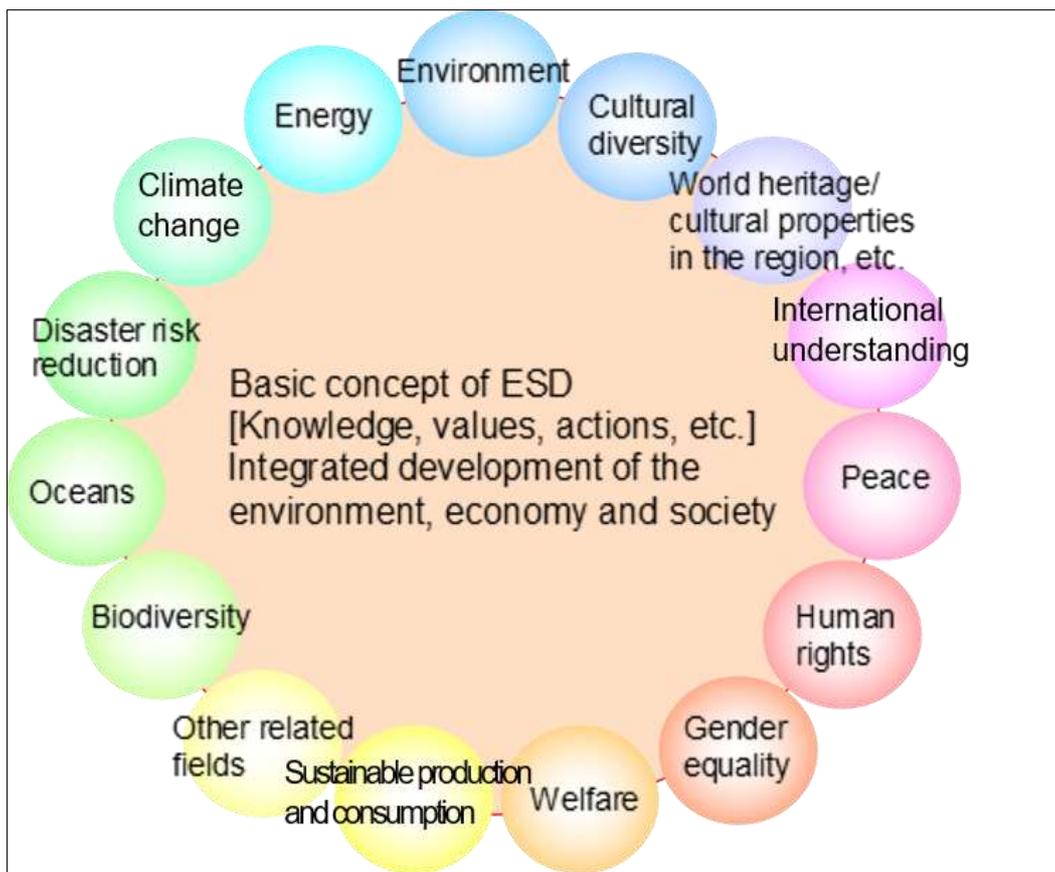
The Emergence of Environmental Education for Sustainable Development (EESD)

The ideas behind environmental education can be seen from 1969 onward and the inspiration received from international organizations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and UNEP has leveraged these initiatives to further the development of the environment. The UN observed World Environment Day for the first time to raise awareness on environmental issues on the 5th of June 1974. UNESCO sponsored a conference in Belgrade, Yugoslavia during which the Belgrade Charter was framed and outlined the basic structure of environmental education. Likewise in 1977 UNESCO in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) held the International Conference on

Environmental Education in Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia. The delegates at the Tbilisi Conference accepted the Tbilisi Declaration, which argued for environmental education to create awareness and values among people to advance the quality of life and the environment.

Objectives of Environmental Education
The most important outcome in Tbilisi was the specification of the objectives of environmental education *viz*: awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation. Most environmental educators from across the world have adopted these objectives. A brief explanation is provided to support these.

Objectives
1. Awareness – to help social groups and human beings acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its related problems.
2. Knowledge – to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in and to acquire a basic understanding of the environment and its associated problems.
3. Attitudes – to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.
4. Skills – to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

Four Major Thrusts of ESD:
1. Improving access and retention in quality basic education
2. Reorienting existing educational programs to address sustainability
3. Increasing public understanding and awareness of sustainability
4. Providing training to advance sustainability across all sectors Seven Strategies for ESD
1) Vision-building and advocacy
2) Consultation and ownership
3) Partnership and networks
4) Capacity-building and training
5) Research and innovation
6) Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
7) Monitoring and evaluation

Conclusion
Education for sustainable development is a dynamic perspective that includes a new approach to education that encourages people of all ages to shoulder responsibility for forming and enjoying a sustainable future. There is increasing international appreciation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an important part of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development. Sustainable development is one of the major goals of environmental education that has become an important part of education at all levels. We have to take responsibility for our conservation and protection. Development takes care of the environment and when we talk about development, it needs to be sustainable and ethical. The pathway to ESD is an important one and nations

that tread it cautiously. Using it to their benefit would make available their present populace and give their future generations an environment that would empower them to fulfil their needs and aspirations by the striking equilibrium between the economy and the environment. Otherwise the consequences would be mildly disastrous. As the Indian Economist and Scholar, Amartya Sen points out, "a fouled environment in which future generations are denied the presence of fresh air will remain foul even if future generations are so very rich". The overall aim of ESD is to encourage citizens to act towards positive environmental and social change while involving a participatory and action-oriented approach. Thus education needs to be enhanced to lead the world toward a more sustainable way of living.

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