

Environmental Education for Improvement of Quality of Life: A Way of Sustainable Development

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Abstract:

In the present scenario, due to anthropogenic activities, environmental degradation is at an alarming rate. Therefore, in order to achieve the acceptable level of global environmental sustainability, the citizens must be empowered with essential knowledge and information especially in developing countries like India.

Environmental education is a process by which people develop awareness, concern and knowledge about the environment and learn to use this understanding to preserve, conserve and utilize the environment in a sustainable manner for the benefit of present and future generations. Environmental education aims at producing citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve these problems and motivated to work toward their solution. The term quality of life references the general well-being of individuals and societies. A standard indicator of the quality of life includes wealth, employment, built a developed environment, physical and mental health, education, social belonging, human dignity, equal pay for equal work and freedom of thought. Sustainable development is linked with quality life. environmental education helps to improve quality of life and good quality of life helps to achieve sustainable development.

So Environmental Education should be part of people's daily life and it should be directly linked up with the quality of life of the community people and sustainable development. The key concepts in Environmental Education are awareness; interdependence; sustainability; biodiversity and personal and social responsibility for action. The goal of environmental education is to instill in learners knowledge about the environment, positive attitudes toward the environment, competency in citizen action skills, and a sense of empowerment. Hence Environmental literacy helps to ensure environmental quality as well as quality of life which leads to sustainable development.

Key Words: Environmental Education, Quality of Life, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the whole world is faced with many prominent environmental problems and issues such as global warming, ozone layer depletion, greenhouse effects, rise in sea water level, improper monsoon and acid rain. Therefore, it is necessary to begin educating the public for facing environmental

problems and solving these problems. Environment education can play a vital role in encouraging present and future generations in order to achieve the acceptable level of global environmental sustainability.

Nowadays, environmental education is sometimes integrated into school curricula as an interdisciplinary goal of formal education. It is also part of informal education, and a part of daily life during leisure time activities. The term quality of life means the general well-being of individuals and societies and sustainable development mostly depends on quality of life.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The title of this research paper is "ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR IMPROVEMENT QUALITY OF LIFE-A WAY OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT".

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of this paper are as follows:

1. To find out the meaning of environmental education.
2. To find out the meaning of quality of life.
3. Acquire knowledge about the index of quality of life.
4. To explore the meaning of sustainable development.
5. To explore how environmental education helps sustainable development through improvement quality of life.
6. To know the strategies of environmental education for improvement quality of life.

1.3. Delimitation

In this study, the researcher only tries to investigate the role of environment education for improvement quality of life and sustainable development. Here the researcher has no interest about curriculum, method of teaching and role of the teacher.

1.4. Sources of Data:-

In this research paper various Primary and Secondary data was use to collect data such as various journal paper, report and books etc.

1.5. Methodolgy:-

For educational research there are three methods exists which are historical method, experimental method and descriptive method. To fulfill objectives of the present study, researcher adopted descriptive survey method because it aims to describe present situation.

2. Discussion:

2.1. Meaning of Environment Education

Most social problems experienced by humans somehow have their root in the distribution and use of natural resources. Human survival depends on existence of natural resources and that the quality of life of humans is intricately linked to the quality of environmental resources. Nowadays resources are being depleted and habitats are still being destroyed to make way for human progress. Other life forms that depend on these resources and surroundings also become threatened. This resource depletion or environmental degradation ultimately affects all of us.

The word "environmental education" was first defined by Dr. William Stapp in 1969. He stated that, "Environmental education is aimed at producing a citizenry that is knowledgeable concerning the biophysical environment and its associated problems, aware of how to help solve the problems, and motivated to work toward their solution" (NAAEE).

International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN 1971): Environmental education is "...the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among men, his culture and his biophysical surroundings. Environmental education also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulation of a code of behavior about issues concerning environmental quality."

