

EDUCATION FOR ATTAINING SUSTAINABILITY

Sukanya K U* & Dr. Seema Menon K.P **

* Research Scholar (Ph.D.), NSS Training College, Ottapalam, Kerala.

** Associate Professor and Research Supervisor, NSS Training College, Ottapalam, Kerala

Abstract

Undoubtedly, it can be said that timely development should occur in human life. But it should be in such a way that the development should aim at the overall improvement of our planet. It is with this view UNESCO has given priorities for attaining the goals of sustainable development. The United Nations has put forth 17 Sustainable Development Goals which provides a blueprint for prosperity and for the people and the planet. The UN has included Education as one of their goals for sustainable development. This paper discusses the reciprocal relationship of Education and Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). SDG Goal 4 deals with Quality and Inclusive education for all and targets to provide quality, equitable and free education without any disparities and at the same time enhance the skills of the youth which will help them find better employment opportunities and develop entrepreneurial skills. This will improve the economic stability and thereby their standard of living. It also emphasizes on Ensuring Inclusive and Equitable quality education at the same time promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. Education will make them aware of the umpteen problems our earth is facing and will encourage them to collectively strive for a sustainable world irrespective of Race, Religion and Economic status. Therefore, Education plays a crucial role in creating a sustainable and equal world which is even more relevant in today's pandemic affected world. Education is the most effective means that can confront the challenges of the future.

KEY WORDS: Sustainable Development, Knowledge Economy, Inclusive Education, Lifelong learning, 5 Ps of Sustainable Development, 3 Es of Sustainable Development

Introduction

Human life is undergoing changes from the origin itself. We humans are constantly evolving and always looking for new and better ideas to make our lives easier and comfortable. All these interventions are influencing/affecting not only our fellow living beings but also the ecology and thereby the universe itself. The quest of humans for acquiring knowledge has resulted in so many changes on this planet. We are now capable of landing our spaceships at the Moon with scientists hinting at a possibility of Life on Mars. We have made remarkable progress in all the sectors from Health and Medicine to Transport and Educational sectors as part of Globalization. We have been constantly exploiting our earth to make our lives better without thinking of the adverse effect it will have on the environment which is pure greed. The changes we make to the environment as part of our greed cannot be classified as Development. True development is when we create a world which is sustainable and equal, keeping in mind the innumerable living beings and our ecosystems as well. A kind of development that improves the quality of human life and at the same time conserves the diversity and vitality of Earth. The systemic approach of the interaction of Man, Society and Nature constructs the heart of a Sustainable World. The

combination of Environment protection Education and Resource management Education is essential in creating a Sustainable world.

Sustainable Development

Sustainable Development is reinforcing Economic and Social Development along with Environmental protection to meet the basic needs of present and future alike. The UN put forth the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which has the most discussed topic in recent times. SDG's aims at overall development of the planet, not only the human, it emphasizes on bringing peace and prosperity to the people and the planet. Merely focusing on the advancement in human life without considering the biotic and abiotic components around can't be termed as 'development'. Development as mentioned by the UN is achieving a higher quality of life and mutually reinforcing Economic stability, Environment protection and social development to bring balance to the society. Sustainable development is the development of the present without compromising the ability of future generations. UNESCO has given priorities for attaining Global goals, thereby ensuring better and quality living for all without any disparities.

There are 17 framed Sustainable Development Goals which includes the overall development of the planet (UNO, n. d.). It aims for global peace and prosperity. SDGs represent some of the most urgent and universal needs of the modern world which must be dealt with at the earliest. We can translate these values and principles to quantifiable results which is possible through proper planning and participation. The goals are as follows:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Required Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institution
17. Partnerships for the Goals

SDG 4 deals with Education for Sustainable Development. Ensuring Quality and Inclusive Education for all to build their skills and knowledge to promote sustainable development. SDG 12 deals with 'Awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature' and to promote employment opportunities by Sustainable Tourism. The SDGs are integrated with each other and hence action done in one area will affect the other. The development must balance Economic and Social sustainability including Environmental protection.

