

# Environmental Education – Meaning And Importance

**Dr. Ashish Vashisath,**

NET-JRF, PhD,

Former Research Scholar in Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan Jaipur Campus

Presently Working in Canara Bank as OL Officer in Panaji Goa

## I. INTRODUCTION

स्यादेव तोयममृतप्रकृतिर्यदि स्यान्नेकान्तमद्भुतमिदंपुनरद्भुतं नः।

लक्ष्मीतुषारकौस्तुभपारिजातधन्वन्तरिप्रभृतयो यदपां विवर्तः॥

आकण्ठदृष्टशिरसाप्यभिभाव्यपृष्टपाशर्वोदरेण

चिरमृग्भिरुपास्यपानः।

नाभीसरोरुहजुषाचतुराननेन शेते किलात्र भगवानरविन्दनाभः॥

It is clear from the sense of the above verses that nature has been given an incredible place in the ancient Indian culture. Just as all people with deep faith towards God understand their responsibilities and tasks well and fulfil them; similarly the desire to fulfil the same tasks and responsibilities for nature also has established the nature and environment in position of God. Due to which the inestimacy and inimitability of nature can be continuously promoted, which will be able to fulfil all the needs of present and future generations. Otherwise, blind and inappropriate exploitation of nature will continue to cause environmental problems. Today, all the environmental problems facing us are not hidden from anyone. This is due to more human reasons than the natural reason behind this terrible situation of environmental problems. Whether it is air pollution, in which the toxicity of various organic gases as well as chemical fertilizers, transportation vehicles smoke has played an important role, or whether it is water pollution, in which the waters of rivers and oceans have varied Toxins are released. The changing standards of satisfying conditions in all kinds of areas are very harmful for human civilization; however, humans are not as much aware of their own circumstances as it is absolutely necessary to control these situations. Therefore, various efforts are being made by the government to increase awareness towards environmental problems. Various standards are being set to deal with environmental problems not only at the national level, but also at the international level. Environmental norms are not only being created in binding form, but are also being given legal form by creating punitive provisions on the violation of these norms, because the protection of the environment is related to the entire human race along with the whole animal class to preserve the existence of all.

Therefore, as an innovative initiative in various government efforts for environmental awareness, environmental education is being given a very important place with the objective of incorporating the daily trend of environmental protection into human day to day behaviour by developing environment related knowledge tradition. Education is a major factor in keeping human behaviour fully balanced and developed. Therefore, this innovative trend in the field of education can increase people's affinity and responsibility towards nature.

## II. MEANING AND NATURE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Generally, environment refers to the environment around humans. It is also difficult to imagine the word as large and broad as its meaning, which is derived from the combination of Par + wrapper. However, for the common man, only trees, plants, rivers, mountains etc. are considered synonymous with environment. But the environment cannot be limited only in this. To know the vastness of the environment, we also have to know and understand all the conditions around human beings, which affect the development, living and working conditions of organisms, plants and people. Along with the inclusion of the physical environment, organisms and plants, one must know each of their biological dimensions and a-biotic aspects.

Without properly explaining this concept of environment to every person, environmental protection is an extremely difficult task. Therefore, environmental education is an innovative trend which is fully empowered to project the effects of environment in the public mind. It is only through environmental education that we can make the public aware of all the external forces, influences and circumstances that affect the life, behaviour, growth, development and maturity of every living being.

In 1970, giving the definition of environmental education UNESCO had said that environmental education is the process by which one tries to understand the interrelations of different elements of man and his environment. It also includes the practice of taking decisions on issues and

problems related to the quality of the environment and creating its own actions and behaviours.

Similarly, the Centre for Environment Education of Nehru Foundation for Development, Ahmadabad has also propounded environmental education, saying that environmental education is a process that aims to develop a population in the world that is aware of the entire environment, its problems and Belongs to it and who collectively have knowledge of it, tend to have tendencies, keep the motivation and work individually and collectively to upgrade it and try to solve the problems related to it and prevent new problems from arising.

It is clear from the above definitions that environmental education encourages us to hold all kinds of knowledge related to nature, as well as imparting education to teach its conservation and promotion by displaying a sense of tolerance, benevolence and reverence towards nature. Therefore, the process of imparting education to develop knowledge, learning, skills and attitudes related to the importance and problems of the environment is environmental education.

Environmental education has emerged as an innovative trend in the field of education. Therefore, there are many inequalities in the nature of education provided for general education and environmental related facts. At the root of these inequalities is the reason for the very broad concept of environment only. Therefore, the nature of environmental education can be understood as follows. Such as –

1. Environmental education is available to all individuals. There is no age restriction for this, because awareness of the environment is very essential for all ages.
2. For environmental needs and conservation, all classes are included as students of environmental education, this includes all of the educated-uneducated, rich-poor, working-unemployed, women-men etc.
3. Teaching of environmental education can be done in all formal institutions with utmost ease.
4. Due to the prevalence of environmental education, there is a need for qualified teachers at every level to adapt to that level.
5. It is a specialty in environmental education that in addition to teaching it as an independent subject, it can be done by associating it with other subjects.
6. Environmental education is a very broad and complex subject in terms of evaluation. Due to the theoretical and practical aspects of environmental education, it has a direct relationship with the

cognitive, mental and emotional aspects of human life.

Therefore, it is clear from the above mentioned various facts of environmental education that the field of environmental education is very vast due to its relation to every aspect of human life. Thus the characteristics of environmental education can be known as:

1. Environmental education is a study related to human life.
2. Environmental education is the process of imparting knowledge of the physical, cultural environment of man.
3. Environmental education is able to keep affiliation with all other subjects for its subject matter.
4. Environmental education is a process with a forward-looking tendency that develops awareness of the environment in the public mind.
5. Environmental education can be imparted through both formal and informal methods.

