NON-FORMAL ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION AND NGOs

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ABSTRACT

Unrestricted and indiscriminate exploitation of environmental resources necessitated by population growth in India has created ecological imbalance resulting in environmental problems, different types of pollution and other kinds of ecological disorders. This environmental degradation has become a serious issue as it threatens not only the tranquility of people's existence, but their health and lives as well. Recognizing the importance of education in the protection of environment, the concept of Environmental Education (EE) as a new dimension in the educational (both formal and non-formal) system has emerged (Stockholm Conference 1972). Then, National Policy on Education 1986 and 1992 emphasized the need for EE as an integral part of the curriculum at all stages of education.

While EE in formal education system is important in shaping the knowledge, values and skills of students, the Non-Formal Environmental Education (NFEE) which involves people in the capacity of individual or organizations, is essential for creation of public awareness about environment, development of primary skills of sustainable use of the environment and building up environment friendly attitudes and values. The Department of Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) took initiative for integration of EE into the formal educational system at all levels and visualized a national curriculum framework, which contains a common core of EE. Where as the responsibility of developing policies and strategies for creation of awareness amongst all the people about environmental issues through non-formal methods has been entrusted to the Ministry of Environment and Forest (MOEF).

In addition to the programs of MOEF, many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are working in the non-formal sector towards the conservation and sustainable use of environment through different types of programs. NGOs tend to take up need based activities; adopt innovative and participatory approaches; emphasize people-centered practices and promote communities active participation and are flexible in functioning, methods and practice; develop linkages with the efforts in school education to promote Environment Education.

This paper attempts to present a brief note on what the NGOs are doing at present to promote NFEE and what are the problems faced by them in this direction? (based on the mini survey of NGOs in Bangalore City). It also attempts to give suggestions to NGOs to make their intervention more effective in the direction of achieving the intended objectives of EE.
ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION - AN OVERVIEW

* Rachel Carson’s “SILENT SPRING”, 1962.

Concept of EE  
World Environment Day, June 5.  
United Nations Environment Program

* International Environmental Educational Program (IEEP, 1975).
* TBILISI Conference, 1977 (I-Intergovernmental conference on EE).
* Johannesburg Summit on sustainable Development, 2002 (WORLD SUMMIT).

EE OVERVIEW

EE movement started after Stockholm conference-1972
* Center for environment education, 1984.
* MHRD   NCERT - school level, UGC - college level.
* MOEF     Non formal environmental education.

NEAC - 1986  
P.VAHINI, 1992  
ECO CLUBS, 1993  
CEE, 1984  
CPR, 1988  
EMCB, 1998-99  
NATIONAL CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK, 2000  
WORLD BANK ASSISTANCE
ENVIROMENTAL EDUCATION (EE)

---CONCEPT---

EE Educational process

Man's relationship with his natural and built in environment

ACTION ORIENTED

Self confidence (awareness, knowledge, skills.)

PROJECT CENTERED

Positive attitude (concern & Values)

PARTICIPATORY

Personal commitment to environment protection.

Awareness & Sensibility to the total environment and it's allied problems

Knowledge of environment and it's associated problems

Participation - active environment in working towards environment conservation

OBJECTIVES OF EE

Attitudes - a set of values, feelings of concern for environment motivation for participation in environment protection

Skills - of identifying and solving environmental problems
EDUCATE

To improve

Awareness

Which arouses

Concern

Which translates into

Commitment

Which demands

Action

Ourselves on matters and issues relating to the environment.

Acquisition of knowledge, skills & change of attitudes.

Of the environment

Our room, Family, School & Community

Regarding the state of our environment

Air, Water, Land

To do something about environment

Individual and collective in the Family, School, Community, Local, National & International level

PARISARA DHARMA (ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS)

Societal

Corporate

Individual & Global

Environmentally literate society

Maintenance of standards

Quality of life for which actions are to be developed among public

* Living in environment with minimum disturbances to the rights & habitats of other living things.
* Using only such resources required to maintain life in a balance of health and productivity.
* Making use of materials & energy in the most Economic manner.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EE TO,

- Consider the environment in totality.
- Be a continuous life long process.
- Be interdisciplinary in its approach.
- Emphasize active participation.
- Consider Local as well as Global Perspective.
- Utilize diverse learning experiences.
- Focus on community involving all categories of people.
- Focus on training, research & experimentation.

Adult education & TL Campaigning
Programs for youth (including rural & non-student youth)
Program for women/house holds
Development of educational material & teaching aids
Training programs for trainers, professionals, technical personnel & legal experts
Research & development programs
Foundation courses for probationers (IAS, IFS, IPS)

Children's activities
ECO-development camps
Programs for NGO's / through NGO's
Environmental forums for public representatives (etc)
Training for executives/administrators
ROLE / SIGNIFICANCE of NGOs in NFEE

- Tend to be local & small (in size & specified area).
- Tend to take up need based activities (action oriented).
- Flexible in functioning, methods & practice.
- Respond swiftly & efficiently to local demands.
- Adopt innovative & participatory approaches.
- Emphasize people-centered practices & promote communities active participation.
- Relations independent of local power structure (in selection/committee, provision of services).
- Relatively more successful to reach the target groups.
- Highly motivated & prepared to accept hardship as a challenge.
- Influence the state policies by advocacy & lobbying through their network.
- Promote integration with the efforts in school education to promote EE.

NON GOVERNMENT ORGANISATION (NGO)

DEFINITION AND CHARACTERISTICS

Private bodies, Components of social movements)

NGO is an Independent voluntary association of people acting together on a continuous basis, for some common purpose, other than achieving government office, making money or illegal activities. (UNESCO, Encyclopedia article)

Characteristics:

- Non-Political Party.
- Non-profit making group.
- Non-criminal group.
- Non-Violent group.
NON-FORMAL ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION (NFEE) (EE Outside the formal schooling)

→ Less definitive and structured.

→ Directed towards the public at large.

→ Covers various target groups.

→ Design for different age groups from different backgrounds & levels.

→ Demands varied strategies, approaches & programs on a sustained basis.

→ Requires involvement of people in the capacity of individuals or organizations.

→ Involves NGOs, government agencies, educational institutions, autonomous bodies & public.

Types and Functions of NGOs

NGOs in INDIA

Operational Grassroot NGOs

Work with the oppressed section of society.

Support NGOs

Work to strengthen the capacities of grassroot NGOs

Network NGOs

Act as a forum to share experiences, joint development endeavor

Funding NGOs

Provide funding support to grassroot NGOs People’s organization

Charity & Welfare NGOs

Charity, welfare, relief & Rehabilitation

Development NGOs

Credit, seeds, fertilizers, technical knowledge

Social Action Groups (SAGs)

Mobilize marginalized sections -- awakening & Organizing

Empowerment NGOs

Development activities with issue based struggle
A FEW NGOs

- Are good and committed with clear vision.
- Involve more and more rural folk, teachers and students.
- Have good Publications.
- Have linkages with schools.
- Have follow up programs at least with different batches of people.
- Have good documentation {with web sites.}

TRUST AREAS OF NGOs

- Environmental awareness programs.
- Biodiversity and wild life conservation.
- Solid waste management.
- Water conservation, waste water treatment, rain water harvesting, water shed program.
- Afforestation - social forestry and urban forestry.
- Waste land development.
- Tribal and slum development.
- Networking, consultancy and co-ordination.
- Training / Awareness Programs for teachers, children, women and NGOs.