



## “A STUDY ON CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES ON ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION”

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### ABSTRACT:

*It is now universally accepted that human activity has a considerable negative impact on the environment and will have long-lasting effects on future generations. The youth's environmental awareness, adoption of eco-friendly social behaviors, and subsequent response to environmental crises are significantly influenced by environmental education. India has started a number of initiatives in recognition of the value and necessity of environmental education, including making it required at all educational levels. There is a need to reorient the environmental education curriculum in order to make it more appealing and responsive to the local environmental issues in today's world where environmental conditions are changing negatively and all living things are suffering as a result of environmental pollution and climate change. In addition, it is necessary to reorganize related policies in order to educate the public, particularly high school and college students, about the problems associated with environmental management.*



**KEYWORD:** Environment Education, Challenges, Opportunities, India, Curriculum.

### INTRODUCTION:

A fresh vision of empowering people about their nature and their role in conservation projects is needed for environment education (EE), a fast-developing and dynamic notion of education. The EE is one of the most successful conservation techniques, and it is now well known that it may significantly alter people's behaviour. By fostering a greener

way of thinking, approaching, behaving, and devotion to the environment, EE promotes green social behaviour among the inhabitants, especially youth (Figure 1). Empirical data support the idea that people's attitudes and behaviours toward the environment are positively correlated with their direct experiences with nature. EE is crucial for a broad civic, moral, and liberal education as well as science education. This catalyst also aids in raising awareness of various environmental problems among the populace and assuring their

active participation in taking steps to control the environment. EE uses both formal and informal methods of instruction to achieve its main objective of promoting people's environmental awareness. When it comes to reducing the terrible environmental catastrophe, EE has grown in importance as the entire world struggles with numerous environmental issues. The value of fostering environmental awareness and a sense of connection to nature as complementary factors that influence ecological behaviour, as

provided by nature-based environmental education, should be further investigated as a highly promising strategy for fostering ecologically motivated people.

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

1. To study the concept of environment education.
2. To review the environment education.
3. To perceive the challenges and opportunities.

#### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

Exploratory research served as the foundation for this paper's development. The examination data is acquired from many auxiliary sources using a variety of web-based sources, including journals, websites, e-books, and so forth.

#### **CONFABULATION:**

In general, the word "environment" is one that we all understand very well, but it's also true that we probably don't fully grasp how this small word is related to humankind's future. Slowly, with the increase in environmental hazards and their long-term negative consequences, we realized the importance of EE primarily for raising awareness to address the environmental issues \ for a sustainable future. In the 1990s, EE was regarded as one of the key disciplines because environmental pollution had grown to be a global issue that threatened both the survival of plant and animal species and threatened human existence. EE was actually established throughout that decade, mostly to inform people about environmental issues.

In its decision on the M.C. petition, the Supreme Court of India in 1991. In the Mehta v. Union of India case, the Central and State Governments were directed to ensure that environmental education is provided in all educational facilities, making it a required subject at all educational levels, including those for technical institutes, colleges, and universities. Additionally, in one of its orders from the year 2003, the Supreme Court of India made EE a requirement for all levels of schooling. Following the Supreme Court's directives, various colleges, institutions, and universities across the nation started offering "Environmental Sciences" courses. However, it first attracted very little interest from the youth and the general public.

Later, EE had been integrated into the curricula as a separate subject at the secondary and postsecondary levels. In India is one of the few nations that has provided the legal support for the significance of EE in this way. According to a UNESCO report, the Supreme Court of India's decision has led to the EE training of nearly 300 million pupils in 1.3 million schools. Afterward, as a result of the rise in Environmental Emergency (EE) received widespread attention from the stakeholders due to environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, waste management, and climate change. Specialized courses were also started by several universities, such as "Environmental Microbiology," "Biodiversity," "Natural Resource Management," "Wildlife Biology," "Marine Biology/Sciences," "Environmental Impact Assessment," etc.

Following this, EE received widespread attention from stakeholders as a result of the escalating environmental crises, such as environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, waste management, and climate change. Specialized courses were also started by several universities, such as "Environmental Microbiology," "Biodiversity," "Natural Resource Management," "Wildlife Biology," "Marine Biology/Sciences," "Environmental Impact Assessment," etc. Given the general position of EE at the high school and college levels, it is evident that EE is just a vocational topic that every student must read and pass. At the elementary school level (through fifth grade), EE is a separate topic that is essentially a science discipline, and in sixth grade and up, it is a science subject that includes some content on the environment. During the first year or semester of technical and professional courses in colleges, EE is taught. The National Council of Education and Research and Training has also created a model EE curriculum and a resource book on education for sustainable development for elementary schools titled "Towards a green school." The importance of education in promoting sustainable development has been acknowledged. A skillful education can be extremely important in inspiring people to adopt proper environmental conservation measures by changing

their attitudes and behaviours. Along with efforts by the government, civic society, and the commercial sector, education may play a significant role in the transformation of societies into one that are more environmentally sustainable.

