

A Study - Need of Reorienting School Curriculum to Integrate ESD and Active Citizenship

Dr. Geetika Saluja

Email: geetika.b.saluja@gmail.com

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a learning process (or approach to teaching) based on the ideals and principles that underlie sustainability and is concerned with all levels and types of learning to provide quality education and foster sustainable human development – learning to know, learning to be, learning to live together, learning to do and learning to transform oneself and society. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development has called for education to be more than a theoretical discussion of sustainability at this critical juncture in time. There is a need of understanding education and reorienting curriculum not merely as instruction, but rather as involvement in the process of orientation, planning and creation of a sustainable future. This will open avenues for the school students to understand various professions among wide array of options available in diversified global world.

As one moves up the ladder in life, the dependence on active citizenship & sustainable outlook empowered with life skills will always increases to ensure that citizens play a full and active part in society; balancing all following four principles in the pursuit of sustainable development and an improved quality of life.

P (Planet): Conservation

- which is needed to ensure that natural systems can continue to provide life support systems for all living things, including the resources that sustain the economic system.

P (People): Peace and equity

- which results when people are able to live co-operatively and in harmony with each other and have their basic needs satisfied in a fair and equitable way.

P (Profit): Appropriate development

- which is needed for people to be able support themselves in a long-term way. Inappropriate development ignores the links between the economy and the other systems in the environment.

P (Politics): Democracy

- which provides ways for people to be able to have a fair and equal say over how natural, social and economic systems should be managed.

Rationale of the Study:

The present study was conducted to highlight the need to train teachers to design integrated curriculum around students gaining tools and strategies to tackle pressing sustainability issues. In today's scenario the method of imparting education needs a review with a focus on cooperative and active participation, wherein students are directed explicitly in taking initiatives leading to understanding their role and contribution in transforming their own cities, to smart and sustainable ones.

Design of the Study:

In order to understand the prevailing understanding and preparedness of current and upcoming educators, a questionnaire in the form of opinionnaire was administered. The opinionnaire was designed with 26 statements to address the following three key parameters

- 1) K (Knowledge): Basic knowledge of concepts and terminology of UNESCO, DSED, SDGs and ESD.
- 2) N (Need): For integrating ESD into basic curriculum by redesigning existing structure.
- 3) P (Preparedness): Of current and in training educators for transaction of the redesigned curriculum

The sample size of the respondent consisted of 228 school educators, students pursuing bachelors in education (future educators), and teacher trainers of Ahmedabad city. All respondents were made aware of the objective of the study

The 26 statements were randomly placed in the original opinionnaire which was administered. Responses were gathered with respect to the awareness, agreement or disagreement of the respondents for each statement. A frequency table of all responses was prepared and then converted into percentage. The opinion of the respondents was then grouped with respect to all the three parameters undertaken in the study and presented in the form of the percentage in the following table.

Table: The opinion of respondents in percentage % with respect to all three key parameters undertaken in the study.

S N	Key	Statement	Not Aware %	Agree %	Disagree %
1	K	UNESCO stands for United Nations Educational, Scientific and Creative Organization	26.32	42.54	31.14
2	K	There are total 15 goals included in SDGs	89.04	4.39	6.58
3	K	Full form of DESD is Decade of Education of Sustainable Development	49.12	46.05	4.82
4	K	Year 2014 to 2024 is planned as DESD	57.89	37.72	4.39
6	K	Environment Education (EE)and Education for/of sustainable development (ESD) are one and the same thing	16.67	42.98	40.35
7	K	Education of Sustainable Development and Education for sustainable development are one and the same thing	21.05	42.11	36.84
10	K	ESD involves only of teaching and practising of saving fuel, energy, water and biodiversity	41.67	38.16	20.18
18	K	'Producers pay principle' comes only under economy aspect of the ESD	57.02	34.21	8.77
17	K	I am not aware that Education for Sustainable development has three components: environment, society, and economy.	20.61	42.98	36.40
5	N	Simply increasing basic literacy will not result into sustainable societies	9.65	71.05	19.30
8	N	Fair trade practices and Eco labels are of importance to see while buying a product	17.11	76.32	6.58

11	N	A curriculum should focus on Social-economical and Political aspects of the world along with discussion of environment	7.02	87.28	5.70
13	N	All educational Institutions must address sustainability and must practice what they preach	12.28	84.65	3.07
14	N	There is a need to redesign curriculum that focuses on skills, values, and perspectives that encourage and support public participation and community decision making	10.53	84.65	4.82
16	N	It is a challenge to raise the education levels without creating an ever-growing demand for resources and consumer goods and the accompanying production of pollutants. Education should take up this challenge	14.04	70.18	15.79
19	N	Achieving sustainability will depend ultimately on changes in behaviour and lifestyles	17.98	74.56	7.46
20	N	Majority of young people demonstrate a high degree of environmental awareness, and positive environmental values, but they generally fail to reflect this in their actions	9.21	81.58	9.21
23	N	The method of imparting education needs a review with a focus on cooperative and active participation, wherein students are directed in taking initiatives leading to understanding their role and contribution in transforming their own cities, to smart and sustainable ones.	13.60	77.19	9.21
24	N	Students should not get into understanding various local, global perspectives and solutions which exist around the world and	13.16	35.09	51.75

		take informed decisions.			
25	N	Students should focus only on the content given in text book and concentrate on developing skills that will only give them marks in the exams	8.33	23.25	68.42
26	N	There is a need to integrate all subjects and provide opportunity to learn from their observation and experiences	6.58	86.84	6.58
9	P	I have discussed with my students about Fair trade practices and Eco labels	22.81	57.89	19.30
12	P	As a teacher I am trained to relate my classroom interaction with environmental, political, social and economic issues	12.28	82.89	4.82
15	P	Students should just study about democracy and citizenship but should not get involved in finding solutions and taking actions to solve any local, global, social or environmental problems	10.96	27.37	61.67
21	P	In schools, subjects should be taught independent of each other. Otherwise there will be confusion among different subject teachers	7.02	42.98	50.00
22	P	In our teachers training model teachers are well trained to design integrated curriculum around students gaining tools and strategies to tackle pressing sustainability issues in their own spaces.	10.96	13.60	75.44