Pillar/Area	Priorities
Social	Gender Equity, Good Governance, Human rights, Access to Education
Cultural	Preserving Indigenous knowledge and Cultural Heritage
Economic	Urbanization, Rural Development, Food Security
Environmental	Mitigating Climate change, Conserving Biodiversity and Natural Resources

Brundtland commission described Sustainable Development as “Development that meets the needs of the future without compromising the needs of the present ”.

Sustainable Development refers to the three major components of human existence:

- Economical
- Ecological
- Human

Quality and Inclusive Education will help develop new profound skills which can be addressed in solving individual problems and maximize profits. An economic plan that fosters economic growth and at the same time preserve the quality of the environment for future generations is the need of the hour. To create long term sustainable values by optimal use and recycling. The present and future values on the natural resources should be maintained in order to meet the needs of the future generations. Economic growth is central to successful globalization.

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented human crisis in the form of unemployment and Recession. The per capita income has shrunk and in order to boost the economy, various skill development programmes and entrepreneurial schemes have been developed by the government.

Ecological Sustainability is built on a long-term perspective of conserving Biodiversity, combat desertification and maintaining a balance between the ecosystems. The productive infrastructure functions of the biosphere involve proper and efficient degradation of waste, circulation of Biogeochemical cycles, maintaining the regenerative potential of the soil and efficient use of Renewable resources. The implementation of policies in tackling plastic and waste disposal, mitigating climate change and Global warming must be done at the earliest.

To produce a place where people can live in harmony and be able to breath fresh air, eat food which is free from chemical residues, reduce pollution of all sorts forms the basis of a sustainable world.

Eco-tourism:

Ecotourism is uniting conservation of biodiversity as well as the communities. It helps in providing financial benefits for the local people and hence strengthens the economy at micro-level. Government is promoting Ecotourism destinations in order to increase sustainable travel. It is about conserving biodiversity and minimizing the carbon footprint.

Ecological sustainability:

We are part of nature and completely depended on her for all our basic needs. To respect nature is to respect life, to approach life with humility and compassion. We must make the best use of resources to conserve nature. To preserve the complexity of ecosystems and safeguard their habitat. The use of renewable resources and lead a low entropy life. We should protect all the species from cruelty and take special measures to conserve the endangered species.

The 5 Ps of Sustainable Development include:

1.Peace

- To foster Peaceful and Inclusive communities which are free from violence and live in harmony. International communities must come together to promote peace and end violence of all sorts by strong institutions of justice and not military interventions.

2.Prosperty

- Ensuring all human beings can enjoy a prosperous and happy life which is possible only through Technological, Social and Economic progress. Smart and Innovative approaches which paves way to strong economic foundation.

3.Planet

- Protecting the planet from degradation, managing natural resources to meet the needs of the present and future and taking necessary actions on climate change. It is crucial for our planet's survival.

4.Partnership

- Mobilizing the means required to implement this Agenda through a revitalized Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, based on a spirit of strengthened global solidarity, focusing the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

5.People

- Eradication of Poverty and Hunger in all its forms to ensure a healthy environment where no one is left behind. Fundamental Development of all the living beings which includes providing a better livelihood and empowering all the sectors of people. Empowering the women by asserting them with equal opportunities.

Environmental Education broadly includes issues of poverty, inequity, values, and ethics. The inequalities based on caste, creed and social strata are still prevalent, proper education and awareness must be spread to end all sorts of disparities. It Involves understanding of the ecological principles and also involves a new concept of reality. Embracing plants, animals as well as people is essential for humans. It will help lead a life in harmony with nature and foster a mutual relationship between man and environment.

Principles of Sustainable Development

- People are entitled to lead a Healthy and Productive life with harmony.
- Prevent Environmental Degradation and undertake cost-effective measures.
- Eradicate poverty and improve the standard of living.
- Conserve, Restore and Protect the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem.
- Promote an open international economic system that leads to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries.
- Encourage the creativity and ideals of the youth and also the traditional knowledge of indigenous people.
- Reduce Gender disparities and provide equal opportunities equally.
- Environmental protection, Peace and development are interdependent.

