

REPORT

of

NATIONAL SEMINAR

on

Environmental Education- The New Frontier

(14th -15th of February, 2014)

Organized by

Departments of Sciences and Social Sciences,

Govt. Degree College Kathua (J&K)

in collaboration with

Indian Council of Social Science Research,

North-Western Regional Centre, Panjab University, Chandigarh

ABOUT THE SEMINAR

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: THE NEW FRONTIER

The pursuit of sustainable development and environmental conservation policies, objectives and targets requires the public to be sufficiently sensitized about the multiple dimensions of environment and development. Awareness and understanding of environmental issues provide the basis and rationale for commitment and meaningful action towards environmentally sound and sustainable development.

Knowledge about environment in its holistic nature, the ecosystem and interdependence of different elements of environment has to be inculcated through formal and non-formal environmental education programmes covering the different sections of the society. Humanity has to come to terms with the environment as the life support system especially through sustainable and sound development of its finite resources. The alarming growth rate of global population on the one hand and increasing basic and luxury needs of humanity on the other result in fast environmental resource consumption and pollution. Population growth and environmental resources should be made compatible and Environmental Education (EE) is a fundamental measure for enhancing their compatibility. Environmental problems have no national or regional boundaries; rather it is a global problem faced by the entire humanity. It is imperative to understand the causes and effects of these problems and devise ways and means for their solution and prevention.

In view of raising the global concern on environment, the UN Conference on Human Environment, Stockholm, Sweden (1972), came up with the recommendation entrusting UNESCO and other international agencies concerned to take necessary steps to establish an international programme in Environmental Education. In response to the above recommendation, UNESCO in cooperation with UNEP launched the UNESCO-UNEP International Environmental Education Programme (IEEP) in 1975 in Paris. IEEP's objectives are to assist governments, national, regional and international institutions to incorporate Environmental Education (EE) into formal and non formal education systems and programmes. The initiative in developing goals, objectives, guiding principles, and strategies for developing Environmental Education at national, regional and international levels, was first taken by the UNESCO-UNEP which organised Inter- governmental Conference on Environmental Education in 1977 in Tbilisi (USSR).

Environment education (EE) is regarded as a permanent process in which individuals and the community gain awareness of their environment and acquire the knowledge, values, skills, experience and also the determination which will enable them to act - individually and collectively - to solve present and future environmental problems. Environmental education is not a separate discipline. Rather, it is an approach and a new thrust. It is interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, and hence draws its content from various disciplines such as geography, physical and biological sciences, history, economics, political science, sociology, literature, etc.

India, a megadiverse nation, is one of the richest nations in terms of biological diversity. India has a great diversity of natural ecosystems ranging from the cold and high Himalayan regions to the sea coasts; from the wet north-eastern green forests to the dry north-western arid deserts; with different types of forests, wetlands, islands and the oceans. India consists of fertile river plains and high plateaus and several major rivers, including the Ganges, Brahmaputra and Indus. The diverse physical features and climatic situations have formed ecological habitats like forests, grasslands, wetlands, coastal and marine ecosystems and desert ecosystems, which harbour and sustain immense biodiversity. It is responsibility of every Indian to protect this enormous biodiversity and environment. As such, they need to be educated about this valuable treasure.

With the formulation of policies for the induction of course work on Environmental Sciences in the curriculum of schools and colleges, India has joined hands with other nations of the world for the cause of educating our youngsters not only about environment but how to live in harmony with it. The formal education sector plays a vital role in environmental education and awareness by exposing the younger generation to the information, issues, analyses and interpretations on environment and development.

