

## **RESHAPING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper discusses the need for education to be reshaped in order to attain the objective of sustainable social growth. The authors briefly touches under different sub-headings the need for reshaping of education for sustainable social growth, steps taken in this direction in India and across the globe, challenges in the way of reshaping education and suggestion as to what can be done and how can we achieve this.*

**Key words:** Education, reshaping, sustainable, sustainable development, society

### **INTRODUCTION**

Sustainable development is the term used worldwide for the last two decades. Conservation, Preservation and Sustainability are embedded in this form of development. Actually, development aims to bring about economic prosperity, ease in the social and biological life processes and well-being and improve the quality of living in the humans. In the process of development natural resources human and economic capital, scientific research and technological development are involved. Sustainable development approach maintains a steady Pace and direction of development over a long period of time by optimal utilising the available capital and resources so as to not cause major disruptions in the availability of renewable and non-renewable resources.

### **NEED OR CAUSE OF ORIGIN OF RESD**

Industrial revolution, two centuries back, brought about the exploitation of resources and deployment of human and economic capital to address the many needs of the humanity by making available ample quantities and quality of Industrial Products at affordable prices. Scientific research and technological development brought about constant improvement in these products and the production processes which in turn improve the profit margins of the

producers. This soon led to the development of greed and clamour for higher profits, which was attended by unscrupulous exploitation of renewable and non-renewable resources and increasing the aspirations of the consumers to acquire newer and so called better products by targeted use of advertisement and publicity. Soon consumerist class emerged which believed in the philosophy of climbing up the ladder of societal status by materialistic acquisitions and indulgence. This aspirational consumerist society now transgress social and cultures boundaries and countries, as the globe becomes one big market. This has resulted in very fast depletion of non-renewable resources and the exploitation of renewable resources at a higher than the natural recharge and recovery regeneration cycle. The product life cycles have decreased with very little emphasis on service, repair or recycle. Technology, which earlier addressed the needs and demands now fuels demand which is compounding the problem further. Environmental pollution, climate change, decrease in food productivity, erratic weather patterns, increase of average temperature, extinction of species, widening class divide and increasing differences between the poor and the rich, in equitable access to resources and opportunities, rising stress and strife in day to day life etc. are a manifestation of non-sustainable model of development which the world has increasingly acquired in the past.

The wise words of Mahatma Gandhi that reads "the earth has enough resources for satisfying the needs of mankind, but not the greed of mankind" is very much relevant today. The ecological footprint of an American citizen for all the developmental amenities that he enjoys is about 9 hectare per person, for Norwegian citizen it is about three hectares and for underdeveloped country countries it is less than 0.75 hectares per person. Thus, we can make out how energy intensive and ecologically taxing an average America's lifestyle is. However, with high population density of the underdeveloped and developing countries, the benefit of low per capita ecological footprint is lost. The age old tradition, values, resources in nature need to be conserved and nurtured for future generation.

### **STEPS TAKEN**

The United Nations, as a measure to help member countries set 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs), covering 169 target areas and addressing concerns related to the People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership i.e. 5 Ps by 2030, passed an agenda declaration in September 2015 (*Education for Sustainable Development Goals.....*). India is a committed

signatory to this declaration. Quality education is one of the 17 SDGs and various targets under the SDGs for education are –

1. Provide inclusive and equitable education and encourage possibilities for all for lifelong learning.
2. Access for all boys and girls to free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education.
3. Ensure equal access for women and men to accessible high-quality technical and professional education including University.
4. Education should assist young people in gaining appropriate technical and professional abilities for good jobs and entrepreneurship.
5. Eradicate gender disparities and ensures that vulnerable sections of society, including disabled and indigenous people, have equal access to all levels of education.
6. Build and upgrade child, disabled and gender-sensitive education facilities that provide secure, non-violent, inclusive and efficient learning conditions for everyone.
7. To make sure that all learners gain the knowledge and skills necessary for the promotion of sustainable development via sustainable development education, sustainable Lifestyle, Human Rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence.
8. The supply of qualified teachers has substantially increased through International cooperation for teachers training.

Today even some schools are already turning into viable growth teaching laboratories, where young learners are ready to adapt to climate change and mitigate its implications. Even teachers are provided with instruments and expertise to provide sustainable development education through online courses (*Dercon, 2019; Schultz, 2019; Pinsky Oren, 2019*).