International workshop on environmental education—"The Belgrade Charter" held at Belgrade in 1975: "Environmental education should be an integral part of the educational process, aimed at practical problems of an interdisciplinary character, build a sense of values and contribute to public well-being. Its focus should reside mainly in the initiative of the learners and their involvement in action and guided by both the immediate and future subjects of concern."

International conference on environmental education held at Tbilisi, USSR in 1977: In this conference it was decided that environmental education is a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and has the attitudes, motivations, knowledge, commitment and skills to work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.

In addition to establishing overall goals, the key components of environmental education are:

- **Awareness:** To acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.
- **Knowledge:** To gain a variety of experiences in and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems.
- **Attitudes:** To acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.
- **Skills:** To acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.
- **Participation:** To encourage citizens to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems.

From these definitions, we can see that environmental education includes three primary elements: first, increasing knowledge about the environment and its problems; second, educating individuals to solve environmental problems; and third, motivating individuals to take action for solving these environmental problems.

2.2. Meaning of Quality of Life:-

The term quality of life references the general well-being of individuals and societies. Quality of life should not be confused with the concept of standard of living. Standard of living generally refers to the level of wealth, comfort, material goods and necessities available to a certain socioeconomic class, in a certain geographic area. An evaluation of standard of living commonly includes the following factors: income, poverty rate, inflation rate, availability of education, affordable access to quality health care, life expectancy, incidence of disease, infrastructure, national economic growth, cost of goods and services. When we think about standard of living, we can think about things that are easy to quantify.

The term quality of life can be elaborated within the Human Development Approach. Quality of life is supposed to be subjectively perceived and experienced by the individual. From this point of view, the meaning of quality of life is the subjective well-being of the individual citizen, considered to be the ultimate goal of societal development. Standard indicators of the quality of life include not only wealth and employment, but also the built environment, physical and mental health, education, recreation and leisure time, and social belonging. Quality of Life is about a person's emotional state and personal life. So quality of life must be in the eye of the beholder. The most important indicators of subjective well-

being used actually are measures of satisfaction and happiness. There are three key issues: first, about the dimensions that are relevant for welfare considerations; second, about good and bad conditions; third, about the direction in which society should move.

2.3. Index for Judging Quality of Life:-

Quality of life is more subjective and intangible. The United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, provides an excellent list of factors that can be considered in evaluating quality of life. Factors that may be used to measure quality of life include the following:

Freedom from slavery and torture	Right to privacy
Equal protection of the law	Freedom of thought
Freedom from discrimination	Freedom of religion
Freedom of movement	Free choice of employment
Freedom of residence within one's home country	Right to fair pay
Presumption of innocence unless proved guilty	Right to vote
Right to marry	Right to rest and leisure
Right to have a family	Right to education
Right to be treated equally without regard to gender, race, language, religion, political beliefs, nationality, socioeconomic status and more	Right to human dignity

The main difference between standard of living and quality of life is that the former is more objective, while the latter is more subjective. Both indicators are flawed, but they can help us get a general picture of what life is like in a particular location at a particular time.

2.4. Meaning of Sustainable Development:-

The term sustainable of development has been introduced by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 on its seminar report. It is defined as meeting the needs of present generations with compromising the needs of future generation. A balance has to be created between resources consumption and generation.

Sustainable development aims at improving the living standards and the quality of people's lives both at present and coming generations. According to Barbier and Markandya (1990) "Sustainable activity is that level of economic activity which leaves the environmental quality level intact, with the policy objectives corresponding to this notion being the maximization of net benefits of economic development, subject to maintaining the services quality of natural resources over time".

Aim of sustainable development is to improving the living standards and the quality of life both at present and future generations. The principal goal of development in the present time is the sustainability of man and environment both through promoting harmony within humanity and between humanity and nature, locally nationally and globally.

Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet theirs. So the development is to be planned in such a manner that it meets the needs

of all the sections of society and provides opportunity for all people to satisfy their aspiration for better life.