In a major attempt to inculcate the sense of responsibility for environment among the youth of India, University Grants Commission, in the light of directions from Supreme Court, made it mandatory to introduce environmental studies at undergraduate level from 2004. Since then Higher education has gained an additional important role in advocating environmentalism. Given this responsibility, the goal of higher education should, therefore, be to develop graduates with the knowledge, skills and values related to environmentalism. However, research indicates that there is a lack of consciousness amongst graduates on the need to be more environmentally aware, especially when it comes to applying the appropriate knowledge and skills related to environmentalism. Although institutions of higher learning do include environmental parameters within their undergraduate and postgraduate academic programme structures, the environmental boundaries are usually confined to specific classes of the degree programmes. This makes environmental knowledge, skills and values exclusive to certain quarters of the higher education system. The incorporation

of environmental literacy within higher education institutions as a whole is of utmost pertinence if a nation's human capital is to be nurtured to become change agents for the preservation of environment. Besides this there are many other constraints and barriers in adopting and practising environmental education. In the formal education sector, class sizes are often large and teachers lack resources and experience in interactive pupil-centred teaching strategies. Curricula are also dominated by a competitive academic curriculum which prioritizes end-of-course examinations and discourages the development of locally and personally relevant intellectual skills. Outside the formal education sector, environmental education is often poorly organized and resourced. Another common constraint is the lack of clear integration of environmental education objectives and programmes with national education and environmental policies.

As India enters the new millennium, it is clear that a new surge of interest, enthusiasm and activity is underway on many fronts to place environmental education, training and communication higher on the public agenda. Although a considerable amount of work has been done and achievements, many challenges remain. As our nation struggle to overcome the social, economic and cultural barriers placed on her by poverty and underdevelopment, and at the same time face up to the new challenges of economic globalization, the priority assigned to environmental issues and conservation is at risk of being overlooked or traded off for more immediate benefits, and for survival needs. The environmental educators and communicators need, therefore, to be vigilant and active to ensure that governments, industry and other key players in the sustainable development arena remain mindful of their international and national commitments to environmental conservation, in addition to ensuring that sufficient investments of resources, time and attention are made to consolidate the earlier achievements.

The proposed seminar intends to bring together students and university professors, teachers of basic education and environmental educators to exchange their ideas on some of the important aspects involving (i) interdisciplinary approach of Environmental Studies; (ii) impact of economic growth on environment; (iii) environment and sustainable tourism; (iv) environmental laws and treaties; and (v) social determinants of environmental health. Its aim is to create a space for exchange of information, training experiences and research findings. This Seminar on Environmental Education and Sustainability can become a conducive space to generate and analyze the state of environmental education and sustainability in India and especially the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. Form a network of environmental education and sustainability that will foster discussion and reflection on the problems and alternatives of environmental education and sustainability.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To provide a platform for exchange of information and experience between academics and students from various institutions of higher education, basic education teachers, teacher educators and non-governmental organizations or groups, working in the field of environmental education.
2. To promote inter-agency working in the field of environmental education and sustainability as collaborative effort.
3. To promote a forum for exploring and sharing initiative of environmental concerns and future perspectives.
4. To make suggestions for improving the existing environment and sustaining for future generations.

The proposed initiative would tend to develop a population that is aware of, and concerned about, the environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.

SUB- THEMES

1. Environment Studies and Allied Sciences: An Interdisciplinary Approach
2. Environment and Economic Growth
3. Sustainable Tourism
4. Environmental Laws and Treaties
5. Social Determinants of Environmental Health

DETAILED REPORT OF THE SEMINAR

As India enters the new millennium, it is clear that a new surge of interest, enthusiasm and activity is underway on many fronts to place environmental education, training and communication higher on the public agenda. Although a considerable amount of work has been done and achievements, many challenges remain. As our nation struggle to overcome the social, economic and cultural barriers placed on her by poverty and underdevelopment, and at the same time face up to the new challenges of economic globalization, the priority assigned to environmental issues and conservation is at risk of being overlooked or traded off for more immediate benefits, and for survival needs. In order to accommodate these issues and develop strategies regarding the various issues of environmental conservation, two day seminar on "Environmental Education: The New Frontier" was held in the College in collaboration with Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) North-Western Regional Centre, Panjab University, Chandigarh with an intention to bring together students and university professors, teachers of basic education and environmental educators to exchange their ideas on some of the important aspects involving (i) interdisciplinary approach of Environmental Studies; (ii) impact of economic growth on environment; (iii) environment and sustainable tourism; (iv) environmental laws and treaties; and (v) social determinants of environmental health. Its aim is to create a space for exchange of information, training experiences and research findings. This Seminar on Environmental Education and Sustainability can be conducive to generate and analyze the state of environmental education and sustainability in India and especially the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Seminar commenced with the lightening of lamp and formal welcome by the worthy Principal, Dr. Nater Singh Raina to Hon'ble M.P. and Chief Guest Ch. Lal Singh, guests of Honour, Dr. Amarjit Singh Soodan, Professor of Botany, GNDU Amritsar and Dr. Bhupinder Zutshi, Professor, SSS JNU New Delhi, and the other dignitaries. He threw light on the topic and mentioned various areas that need to focus on Environment Education. Sh. P.K. Rao, Organsing Secretary of the Seminar, introduced the gathering about the activities to be undertaken during the Seminar. Prof Amarjeet Singh, GNDU Amritsar read the keynote address on the topic "Paradigm of Environment". He stated that the most common aspect of paradigm is an external orientation. Dominant firms are focused on environmental trends and events and perceive them as a set of opportunities to be leveraged. They are focused on marketing of their products and services and this focus is combined with creation of optional marketing strategies, experiments and