At the 1992 Rio de Janeiro United Nations Conference on Environment & Development, a separate Agenda 21 chapter on "Education, Awareness, and Training" was included and adopted. UNESCO later stated that there is a need for reorienting education towards sustainable development and a new vision for education based on the lessons learned about the contribution of education to sustainable development over the decade between the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. (2002). SDG #4 refers to "provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" and is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Realizing high-quality education for all societal groups confirms that this SDG is also one of the most potent and effective means of achieving.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Even though we were successful in securing all the necessary conditions for implementing EE, there is still a gap in its efficient application, as a result of which a sizable portion of the population is ignorant of the usefulness of ecosystems and the services they provide, the detrimental effects of environmental pollution and climate change, etc. Lack of attitude, commitment, and skills toward environmental management, lack of environmental training modules and adequate curriculum, lack of readiness to address an immediate environmental problem, lack of organizational support, lack of employment opportunities in the environmental field, escalating rates of economic development, lack of quantifiable results, etc. are a few of the problems attributed to ineffective EE implementation. All of these issues limit the ability to raise knowledge and develop responsible people who can protect the environment. In addition, developing EE-related legislation, reviewing current policies from the perspective of environmental conservation, and political decisions and actions are all crucial components of EE. Some of the causes of the lack of visibility of the effects of EE on the ground include a lack of concern and commitment for the environment, as well as an individual lack of ability to address environmental problems as a result of poor environmental courses. At this time, when the climate is changing negatively and all living things are experiencing the harmful effects of pollution and climate change, Such knowledge and abilities must be instilled since they will be crucial in raising public awareness of environmental challenges. This will make it easier for people to adopt environmentally friendly social responsibility. Therefore, a strategy is required to engage educators and students in environmental and related issues. The "Swachh Bharat Mission," a nationwide environmental awareness campaign with the goal of realizing the "Clean India" vision, was launched by the Indian government in 2014. This mission has accomplished its goals and demonstrated India's dedication to a clean, green, and healthy India. In actuality, the "Swachh Bharat Mission" also promotes environmental awareness.

Although it is difficult to quantify the quantitative effect of EE in developing environmental leaders, some environmentalists are witnessing a significant increase in awareness levels as a result of education, while others are not persuaded that education is producing anything beyond general nature lovers. The National Policy on Education, which was updated in 1992, was introduced in 1986 by the Ministry of Human Resources Development and promoted the adoption of environmental education at all educational levels. In reality, the National Education Policy, 2020, which supports the EE, is now being released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. Effectively implementing the EE across the nation requires the National Council of Educational Research and Training can serve as a model for curriculum development for schools. Additionally, in implementing environmental education in technical and higher education, the University Grants Commission and the All India Council for Technical Education can play a significant role.

A few other legal instruments being implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change include the Wildlife (Protection) Act (1972), the Environment (Protection) Act (1986), the Biological Diversity Act (2002), and the National Environment Policy (2006), which also emphasise the significance of environmental conservation. The Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change is also

training young professionals to encourage environmentally friendly behaviour through its flagship initiatives like the National Green Corps (Ecoclub) programme, the Green Good Deeds project, and the Green Skill Development. Similarly, organisations like Prasar Bharati, the National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR), the National Council of Science, Technology, and Communication, and others organise many programmes and campaigns on environmental awareness concerns. One of the key elements of this education is the development of students' and teachers' capability, which must be ensured by starting field-based learning activities. All of the significant subjects, such as biological variety, noise, air, water, and soil pollution control, waste management, and forest and wildlife conservation, can be covered in the training module. Additionally, incorporating some field learning tools would be crucial since they will help teachers and students learn about and spread knowledge of the dynamic elements of nature.

### CONCLUSION:

Although EE has been streamlined in the curricula of all levels of education, there is a need to educate people about the significance of the subject, especially high school and college students. The two types of education—formal and informal—can help with this. Outdoor learning modules need to be developed, such as nature camping, expeditions, development of training programs and workshops, etc., to bring issues to light of natural issues among understudies. Activities linked to EE should be carried out often. Every year/semester of the undergraduate degree courses should be required to take EE. Additionally, young people need to be made aware of the numerous professional prospects available to them, such as Environment Advisors for various businesses about Environment Impact Assessment. Additionally, it is a crucial part of education at all levels that helps people to adopt environmentally friendly behaviors for sustainable social development and to maintain a cleaner, greener world for our children and grandchildren.

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