Therefore, it is clear that for the development of awareness about the protection and promotion of the environment in the public and for positive changes in the values and life values related to the environment, environmental education is absolutely essential today. Environmental education is very essential for the diverse needs like development of proper scientific attitude towards environment, control of environmental pollution and achieving a happy life.

### **III. OBJECTIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION**

Several organizations have concurrently set different objectives, goals and norms for the diverse purpose of this innovative trend of environmental education, with the main objective of controlling environmental pollution through public awareness towards environmental protection and promotion. The Department of Environment at the national level was established in the year 1982, which was given the responsibility to perform various tasks towards the environment. For determining the objectives of environmental education, the Department of Environment accepted the pre-announced international norms. Because at the international level, UNESCO had formulated the objectives of environmental education at the International Environment Conference held in 1977, which recommended the inclusion of environmental education for all in all types of teaching along with other subjects. These recommendations, published by

UNESCO in 1977, stated the following objectives of environmental education:

- Developing awareness for the environment.
- Strive to solve environmental related problems.
- To provide education on various aspects of the environment.
- To develop environment related skills and interests among the students, which is helpful in environmental protection and promotion.
- To make the students aware of the different subjectivity of the environment related to various topics.
- To develop in students the ability to acquire critical and evaluative knowledge related to environmental education.

In this way, environmental education has gained acceptance for the basic purpose of environmental awareness by setting various objectives.

#### **IV. IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION -**

The importance of environmental education should be fully understood as the excellence of human life. However, other important dimensions of environmental education can be understood in the following ways.

1. Inexperience existing in the public and lack of environmental awareness is a hindrance in the completion of environmental protection efforts. Because without the knowledge related to the environment, environmental protection and promotion is not possible. Therefore, environmental education is very important.
2. Continuous increase in population can be controlled for environmental protection only through environmental education. Only through environmental education can people be made aware of the adverse effects of population growth on the environment.
3. In today's industrialized world, it has become very important to provide environmental education to get rid of the problem of pollution caused by industrial progress.
4. Due to the constantly advanced technology and the busiest way of life, there is an increase in the transport modes, due to which the pollution caused by the growing vehicles is adversely affecting the entire environment, so to mitigate these effects and to increase awareness environmental education is essentially necessary.

5. Environmental education is capable of doing very important work in the preservation of the values of truth, non-violence, life-kindness, nature-love, nature-worship etc. as our cultural heritage. Through environmental education, these values can be proven on scientific standards and faith in them can be revived.
6. Environmental education, which is aware of the bad effects of environmental pollution and their remedies, shows how people should fulfil their duty and responsibility towards environmental pollution.
7. It is only through environmental education that it is possible to construct an analytical approach to various problems related to the environment. Therefore, it is only through an analytical approach that the corresponding solutions can be effectively implemented when the problems are seriously addressed.

Through environmental education, the public is told about the meaning of environmental pollution, types of environmental pollution and their impact on human life. Not only are the pollution related variations represented, but the efforts made for environmental protection are also projected, in which future-oriented activities, with implications for various environmental protections such as energy conservation, water conservation, soil conservation, forest conservation methods are included. At the same time, popular programs for environmental protection are also presented. The public is motivated by the Chipko Movement (1973), Aripco Movement (Karnataka, 1983), Narmada Bachao Andolan (1985) and the promulgation of Miscellaneous Environmental Protection Acts launched for environmental protection. Various acts and policies have been formulated for environmental protection at the national level. In order to fulfil the objectives of the Stockholm Conference, the Government enacted the Wildlife (Protection) Act in 1972, with a view to protect the wildlife of this country and to control the trafficking, poaching and illicit trade in wildlife and its derivatives. Similarly, in the year 1986, the Environment (Protection) Act has also been enacted with appropriate penal provisions towards the environment. Similarly, other miscellaneous acts and policies including National Forest Policy (1988), National Wetland Conservation Program (1987), Wetland (Conservation and Management) Rules (2010), Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act (2006), National Green Tribunal, National Wildlife Action Plan, National Forestation Program, Joint Forest Management, National Clean Energy Fund, National Green Corps, Mangrove programs for the future, National Bamboo Mission, National Clean Ganga Mission, Environmental Education-Awareness

and Training Scheme (1983-83), National Environmental Awareness Campaign (1986), etc. are majorly inescapable, which are implemented through various organizations. Various organizations have been given responsibility by the government for the smooth implementation of these programs related to environmental protection, mainly among them Animal Welfare Board of India, National Biodiversity Authority, Central Zoo Authority, Wildlife Trust of India and National Forestation and Eco - Development boards etc. are doing remarkable work. Not only at the national level, but also internationally, various organizations are involved in the best work for environmental protection, including IUCN, World Wide Fund for Nature, United Nations Environment Program, Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 1992 Earth Conference, Cartagena Biodiversity Protocol, Nagoya Conference, Paris Agreement, UN REDD Program, World Watch Institute, World Bank Environment Policy, Forest Investment Program, Terry, Green Peace, World Nature Organization, World Resource Institute, Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility, Geneva Protocol, Montreal Convention, Vienna Convention, UNESCO.

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## V. CONCLUSION

In the field of education, environmental education is an innovative trend which is related to every aspect of human life, both directly and indirectly, hence the education of the environment should be provided only from childhood to children through both formal and informal learning methods. Children should be aware of the preservation of the environment from the family and the school, so that the spirit of respect for the environment and nature should remain stable in their behaviour.

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