The United Nations Development Education department (UNESCO LED), launched in 2005, explicitly aims to instil 'the understanding, skills, attitudes and values needed to shape a sustainable future in every human being. (*Education Transforms Lives; Education for Sustainable Development*)

UNESCO highlighted the underlying principles of the ESD, namely respect for and care of life in all its various forms. This includes protecting and restoring the earth's ecosystem,

respecting people's dignity, future generations and cultural diversity. (*Education for Sustainable Development: Wikipedia*)

## **CHALLENGES**

Quality education, training and public awareness is the most efficient way of achieving more sustainable world. It is helpful in

1. Eradicating poverty,
2. Improving well-being,
3. Restoring the earth's balance by changing the way we think and act critically, holistically and collaboratively, fulfilling our duties for each other and the planet,
4. Nurturing new generation of environmentally Savvy citizen,
5. To provide individuals with the abilities needed in fields such as renewable energy, agriculture advancement, forest rehabilitation, healthy eco-system governance and stimulating economic growth.

Now we are aware that quality education is the foundation of sustainable development. An educated society will self-actualize on the path of sustainable development. There have also been significant progresses in the past decades towards enhancing access to education at all levels, enhancing quality of life and increasing enrolment rates in schools. However, strong efforts are required to achieve quality education in order to achieve a sustainable world (*Dercon, 2019; Schultz, 2019; Pinsky Oren*).

It is disheartening to know that we still lack in quality in education and the reason behind this are: lack of properly qualified educators, poor schools conditions and absence of access to inclusive education

## **SUGGESTIONS**

1. It is true that nature has healing powers, can cure of damages caused by human's irresponsible activities, provided sufficient time is given.
2. Systematic approach based learning can ensure that impact on Environment, due to human's irresponsible activities is minimal or zero.

3. Education is recognised as an appropriate tool for reaching the milestone of sustainable development by taking steps to carry forward the concept of Sustainable Development.
4. Education through sustainable and eco-friendly practices have shown way as to how human can live in harmony with nature for his own sake and for the sake of future generation ([greenofficemovement.org](http://greenofficemovement.org)).

Thus, education as a tool to sustainable development is established beyond doubt. All we need today is that our education should be reshaped for sustainable development by adopting different approaches to learning content and pedagogy which is the demand of the day. For that education has to perform three important functions namely –

1. Creating change makers rather than passive consumers,
2. Enabling learner's to research and learn subjects interdisciplinary way from an economic, social and environmental perspective,
3. Making pedagogy innovative, creative, interactive, learner-centered and action oriented. This implies that after the lecture students should not sit in the hall and listen to the presentation one after another. They should instead work together on group assignment, solve issues of true life for external client, go on excursions or discuss the problems in small groups and seminar. Actually pedagogy is not about what students learn, but how they learn.

In Education for sustainable development, teachers need to be simply a facilitator rather than knowledge provider and students need to be far more active and responsive rather than a passive knowledge recipient. In other word, education should be holistic and transformative in nature, addressing the content and results, education and teaching atmosphere. It achieves its aim by changing itself and the society in which they reside by -

1. Equipping Learner's with skills for green jobs and encouraging individuals to embrace sustainable lifestyles,
2. Enabling learners to become global citizens, who are active both locally and globally,
3. Empowering the student to face and address global difficulties in an inclusive, safe and viable globe that is more just and peaceful,
4. Addressing local and global issues,
5. Insuring that the content has long-term perspective and has medium and long-term planning.

6. Employing variety of educational methods like drama, debate, etc. to illustrate the processes,
7. Promoting key thinking, solving problems and actions that build trust in tackling sustainable development problems.
8. Sharing values and principles required for sustainable development,
9. Involving a broad spectrum of government, private sector, civil society, non-government organisation and general public stakeholders,
10. enabling us to know ourselves and others and our connections with nature and social environment,
11. adopting behaviours and practices that allow us to live our lives without being deprived of fundamental human needs,
12. inculcating a powerful environment and conservation tradition,
13. Promoting behavioural changes,
14. Promoting values, attitude and understanding to respect yourself, others and the world we live in and respect for the planet,
15. Promoting active participative, inclusive, facilitative and experiential education
16. Encouraging organizations to revise their procedures and create viable growth strategies and programmes that promote sustainable development,
17. highlighting the global perspective of education for sustainable development where our activities are linked with the globe locally, nationally and internationally,
18. Promoting understanding that local activities can have global impacts,
19. Investing in educational grants, training workshops for teachers, school building and improvement of the water and electricity provisions of schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

It is true that it is not a matter of a day or two to ensure a sustainable future. But with the global movement that has a well-designed set of obligations and objectives, efficient and quality education systems linked with the globe at the local, national and international levels we can move on to the right path to re-establish the Earth's balance and work towards the sustainable future. For that, we as an individuals of societies need to learn to live together sustainably, take action responsibility with an understanding that what we do today can have implications on the life of people, societies and the planet in future. This is possible only when our education is reshaped for sustainable development.

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