Education for Sustainable development

SDG 4 – Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Education for Sustainable Development (EDS) is one of the goals of Sustainable development. It aims to empower the learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes so that they will be able to face the global challenges like climate change, biodiversity issues, poverty, inequality, degradation of environment, etc. by 2030 (UNESCO, n. d.). The notion of “Education for Sustainable Development” was first put forth at the ‘International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability’ by UNESCO and the Government of Greece in 1997. It was a noble initiative by the UN to declare 2004-2015 as the decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Education is multidisciplinary, improvement in this field will indirectly improve all the other sectors too. . One of the Sustainable Development Goals is ensuring quality education. It aims at giving good quality education to people in all sectors of society and providing life-long learning opportunities to them. Keeping this in view, the New Education Policy of India, 2020 has given prominence to give good quality education to all, irrespective of caste, creed, gender, community, geographical area, etc. NEP 2020 aims at giving education to meet the needs of the digital era. SDG aims at ensuring primary and secondary education irrespective of any bias. It aims at developing quality technical and vocational courses. Keeping this in view India has made Education one of the fundamental rights of the children. The Right to Education Act makes every child from the ages 6 to 14 entitled to free and compulsory education.

Education can bring social transformation among the people and create a common future, it is a key component of innovation that leads to a social change. It is about formulating strategies for solving and evaluating inter-generational issues. The most literate nations usually have the highest per capita rates of consumption and leave lesser ecological footprints compared to other nations with lesser per-capita rates. Data collected by UNESCO Statistical Yearbook and World Education Report shows great disparities on the national average of years on education. This provides evidence that Education plays a crucial role in development of human-kind and thereby the development of the nation and also better understanding on climate and our environment and make developmental changes to tackle them. The importance of learning and Capacity building is to be acknowledged to make our Earth more sustainable. Sustainability is a multi-faceted agenda, it can help make substantial development in most sectors. Hence, Education is the key to transform our earth into a better place and contribute to a sustainable future.

Education for sustainable development is a lifetime process. It goes well beyond the limits of formal education and exists in a form of lifelong learning conditions for the development of environmental consciousness and formation of ecological culture. One of the key purposes of Education is the development of systemic worldview and critical thinking along with acquiring knowledge and skills contributing to sustainable development of the society.

It is necessary to reconsider the notion of education quality that includes both global and local traditional knowledge that supports emotional and practical abilities, potential and capabilities including improving the cognitive abilities of students and their endowment with value, ecological integrity and equitable well-being. Involvement of children is the most important component of Education for Sustainable Development. The following should be considered

- 1) Planetary awareness
- 2) Caring for future generations
- 3) Nurturing bioregional cultures and local knowledge
- 4) Expanding our ethical horizon
- 5) Celebrating life

Planning in education should be interdisciplinary and should take all groups into consideration. There should be necessary changes in the curriculum and participation of representatives of all strata and spheres in the discussion and planning of sustainable development.

Providing good education means making the learner face the challenges of the newly so-called developed world and to help them find solutions for these issues and make our world a safe and secure place for prosperous and peaceful living. It is about creating positive behaviour and creating new consciousness in the course of human development to create skills and technology to tackle complex problems of development and find solutions to global crises. The idea of sustainable development should form a conceptual base and a foundation of the entire system of education.

Education helps making developments in the following factors:

1. Decision Making
2. Quality of Life
3. Implementation

1. Decision making:

Education will directly affect the decision-making skills of the youth as it provides the learner with better understanding of the subject. It will help in solving the problems accurately and makes one critically aware of the subject. Good decisions can go a long way and provide fruitful interpretations for a better future.

2. Quality of Life:

A future-oriented education helps in better understanding of the interconnections between Ecology, Economy and Social Equity. It helps in economic and social well-being and thereby improves the Standard of Living of the people.

