

**Environmental values and skills through Green Education for Green Society**

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**Abstract**

Every educational institution is embedded with the responsibility of bringing social transformation in the lives of the student community along with the inculcation of ethical and cultural values. But presently the higher educational institutions are propelled to play a vital role in promoting the environmental sustainability to withhold the horrendous outbreaks of environmental calamities, as education is the most influential armament of revolution, if rightly administered the world will certainly visualize remarkable changes. The mankind of this universe is highly dependent on the natural resources but the indecorous upkeep of the accountability leads to several environmental issues, which now seeks high attention and contribution from the domain of academy. This research work strongly emphasizes the transition of higher educational institutions to the agents of creating green environment through academic programmes. This article also proposes suggestive measures to be practiced by the higher educational institutions in promoting the sustainability of the degrading environment with the introduction of the terms 'Environmental values' and 'Environmental skills' in the context of Green Education.

**Keywords:** Environmental values, Environmental skills, sustainability, green education, higher educational institution, green society

## **1. Introduction**

Presently, the environmental conservation is gaining much attention, as everyone is becoming aware of its significance and the need of preserving it for the future generation. The proclamation of environmental awareness is indeed has become an essential practice and it has also become the need of the hour. Just as a child gets acquainted with moral, social and cultural values in the process of socialization, the child must also get familiarized with environmental values and skills to create green society. The term 'green society' refers to a society which is conscious of the environmental aspects and contributes towards its sustainability. To impart the values and skills of the environment in a child, the educational institution especially, the higher educational institution should devise a suitable academic framework for it. Acquisition of the knowledge on environmental values and skills is insufficient to reach the desired outcome; rather opportunities have to be created to test the efficiency of the students in applying their acquired skills and knowledge on environmental aspects.

The educational policies of several countries are providing a space for environmental education and the institutions of varied nature implements it. The National educational policy of India has also integrated the environmental education in its curriculum framework and recurrence upgradation is also taking place. The effectiveness of environmental educational programmes purely depends on the efficacy of its execution. The three prime areas of any higher educational institutions are characterized by Teaching, Research and Extension. Jadhav.et.al has presented the contribution of higher educational institutions in the conservation of the environment and development of the sustainability through a case study of Shivaji University, Maharashtra. The ways how an educational institution can function in the three domains of teaching, research and outreach have been vividly picturized. It is inferred from the case study that the higher educational institutions can utilize its insources to a great extent for creating remarkable changes along with collaborative works particularly with NGO's in developing the sustainability of the environment.

This research work is taken up to propose new measures of environmental sustainability other than the measures suggested by Jadhav.et.al, that could be executed by the higher educational institutions through the prominent domains of teaching, research,

extension and other related portals. The paper is organized as follows: section 2 presents the description of environmental values and skills; section 3 explains the manifestation of environmental values and skills through green education; section 4 proposes new portals of green education for creating green society and section 5 concludes the work.

## **2. Environmental values and skills**

Values refer to the principles or the standards of life. Every individual in this world is familiar with moral, ethical and cultural values, it matters whether one imbibes it or not. It is the possession of values that makes mankind as rational beings. The exhibition of a man's behavior towards the fellow being is characterized by the nature of the above possessed values. But still these values are pertained to the interactions between the human. It is indeed very essential to cultivate yet another value in the mankind for maintaining harmony with the natural environment and that value is termed as environmental value.

In commercial sectors, the term environmental value is associated with eco-friendly products. If a product causes no environmental hazards in its production and disposal, it is termed as eco-friendly. The same essence is incorporated to the notion of environmental value in the field of humanity. A person is said to possess environmental value, if he contributes to the sustainability of the environment and refrain himself from destructive actions. The environmental values have to be instructed to the learners to install the intentions of contributing to the wellbeing of the environment. A person with environmental values will take initiatives to go green in all his endeavours towards his environment. Environmental values are more conceptual and profound acquisition of it is very essential to step into the action phase, environmental skills.

Environmental skills are highly action oriented, as they pertain to the execution of environmental conservation actions of mitigating the hindrance to environmental sustainability. Deeper insights of environmental values help an individual to acquire the environmental skills, which refer to the synergy of cognitive, conative and psychomotor domain towards the sustainability of the environment. The notion of environmental skills has to be distinguished with the other skills as it refers to the execution of the specialized activities with environmental concerns. These skills enable the persons to handle the

environmental crisis in a normalized manner. Environmental skills have to be accelerated continuously to upkeep the sustainability

of the nature. Obtaining environmental values and effective effecting of the environmental skills should go hand in hand. Just acquisition of the environmental values with nil implementation ends in void impacts. Weaker conceptualization of environmental values will certainly yield poor performance of environmental conservation.

