

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS- PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

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Abstract

A large topic of interest within the Environmental education realm is establishing, how personal traits on lifestyle factors contribute to a person's environmental attitude and behaviour. Therefore basic aim of environmental education for awareness is to enhance/ increase pro environmental attitude and behaviour in an individual.

Keywords: Environmental awareness, Environmental Education.

INTRODUCTION

A large topic of interest within the Environmental education realm is establishing, how personal traits on lifestyle factors contribute to a person's environmental attitude and behavior. Therefore basic aim of environmental education for awareness is to enhance/ increase pro environmental attitude and behavior in an individual.

Why environmental awareness programs are needed?

As every individual is part of environment, he/she would affect the environment positively or negatively, intentionally or unintentionally. Environment also has an impact on every individual.

In developing countries like India environmental degradation is not a direct concern for an individual, as it does not affect life immediately but indirectly environmental degradation is interrelated with every aspect of life. Rules and regulations are not sufficient for effective protection of environment, thus environmental awareness programs are essential to counter environmental degradation.

Environmental awareness may be achieved through

1. Mass media- Radio, TV, newspapers and magazines. Devising a general program or planning an environment awareness programme is difficult. Participation of mass media is based on self/vested interests and motivation level of journalists and editors. With the right amount of motivation this group(mass media) can cover larger part of population easily. Government of India is running programmes to make people aware of the consequences of a degraded environment, but lack of education especially among rural women is a big detrimental factor in our country. One such endeavor taken by the Rajasthan Government is door to door collection of domestic waste, where the vehicle collecting the waste also makes the people aware of the bad effects of a polluted environment.
2. Institutional media – Schools, government officials, NGOs etc. This group can actively participate in Planning and formulating programs.
3. Traditional media– Family, social groups, rural groups etc.
4. Exposure to environmental pollution- with more people suffering due to pollution related diseases this factor itself creates environmental awareness, where

Affected people take the initiative and work towards betterment of environment for a better living.

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS PROGRAMS

Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) of Govt of India (GOI) is the main agency to plan, conduct and approve all the environmental awareness programs. These programs are also monitored by CEE(Centre for Environmental education). The Environment (Protection) Act was enacted in 1986 with the objective of providing for the protection and improvement of the environment. It empowers the Central Government to establish authorities [under section 3(3)] charged with the mandate of preventing environmental pollution in all its forms and to tackle specific environmental problems that are peculiar to different parts of the country. The Act was last amended in 1991. Under various schemes and heads MOEF is running the following environmental awareness programs

1. EEAT- Environmental Education Awareness and Training.

It is a flagship scheme of MOEF for enhancing the understanding of people of all levels about the relationship between human beings and environment and mobilize people's participation for stopping the degradation of environment.

2. NEAC- National Environmental Awareness Campaign was launched by MOEF in 1986. Its aim was to create awareness on environmental issues among a wide group of stakeholders. The NEAC was launched with the objective of creating environmental awareness at the national level. In this campaign, nominal financial assistance is provided to NGOs, schools, colleges, universities, research institutes, women and youth organizations, army units, government departments etc. from all over the country for conducting awareness raising and action oriented activities. Thirty four Regional Resource Agencies (RRAs) appointed by the Ministry are involved in conducting, supervising and monitoring the NEAC activities¹. During NEAC 2013-2014, 11754 Organizations participated from across the country¹. NGOs, educational and training institutes, community organizations, and scientific bodies are main participants of this scheme.

Every year NEAC launches a main theme and sub themes on major environmental issues. In the year 2009-10 the main theme was climate change, in the year 2013-14 the theme was biodiversity conservation, and the year 2014-15 was dedicated towards combating desertification, Land Degradation, and droughts. The participant groups/ stakeholders can submit their environmental awareness project for grants on these themes, through RRA(Regional resource agency). The grant for selected projects is there after sanctioned into installments. Objective of NEAC is to create mass awareness among public, students and other target groups. This awareness about environmental problems should in turn make them devise measures for Environmental Protection by active involvement of student NGOs, rural groups and general public.