3. Implementation:

Critical thinking helps in making better decisions and implementing better ideas. Formulating a structured development process to mitigate climate change, conserve biodiversity and implement them to make our world a better place to live for all the living beings. Better opportunities for participation and reflection has to done

Globalization affects political, economic and cultural spheres in highly contradictory ways. Technology and Politics will not only depend on the economics but also vary from region to region and hence policies must be formulated and implemented keeping in mind the overall development and the contribution the region can make towards sustainable development. The role of education and skills is very prominent in international trade to improve the economy of the place. There has been rapid advances in science and technology which enhances the knowledge and ideas on production and services also called the Knowledge Economy.

Education is a basic right. SDG 4 also has linkages with all the other SDGs across the 2030 Agenda. Access to quality education will help create mobility and reduce inequalities in the society. Education is essential in tackling critical challenges like climate change and will help youth prepare for employment in the high-skill jobs and is a foundation for peaceful and prosperous societies. Investments in education that are not accompanied by concurrent progress in other aspects of human wellbeing will fall short of enabling all people a good standard of living. Good child health and nutrition are essential to not only increase attendance but also improve educational achievements. Similarly, ending poverty and thereby reducing the pressure on the children to work which affects their physician and mental health. Hence it is essential to increase the universal school enrolment. There should be steps taken towards the objective of 'leaving no one behind'.

Achieving Sustainable Development through Education

Sustainable Education encompasses the broader concepts of Socio-cultural and Socio-political issues such as Poverty, Equality, Democracy and Quality of life in relation to the environment. It helps in making necessary developments to improve the quality of life both locally and globally and thereby creating a secure and suitable environment for the future generations as well.

Giving proper quality education is one of the SD goals. It can also be said that by giving proper education, it is easier to achieve the other 16 goals of SDG. Through proper education, everyone will be aware of the condition our planet is facing, mainly the climatic and environmental hazards. It will make learners or future generations aware that the poor condition of nature is due to the quest of humans to make their life easier by exploiting nature. Quality education can make the learner aware that the development of today should not be done by grabbing the future of the next generation from them. Development should be done without destroying the peaceful condition of the planet.

Rosman, Omar and Zahari (2019) in their study reports that teachers are of the opinion of integrating sustainable development into the daily teaching, even in the technology subject. Proper guidelines should be made to inculcate the aspect of Sustainable Education. The areas of science and technology for sustainability has increased substantially and these interventions have been very successful by far. Research for people rather than Research on People has been a major change in recent times. Research for Social change promotes forms of research which explicitly deals with participatory relations, it encourages participatory inquiry techniques and creates a common idea for a sustainable world. The participation of the students, local residents as well as local government is vital in developing a sustainable world.

The change in the existing curriculum is important in reinforcing the sustainable development goals. It should be inculcated in the students right from their childhood that it is their responsibility to build a sustainable world.

education needed for the present era can open many employment opportunities before the future citizen. Hence through a better job they can bring betterment in their life conditions. Slowly the poverty can be eradicated. No man with a hungry stomach will be there in future if given age-appropriate education. Every person should have access to basic facilities like clean drinking water and healthy food.

The other aim of education is ensuring a healthy life and well-being. One who gets proper education will know how to keep themselves and those who are around them healthier in all aspects. They will take actions for good hygiene including proper sanitation, good water supply etc. They will be aware of the need to consider all as humans, irrespective of gender. Male dominant society will be slowly changed to no gender disparity society, where all gender will be treated similarly. If the employer and the employee is properly educated, it can create a good working condition. A healthy working condition can contribute to the economic growth of the employee, employer, as well as the nation.

The aim of promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development can be definitely achieved by providing quality education. It will enable the future generation to think critically on every subject and to take the correct decision to keep this planet where we are living, happy and peaceful. The competitive mind among nations resulting in war should have to be changed. Education for sustainable development should aim at developing a competitive mind in the people for making their surrounding stress free, tension free and peaceful.