### **3. Manifestation of Environmental values and skills through Green Education**

Education plays a remarkable role in imparting values and skills in the learners. The educational institutions highly concentrate on academics and it mainly strives to enhance the cognitive levels of the students as proposed in Bloom's taxonomy. To promote the comprehensive dimensions of the personality, value based and skill based courses are thrust on the students. In addition to it, career oriented courses and part V courses are also inserted into curriculum for developing the entrepreneurial, employability skills and social responsibility respectively. But still there exist incompleteness as the area of environment is not given separate identity in the curriculum, the present status of environmental sustainability is very feeble, the awareness and commitment towards conservation of nature has to be propagated through exclusively designed curriculum in the name of Green Education for environmental sustainability.

Green Education must be made as a part and parcel of curriculum, and it has to be administered in a concrete manner. Green education pertains to environmental education comprising of the attributes and the significance of environmental sustainability. Courses based on environmental aspects are not new, but just theoretical focus and preparation will not yield fruitful results, rather it has to be made empirical. In almost all the educational institutions, environmental science has become a part of the curriculum and environmental engineering is also given space in the curriculum of engineering courses. But still, the content of the courses remain as pile of conceptual without any filed work. The students have to be trained to apply the acquired knowledge of environmental values and skills in the real life circumstances and there lies the actual outcome of Green Education.

The higher educational institutions can integrate the facets of environmental sustainability with the domains of teaching, research and extension. The following actions can be imbibed by the higher educational institutions to make green education a reality.

- (i) The higher educational institutions should construct a committee to frame a curriculum for environmental sustainability and it has to be integrated with the existing program of study. The courses related to environmental sustainability should be given space in the entire curriculum of any under graduate programme not confining to just one or two semesters.
- (ii) The faculties are to be oriented by the environmental experts with the conceptual framework of environmental modeling, environmental costing, environmental ethics, environmental impact assessment, environmental protection act, environmental issues and its related aspects. It is very mandatory to empower the teaching community on the various dimensions of environmental sustainability.
- (iii) The teaching community can be encouraged to carry out projects related to environmental concerns by integrating their research field and subject specialization. For instance, a faculty of mathematics can undertake a research based on environmental modeling, a faculty of economics on environmental costing and so on.
- (iv) The higher educational institutions can support for the implementation of student project on environmental sustainability in the areas which needs immediate attention along with the collaboration of government and non-government organizations.
- (v) The grading system of education must give much emphasis to group practical works rather than assessing the theoretical presentations of the students through examinations.
- (vi) The phenomenon of Lab to Land and Land to Lab must be made as the principle of Green Education. The syllabus of green education must

incorporate recent issues and developments in the field of environmental sustainability.

Thus if these practices are made systematically then green education will create great reformation in the dark areas of environment. Every higher educational institution can adopt vulnerable areas to environmental crisis and sustainability measures can be executed as a part of extension programmes with the involvement of faculties and the student community. The collaboration of one or more higher educational institutions towards environmental sustainability with sharing of resources and expertise can also be encouraged to reach greater levels of promoting environmental sustainability.

#### **4. New portals of Green Education for creating Green Society**

The domains of teaching, research and extension are not the only gateways of imparting the notion of green education to the learners. Teaching, research and extension programmes are designated as academic and they can be customized as the portals of green education based on the needs. Perhaps these portals are not sufficient to create green society. The need of new portals has taken upper hand. To fulfill it, it is proposed to inaugurate certain new non –academic portals of green education. One such is establishment and maintenance of eco park, which will duly be a testimonial to environmental sustainability and it will articulate the need and concern towards environmental preservation from the mishaps of environmental threats.

The eco park can be constructed by the higher educational institutions at small scale with the support and contribution from the society, which will strengthen the cohesiveness of the society with environmental concern. This will also create a feeling of owning in the people. The higher educational institutions can motivate the students to start nature club, eco club and other clubs to take green initiatives for attaining green goals. The students and the faculties must be given the liberty to take combined efforts in inducing the social responsibility of the people towards environmental sustainability. The activities through any of the environment related clubs have to be monitored by the higher educational institutions and proper feedback has to be given periodically with corrective and suggestive measures.

Adoption of vulnerable and affected areas, construction of eco park are the two ways of by which the higher educational institutions can integrate society with environmental sustainability. The higher educational institutions must garnish its vision and mission with green initiatives to promote environmental sustainability along with social transformation and academic up gradation. The higher educational institutions must also brain storm other new portals such as establishing memorandum of understanding with environmental conservation agencies, organizations to enhance the workability and applicability of environmental skills. The institutions can also organize environmental sustainability associations and forums to take decisions and policy framing for extenuating the environmental problems.

## **Conclusion**

This article has integrated the notion of 'Environmental values' and 'Environmental skills' in the context of Green Education. It sketches out the manifestation of green education. The new portals of green education for creating green society are also discussed. This descriptive research work lays a foundation for the higher educational institutions to devise action based initiatives for promoting the environmental sustainability at various capacities, subjected to the institutional limitations, also it will certainly assist the researchers in this field by creating a platform for developing future intuitions.

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