Findings and Discussion of the Study:

Response to the parameter (1: K) clearly shows the lack of knowledge of basic terminology and concepts pertaining to UNESCO, DSED, SDGs and ESD among participants and thereby the need to address that to begin with.

Response to parameter (2: N) clearly shows that the need is felt unanimously among participants to have a redesigned curriculum with integrated approach and focussing on bringing in change in behaviour in all stake holders of educational institute through whole school-whole system approach.

Response to parameter (3: P) shows a mixed response to the preparedness of current and future educators. There is a need to orient educators towards the basic fundamental aspects of ESD and how to integrate it effectively in the curriculum as integrated approach without creating much confusion among different subjects educators as practiced in the current situation. The difference in response of statement 26 and 21 clearly indicates the confusion of educators for integration of all subjects in the transaction of the curriculum. In the current practice generally each subject are taught independently by individual subject teachers. There is a need to design educational structure with focus on coordination and cooperation among individual subject educators to integrate their teaching. The disparity in the response to statement 9, 12 and 22 clearly shows their opinion on acceptance level of individuals (self) preparedness and preparedness as a group in teachers training.

Conclusion of the Study:

Simply increasing basic literacy will not advance sustainable societies. Indeed, if communities and nations hope to work towards sustainability goals, they must focus on skills, values, and perspectives that encourage all stake holders of a school to participate in community decision making. Designing participatory curriculum poses, perhaps, the greatest challenge of our time as this requires alternative ways of thinking, valuing and acting. The need is to integrate all subjects to learn from their observation and experiences. It is vital to remember that designing Curriculum with Education of Active Citizenship for Sustainable Development should not be an add-on to Syllabus but is central to it and should be integrated within the conceptual framework of taking students along the ladder of LOTS to HOTS. It should go from learner's level tasks- initiating thought process to Master's level task giving space for incubation, discussion to finally Development level task of taking viable actions. This will then be translated into acquired life skills through Project Based Learning, debate, panel discussion, survey, opinion, role play, interview, reflection, interaction with range of experts, field visits with enriched perspective and provide learners with valuable opportunities for

community engagement, professional development and wider scholastic and co-scholastic achievement. Education has to be reoriented to involve transforming institutional programs, practices, and policies. Institutions involved in reorienting education to address sustainability must “practice what they preach” and go through the processes necessary to make progress towards becoming model institutions. Students should understand various local, global perspectives and solutions which exist around the world and take informed decisions.

Bibliography

Arranged Alphabetically

1. Arjen E. J. Wals (2010), Shaping the Education of Tomorrow 2012 Full-length Report on the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 7, Paris, France As retrieved in Dec 2015 from <http://www.desd.org/UNESCO%20report.pdf>
2. Mathar . R. (2013), The concept of whole school approach – a platform for school development with focus on sustainable development. As retrieved in Dec 2015 from <http://esd-expert.net/assets/130314-Concept-paper-ESD-Whole-school-approach-general-introduction.pdf>
3. Njeru. N. A, Identifying the Barriers To Implementing Education For Sustainable Development In Kenyan Secondary Schools: A Case Of Southlands Of Nairobi As retrieved in Dec 2015 from http://www.ku.ac.ke/schools/graduate/images/stories/docs/abstracts/2010/june/identifyingthe_barriers_to_implementing_education_for_sustainable.pdf
4. Nsanzimana. D. , Tushabe. R. (2010), Guidelines for infusing Education for Sustainable Development into Schools in Rwanda, Environmental Education and Mainstreaming Unit, Rwanda Environmental Management Authority (REMA). As retrieved in Dec 2015 from http://www.rema.gov.rw/rema_doc/publications/Guidelines%20for%20infusing%20ESD%20into%20schools.pdf
5. Ravindranath.M.J. (2007). Environmental education in teacher education in India: experiences and challenges in the United Nation's Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, Journal of Education for Teaching: International research and pedagogy.Vol. 33, 2, 191-206

6. Richmond .M. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD): An Optimistic Overview.
As retrieved in Dec 2015 from
http://www.lne.be/doelgroepen/onderwijs/ecocampus/kennis-en-instrumentenhub/presentaties/2_MarkRichmond.pdf
7. Sarabhai.K.V. ESD in a developing nation. The Centre for Environment Education, India
As retrieved in Dec 2015 from http://www.desd.org/KVS_today%20tomorrow.pdf
8. Shallcross, T. (2005). Whole school approaches to education for sustainable development through school-focused professional development (The SEEPS project). *Education for a Sustainable Future*.
9. UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 – 2014)
As retrieved in Dec 2015 from http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/mods/theme_gs.html