3. NGC- National green corps -This program was started by MOEF in 2001-02 for spreading environment education in school children, to facilitate children's participation in Environmental awareness programs and to bring children into direct contact with

¹[National Environmental Awareness Campaign \(NEAC\) - The Official Website of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change \(moef.gov.in\)](http://www.moef.gov.in)

environmental problems facing the society they live in, so that they grow with these problems and think about the solution.

Under this scheme 250 schools have been selected in each district and financial aid is given to each school which is restricted to rupees 2500 per year (due to financial constraints)

In the above mentioned programs, awareness may be spread out by

1. Training programs
2. By Workshops and Seminars
3. Including environment related study material in Course books at school or college level, and making students participate in quiz and similar competitions
4. Documentary films
5. Yatra and rallies
6. Street dramas (nukkadnatak)
7. Eco clubs

Environmental awareness programmes in perspective of Rajasthan

In Rajasthan CEE (Centre of Environmental Education) has a project office in Jaipur and Jodhpur and MOEF has appointed consumer unity and trust society (CUTS) Jaipur as the RRA (Regional Resource Agency) for Rajasthan since 2006-07. CUTS Centre for consumer action Research and training (CUTS CART) is entrusted with responsibility of performing as the RRA and implementing all programs of NEAC and NGC

Major programmes undertaken by the state as under

1. NEEPS- National environment education program for schools
2. EOSE- environment orientation through school education
3. SGP- small grant program
4. NGC- National green Corps
5. Strengthening EES project- strengthening Environmental education in school system by development of books teaching learning material and teacher training programs.
6. Lake and wetland project- TAAL Confluence (Publication- lake and wetlands of Rajasthan)
7. Desert Environmental education and Awareness- It covers 12 desert districts of the state. Material about environmental awareness is distributed in 3000 eco clubs of these districts.
8. Paryavaran Mitra- This program is related to schools and is a part of NGC program after the resource material is created and teacher training has been done. Trained teachers take their Environmental education learning into the school. There are two approaches to Paryavaran Mitra - the first is curricular approach where all teachers and students are involved. Second is Eco club approach where Eco club in charge is responsible and select groups of students from different classes from the Eco club, which involves students from classes IX and above.

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES IN INDIA IN THE POST-INDEPENDENCE ERA

1. First five year plan- maximum concern in this plan was about forests, felling of trees and emphasis was on minimizing tree cutting.
2. Second five year plan - several wildlife sanctuaries were established and the stress was on increasing forest area
3. Third five year plan - stress on quick growing plant species to increase the forest cover

During the seventies perspective became wider and 4th and 5th plan gave attention to environmental issues, air, water, and wildlife and productive capacity of land.

The 1972 Stockholm declaration expressed concern over India's environmental protection; the biggest polluters identified in our country at that time were poverty and needs of people.

In 1976 the 42nd amendment in the constitution included environmental protection among the principles ruling the state policy

INSTITUTIONAL MEASURES TAKEN IN 1980 FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

In 1988 the National Forest Policy was formed and national committee on environmental planning (NCEP) was constituted

POST 1990 ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES

1992 National Conservation strategy and policy statement on environment and development

2004 National environment policy enhancement of resources on Environment conservation

2006 National environment policy- the first initiative in strategy formulation for environmental protection in a comprehensive manner 2009 National green tribunal bill was passed which is known as the NGT act 2010 The solid waste management and handling rules for managing municipal solid waste were formulated and issued by MOEF on 25th September in the year 2000. The draft of these rules was published on 27th September 1999 in the Gazette of India.

In the year 2008 MOEF issued Guidelines for development and operation of the common hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities according to HW (M, H and TM) rules. The policy making and formulation of rules has been done by the MOEF (Ministry of Environment and Forests) from time to time, as pollution has been on the rise. However implementation level of these rules and policies has been low and strict following of rules is a distant dream for a developing country like India. Monetary/financial constraints are a major drawback in our country. As a major chunk of population is not able to meet its subsistence level, environment protection takes a backseat, and all policies for the same go in vain.

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