innovations, quick entries and exits in search for a possibility to create a standard and/or a brand. If they lack resources, knowledge or experience they try to borrow them through alliances. They also use alliances in order to share the risk and responsibility with partners. The key role in this respect is played by owners that in all cases perform the role of natural, passionate and optimistic leaders. In his address, Ch. Lal Singh said that industries, automobiles and uncontrolled extraction of natural resources are causing pollution, which has resulted in the global warming affecting the various forms of life on the earth. He added that change in climate has resulted in change in the seasons. Storms, cyclones, cloudburst etc are the result of the change in the climate. Advocating for more and more plantation, he said that we are cutting lakhs of trees for various purposes. In order to keep balance in nature, at least same number of trees needs to plant. He appealed the representatives of panchayats, religious organisations and social organizations to aware the masses about this important issues for the safety and security of the coming generations. He appealed the students to pass the tips to conserve the various forms energy. Whereas he further appealed the people to save trees and to plant more and more trees to save the environment. Stressing on the importance of saving our environment by planting more number of trees and avoiding modern amenities and he also appreciated the efforts of the College in organizing such a National Level Seminar.

In plenary session, Prof Bhupinder Zutshi, School of Social Sciences JNU, New Delhi deliberated on Sustainable Development. The other dignitaries present on the occasion were Prof Renu Nanda, Jammu University, K C Sharma, Executive President CTM Kathua, Dr. Janak Singh, Prof K C Badgal, Dr A K Malhotra, Prof Yog Dutt, Prof Dhian Singh, Dr C P Sharma and various other prominent citizens. The technical session of the seminar started immediately after the inaugural function. During which there was presentation of 10 papers. In the end, Prof. Sumnesh Jasrotia, Coordinator of the Seminar, presented the vote of thanks.

On the second day of National Seminar on the topic “Environmental Education: The New Frontier” organized by Department of Sciences and Social Sciences, Government Degree College, Kathua (J&K) in collaboration with Indian Council of Social Science Research North-Western Regional Centre Punjab University, Chandigarh starts with a total of four technical sessions. A total of 30 papers were presented by scholars of various institutes of India. Poster presentation was also held in the College Auditorium where as many as 43 researches were displayed covering almost all the aspects of Environment and Environmental Education. Prof. Amarjeet Singh, Dr. Janak Singh and Prof Yog

Dutt were the Judges for this session. A separate poster session was also held for the students of various colleges in which a total of 28 posters on various environmental issues were presented by young scholars. The Judges for this session were Prof. Falender Kumar Soodan and Dr C P Sharma.

In the valedictory function Jetinder Kumar Singh, District Development Commissioner, Kathua was the chief guest and Prof. Amarjeet Singh, GNDU, Amritsar, Prof. S P Dutta, University of Jammu, Prof. Falender Kumar Soodan, University of Jammu also presided over the function. Principal, Dr. Nater Singh in his welcome address said that Environmental Education in the present scenario is important tools at the hands of educationists to disseminate knowledge about environmental issues among the students and masses.