Education provides the means to transmit knowledge, values and skills across generations, enabling societies to set the foundation for thriving in the future. Awareness and

communications strategies sometimes lack sustainable and sufficient financial resources. The four main levels of learning depending on the age are

- a) Basic/Elementary education: It includes elementary, higher and vocational education which is very important and the basic right of each child.
- b) University : This includes Graduate and Post Graduate courses. University plays a crucial role in developing knowledge. It introduces the learner to technical and scientific areas.
- c) Organizations : Education from institutions and companies. It is different from universities. They play a major role in implementation and promotion of sustainable development policies.
- d) Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning is the process of gaining knowledge through experience and more often learning that takes place outside our walls is usually overlooked and knowledge is hard to measure because it gives us experience and better understanding and not confined to certificates. Proper awareness must be spread from the grassroot level on the SDG's and the role of each individual in developing a sustainable world. Fostering sustainable and long- term behaviour changes in the youth can be included through the integration of SDGs in the educational curricula.

Especially in a rapidly changing world with global integration and technological; shifts, educational needs must evolve constantly to the changing demands. The ways in which learning prepares individuals for decent work, as well as for life or 'global citizenship' is increasingly important. Decisive action is essential in solving modern day problems and developing new skills and techniques are important. Efforts are being taken to revolutionize the educational system and make changes to the curricula to respond to the technology revolution. The re-orientation of education provides greater accountability in terms of outreach and provides a number of materials that could be accessible to a wide number of people. The benefits of these research materials or case studies can go a long way in making a difference making it accessible to learners who are interested in acquiring knowledge.

Efforts to improve access to schooling and the quality of education are to be made to make progress towards universal completion of primary and secondary schooling. The slowing down of progress could reflect difficulties reaching those populations that are being left behind. It could even be associated with other deprivations like Poverty and poor nutrition that must be addressed to enable children to attend school.

Accordingly, greater support and resources are needed for making relevant initial and continuous professional developments, appropriate recruitment and deployment processes, decent working conditions, and opportunities for sharing promising practices, professional autonomy and career pathways for teachers. Teachers and educational institutions should be involved in the monitoring and development of education policy.

1. Re-orientation of curriculum, teaching and learning

Education and Research related institutions and curriculum development institutions should take special care keeping in mind the cognitive development of the learner in mind. Education policies that Foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in education for sustainable

development and allow for more integrated forms of teaching and learning should be strengthened.

2. Capacity Building

Capacity Building programmes for teachers, managers and facilitators to initiate and enhance inspired forms of learning in schools, universities and the workplace must be initiated. It helps in facilitating and strengthening the social learning and networking building between schools, other educational institutions and other potential partners. These capacity programmes must be done at Non-Formal and Informal learning settings as well.

3. Resources and Materials

The resources must be constantly reviewed, updated and improved as per the changes occurring and must not be restricted to traditional knowledge. It should also be available in multiple languages, open-sourced and accessible.

4. International and Regional Co-operation

The utilization of inter and intra-regional networking will help in promoting and strengthening Education for Sustainable development at the national level and also at the global level. The intensifying competition has paved way for proactive approach and thereby leading to training and cooperation focusing mainly on training and transfer of technology. Quest for innovative products and processes has led to this development globally.

Conclusion

SDG Target 2030 has been taken into granted by almost all nations of the world. It is true that almost all citizens of the world long for a peaceful living. If properly implemented and succeeded in achieving the SDG target our earth will be transformed into a heaven. One of the aims of SDG is ensuring quality education to all thereby making the future generation to face the future challenges from the society and nature and finding a sustaining solution for that. If given proper education to all as early as possible, it will be easier to attain the other 16 goals of sustainable development, for an educated generation will act more effectively than others. Nations would concentrate more on giving quality education. Then, it will make it halfway to the other goals. It helps develop competence to think in a forward-looking manner and to deal with the uncertainty and therefore make plans for the future. The 3 Ps of Sustainability (People, Planet and Profit) and the 3 E's (Efficiency, Environment and Equity) is correlated with Education being the catalyst between the two. Sustainable development requires changes in peoples' attitudes and values, and education allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future.

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