2.5. Environmental education helps sustainable development through improvement quality of life:-

Quality of life is one of the most important aspects for the purpose of fulfilling the human needs. Quality of life and sustainable development both are connected. Sustainable development secure that individual needs are fulfill in present time without harming the earth or future generations. Better food, health, pure water, good jobs, and a pollution free environment directly improve daily life and overall well-being.

To create a good living environment, human always interact with the environment by exploiting the natural resources. A resource is everything gained from the environment to meet human needs. Therefore, more population means more consumption of natural resources. Sustainable development means without compromising future generation needs fulfil present generation needs in a planned and systematic way.

Aim of sustainable development is to fulfil the needs of present without compromising future needs. Quality of life means well-being of people which includes safety, housing, relationship, income, education and environment and sustainable development means full fill the needs of present without compromising future generation's needs.

Sustainable development helps economic development through job opportunity, income and improving life standards and quality of life. Environmental tries to ensure sustainable development.

Aim of environmental education ensures pollution free air, drinking water and healthy environment which are very important for good quality of life. Sustainable development try to create, protects and maintain these type of environment for quality of life.

Another most important indicator parts of quality of life are social equality, social justice, equal opportunity, good quality of education and sustainable development promotes all of these aspects for human well-being. All aims can be achieved through environmental education through ensuring sustainable development.

2.6. Strategies of Environmental Education for Improvement Quality of Life:-

A sustainable society mostly depends on quality of life. For improvement of quality of life, we should take some strategies. These are as follows:

1. Environmental Education must involve everyone. Because of its very nature and importance, environmental education cannot be confined to any one group in our society. It is a responsibility for everyone: government, industry, the media, educational institutions, community groups as well as individuals.
2. Environmental education must be lifelong. Environmental education, whether formal, non-formal or informal, should be grounded in critical and innovative thinking in any place or time, promoting the transformation and construction of society.
3. Environmental education must involve a holistic approach and thus an interdisciplinary focus in the relation between human beings, nature and the universe.

4. It aims to develop local and global citizenship with respect for self-determination and the sovereignty of nations. So, Environmental education should be both individual and collective.
5. It should emphasize the complexity of environmental problems and the need to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.
6. Environmental education must stimulate solidarity, equality and respect for human rights involving democratic strategies and an open climate of cultural interchange.
7. Environmental education must recover, recognize, respect, reflect and utilize indigenous history and local cultures, as well as promote cultural, linguistic and ecological diversity.
8. Environmental education must stimulate dialogue and cooperation among individuals and institutions in order to create new lifestyles which are based on meeting everyone's basic needs, regardless of ethnic, gender, age, religious, class, physical and mental differences.
9. Environmental education should promote the value and necessity of local, national and international co-operation in the prevention and solution of environmental problems.
10. It should consider environmental aspects in plans for growth and development.
11. Environmental education must integrate knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and actions. It should convert every opportunity into an educational experience for sustainable societies.
12. Education must help develop an ethical awareness of all forms of life with which humans share this planet, respect all life cycles and impose limits on humans' exploitation of other forms of life.
13. It should enable learners to have a role in planning their learning experiences and provide an opportunity for making decisions and accepting their consequences.
14. Environmental education helps learners discover the symptoms and real causes of environmental problems.
15. It should relate environmental sensitivity, knowledge, problem-solving skills and values clarification to every age but with special emphasis on environmental sensitivity to the learner's own community in early years.
16. Environmental education should focus on current and potential environmental situations.
17. Environmental education should emphasize active participation, prevention and solution to environmental problems.

3. Conclusion

After this discussion, we can conclude that environmental education and quality of life are correlated. For building a sustainable society, we must give more attention to effective environmental education. Through environmental education, people will be able to understand the natural world around them, the current issues regarding it, and make informed decisions about its fate for them. In this democratic country, environmental education can play a pivotal role in improving the quality of life as well as building a sustainable society.

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