Dr. Ram Singh, co-convener of the event read the report pertaining to the proceedings of the two-day seminar. Prof. Falender Kumar Soodan from University of Jammu presenting his valedictory remarks said that in view of widespread changes in the environment occurring globally it becomes important to make people aware about the far-reaching consequences of the environmental degradation. Jetinder Kumar Singh, District Development Commissioner, Kathua applauded the efforts of staff and in particular the Principal of the college for making the event such a big success and said that seminar has provided an opportunity to the scholars, intellectuals, academicians to highlight the problem and issues confronting the environmental education and devise the ways and means to overcome them. The other dignitaries present on the occasion were Prof. K C Badgyal, Dr. Janak Singh, Prof. Ram Krishan, Dr. Sujata Slathia and Dr. Ranvijay. Dr. R. K. Manhas, Convener of the event presented the vote of thanks.

**Working Committees for the National Seminar on
Environmental Education: The New Frontier
(14-15th February, 2014)**

1. **Stage Committee**
 - a) Prof. Sumnesh Singh Convener
 - b) Prof. Jaswinder Singh Member
 - c) Prof. Pankaj Nandan Member
 - d) Dr. Balbinder Singh Member
 - e) Prof. Subita Sharma Member
 - f) Prof. Deepika Sharma Member
 - g) Dr. Surinder Singh Member
 - h) Prof. Vikas Sharma Member
2. **Registration Committee**
 - a) Prof. Sandeep Singh Convener
 - b) Dr. Deepshikha Sharma Member
 - c) Prof. Kailash Sharma Member
 - d) Prof. Sumit Dubey Member
 - e) Prof. Pawan Kumar Member
 - f) Prof. Ram Krishan Member
 - g) Prof. Ambika Rajput Member
 - h) Prof. Rubi Raina Member
3. **Hospitality / Protocol / Refreshment Committee:-**
 - a) Prof. P.K. Rao Convener
 - b) Prof. Gurdyal Member
 - c) Dr. Sukh Chain Sharma Member
 - d) Prof. Mona Sethi Member
 - e) Dr. Arun Dev Singh Member
 - f) Prof. Neha Mahajan Member
 - g) Dr. Ruchira Sapru Member
4. **Reception Committee :-**
 - a) Dr. T.R. Sharma Convener
 - b) Dr. Namrata Member
 - c) All HODs
5. **Transport Committee :-**
 - a) Prof. Shub Kumar Convener
 - b) Prof. Ajmer Singh Sodi Member
 - c) Dr. Kehar Singh Member
 - d) Prof. Rajesh Chalotra Member
6. **Technical Session Committee**
 - a) Dr. Suram Singh Convener
 - b) Dr. R.K. Manhas Member
 - c) Dr. Ram Singh Member
 - d) Dr. Pankaj Gupta Member
 - e) Dr. Suraya Pratap Singh Member
 - f) Prof. Parveen Pathak Member
 - g) Prof. Ashok Kumar Member
7. **Campus Decoration Committee**
 - a) Dr. Arun Dev Singh Convener
 - b) Dr. Balbinder Singh Member
 - c) Dr. Mohinder Nath Sharma Member

- 8. Printing & Publication Committee**
- a) Dr. R.K. Manhas Convener
b) Dr. Ram Singh Member
c) Dr. Suraya Pratap Singh Member
- 9. Press / Media Committee**
- a) Prof. Sumnesh Jasrotia Convener
b) Dr. Ram Singh Member
c) Dr. Surya Pratap Singh Member
d) Prof. Anoop Sharma Member
- 10. Cultural Committee**
- a) Prof. Ritu Bhagat Convener
b) Prof. Madhvi Manohar Lal Member
c) Prof. Subita Sharma Member
d) Prof. Deepika Sharma Member
- 11. Resource Mobilization Committee**
- a) Prof. Gopal Sharma Convener
b) Prof. P.K. Rao Member
c) Prof. Tajinder Kour Member
d) Prof. Anirudh Sharma Member
e) Prof. Sumnash Jasrotia Member
f) Dr. Ram Singh Member
g) Dr. Suraya Partap Singh Member
- 12. Accommodation Committee**
- a) Prof. Anirudh Sharma Convener
b) Prof. Shubh Kumar Member
c) Prof. Raj Kiran Member
d) Prof. Anupama Arora Member
e) Prof. Balbinder Singh Member

Principal
Govt. Degree College, Kathua