

## **Sustainable Development: Betterment through Education**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of the study is to include the sustainability concept in the higher education module and to find out the level of awareness among various age groups about sustainable development. Sustainability covers following ambits

- Progress
- 360 degree development
- Environment protection
- Overall growth
- Complete Awareness

Sustainable development has lot of parameters which needs to be understood by individuals at various levels of society, sustainable development will lead to a condition of sustainability which will lead to an optimum stage of overall development.

Major challenges before higher education are as under:

1. How to categorize the parameters of sustainability in curricula to make it practical and implementable?
2. How to prioritise the parameters of sustainability for implementation purpose?
3. What kind of changes should be made in revamping or restructuring the policies in higher education for sustainable development?

### **Research Paradigm**

A sample of 50 students from various age groups has been selected for the study. Various statistical tools like correlation, t test and testing of hypothesis have been used to find out various results. The hypothesis of the research given by the researcher is as follows:

- 1) Our existing traditional teaching learning methods are not found significant to teach importance of sustainable development for various age groups.

- 2) Our experts teaching and conditioning methods are not functioning well due to extra-pressures on the higher educational system with respect to sustainable development.

**Keywords:** Sustainability, Economic, Social, Development.

## 1. Introduction

Sustainability education, Education for Sustainability (EfS), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are common terms describing the practice of teaching for sustainability. There are three main parameters of sustainable development: Social, Economic and Environmental. Sustainability depicts following ambits:

- Progress
- 360 degree development
- Environment protection
- Overall growth
- Complete Awareness

Agenda 21 – A Manifesto for Education also facilitates the importance of education in awareness of sustainability. It says that education is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with sustainable development and for effective public participation in decision-making. Both formal and non-formal education is indispensable to changing people's attitudes so that they have the capacity to assess and address their sustainable development concerns.[1]

We can define sustainable development in the following module:

S= Self Motivation

U=Understandable

S=Stability

T=Transformation

A= Awareness

I=Innovation

N=New Ideas

A=Achievements

B= Best possible

L= Lucrative

E=Environment Protection

In recognition of the importance of ESD, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2005-2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). UNESCO leads the Decade and has developed an International Implementation Scheme for the Decade. The main aim of this program is to facilitate opportunities and promoting planning and implementation of sustainable through all possible ways of education, public awareness and training. Education for sustainability is the practice of learning how to achieve global and local sustainable communities.

The World Economic and Social Survey 2013 talks about various aspects of involving the lower income group or the poor community of the country in awareness

programs and in action oriented and collaborative levels of development. If this inequality will be reduced, it will strengthen the governance and will lead to social and economic sustainability.[3]

The vision of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from quality education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation.

Key Areas need to be focused in Education for Sustainable Development.

There have been various initiatives by various countries to implement Education for sustainable development. Some key areas are listed below:

- Education for sustainable development is a base constructing concept that includes a new vision of education that seeks to empower people across all ages to carry responsibility for creating a sustainable future.
- Basic education provides the foundation for all future education and hence it will result into sustainable development in its own right.
- There is a need to revisit many existing education policies, programs and practices so that they build the concepts, skills, motivation and commitment needed for sustainable development.
- Education is the key to rural transformation and is essential to ensuring the economic, cultural and ecological vitality of rural areas and communities.
- A sustainable future can be built when there will be appropriate technical and vocational education, lifelong/continuous learning and the need for this is clarified to the learner for betterment of society, economy and environment.

The challenges aforesaid needs to be dealt in such a manner so that it can be put in a continuous process and it can be monitored timely to keep a check on the smooth implementation. The first challenge mentioned by the researcher is important from the prioritisation point of view. It will be relative if we see it from individual perspective. But categorisation is necessary as it will help students to learn and think upon those parameters individually and act accordingly. Even the main challenge here is to reaching the unreached [4]. Most vulnerable data here would be youth, children, and adults, hence education become very important part to percolate the importance of social and environmental sustainability which result into economic sustainability.

Another main important point is that all need to understand that sustainable development does not belong to an organisation or a society or to a specific person but all individuals are stakeholders in achieving social, environmental and economical sustainability. [6]. UNESCO started a program DESD- Decade of Education for Sustainable Development Which runs from 2005 to 2014 that emphasized with content and purpose of education. International Education initiatives focus on education a fundamental right and providing opportunities for education so that it helps in reducing illiteracy.[6]

Social factor focuses on peace, equity and democracy. Environmental factor focuses on conservation, preservation and protection. Economic factor focuses on work, money and Education. For attaining sustainable development a balance should be made and priorities should be decided. This is one of the most important challenges

before education authorities to maintain a balance between these factors and implement it.

Teaching about sustainable development is like teaching the theory behind an abstract concept or teaching the principles of sustainability by memorization the concepts. ESD in its real and effective forms gives students the skills, perspectives, values, and knowledge to live sustainably in their communities. At the same time, true education is not programming or inculcation. To meet sustainable goals experimentation will be determining concept and it should not be restricted to only schools but it should cover all other areas of educational communities. There should be a reorientation of curricula across all levels of education to implement it successfully.

## 2. Analysis

Various age groups were enquired on sustainability parameters. The results are given below:

- a) Students less than 18 years are 65% aware about environmental sustainability and working on it in along with the institute.
- b) 18- 25 years students are 51% aware about the term sustainability and they are not active at their community to implement.
- c) Students are not aware of economic sustainability and there are no measures which are being taken from the institute to overcome it.
- d) Due to extra pressure in higher education students are unable to divert their mind towards social aspect of sustainable development.
- e) People more than 35 years of age are not actively taking part in achieving sustainability.
- f) Specialisation programs do not include any activity or parameter related to Sustainable development, hence act as an inactive part of ESD.
- g) Most of the people are unaware about international measures taken for achieving sustainable development.
- h) Our existing traditional teaching learning methods are not found significant to teach importance of sustainable development for various age groups.
- i) After testing the hypothesis it is found that our experts teaching and conditioning methods are not functioning well due to extra-pressures on the higher educational system with respect to sustainable development

## 3. Findings and Suggestions

The analysis clearly shows that main problem is lack of awareness followed by the implementation. Secondly the educational community is not taking interest in active contribution towards sustainable development.

To foster a global network of problem solving, it is necessary to empower universities, promote public private solution initiatives and encourage bold movers.

Another important aspect is that UNESCO is doing so many plans and activities to promote Education for Sustainability but it is not being conveyed in the same manner to the bottom of the hierarchy. Principles of sustainable development are not currently woven into daily life and governmental policy, the emergence of ESD could become

an important "bottom-up" driver of community-based sustainable development. ESD could shape and encourage behaviors and ethics that support an informed, knowledgeable citizenry that has the political will to achieve a sustainable future. The water should reach to the grass root level to nourish and enrich it.

In spite of multiple efforts to strengthen ESD, many challenges remain. In particular, there is a need: to integrate sustainable science and education, to strengthen co-ordination and collaboration between different levels of education for SD, and to mitigate information and knowledge gaps between different parts of the world.

The successful implementation of a new educational trend will require responsible, accountable leadership and expertise in both systemic educational change and sustainable development. To support global implementation of ESD, there is a need for international cooperative programs for administrators, curriculum developers, teacher educators, and lead teachers. These programs should maximize and leverage the knowledge base and strengths already existing in the market.

Talented educators, especially in the fields of environment, population, and development, already teach strands of ESD and could easily expand their focus to include other concepts of sustainable development. Fortunately, every educator in every discipline has some existing strength to contribute to ESD via the strengths model. In this approach, the synergistic strengths of combined educational disciplines can convey the knowledge, issues, skills, perceptions, and values associated with ESD.

If ESD will become an indispensable part of education and can become part of the curricula in such a way so that it won't affect the quality of the education and the cost of the course as well, it will become a decisive move in achieving sustainability through education.

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