



Role of School curriculum in Establishing Sustainable Environment Development

¹Ms. Manisha Pathak, ²Ms. Pallavi Khedkar

¹Research Students Faculty of Education and Psychology

¹CASE Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda.

Received 16 September, 2014; Accepted 22 November, 2014 © The author(s) 2014. Published with open access at www.questjournals.org

EXTENDED ABSTRACT:

In the present era of globalization and massive advancement in science and technology, the world is experiencing enormous changes in the environment; the individuals across the globe are mere quiet spectator of ever deteriorating environment. In such a scenario it is time for the scholars across the globe to join hand and come out with innovative working plan that can establish the environment which enables both the present and future generations to live happily- it is time to frame such practices which can lead to the development of sustainable environment (MDG-7). This divine work can be rightly done by the educators- the teachers. The teachers of present era need to shoulder the responsibility of sowing the seeds of establishing sustainable environment in the minds of young citizens by practicing innovations in curriculum transaction. The seeds can be sown in the minds of young citizens by the innovative teaching practices such that aiming and establishing sustainable environment becomes way of life and not an agenda for a certain time period.

What is Sustainable development?

The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) put forward this concept of Sustainable development before the world in 1987 "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." (Brundtland Report 1987).

The concept of sustainable development can be divided into: environmental sustainability, economic sustainability, educational equity and sociopolitical sustainability.

Role of school curriculum in Development of sustainable environment:

Curriculum is defined as 'the sum of all the formal and informal teaching and learning experiences provided by a school'. The concept of sustainable environment development cannot be taught in isolation, as a distinct subject, rather it can be integrated with the regular subjects taught at the school. This can be explained with help of concept of 'Green lessons' (Howick, 1998) as follows:

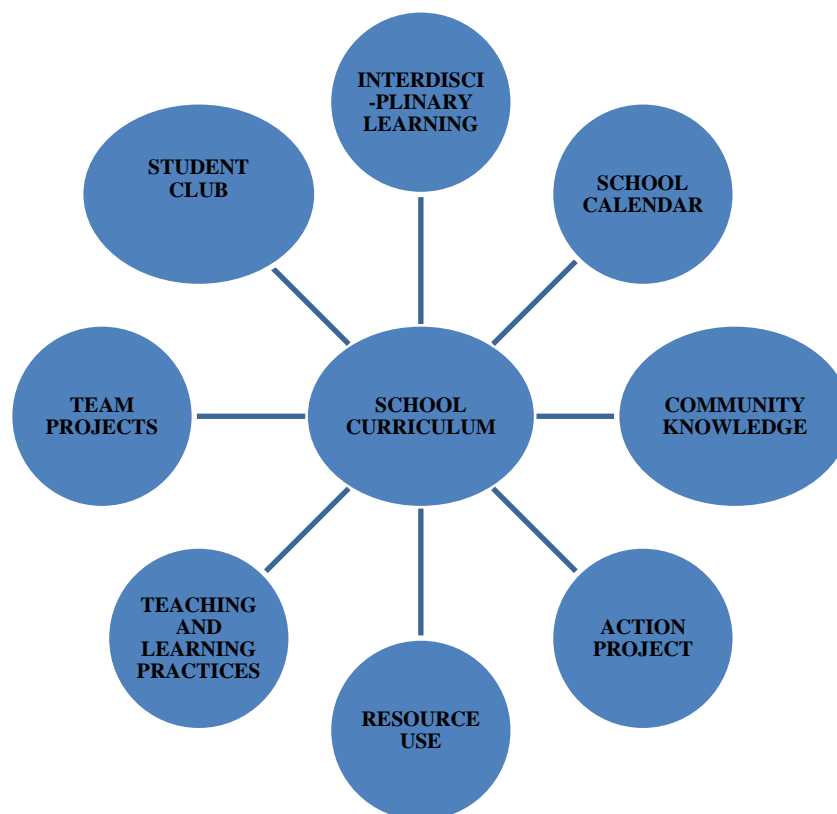


Diagram -1 Role of school curriculum in the integration of sustainable environment Development-Green lessons

Interdisciplinary teaching and learning: The curriculum should be designed such that the learners are provided with the opportunity to integrate the knowledge of different subjects in problem solving or in achieving the set goal. For this the teachers need to be skillful and flexible in designing the learning experiences.

School Calendar

Activities and learning at school makes a permanent impression in the mind of young learners; hence including the celebration of particular issues in the school calendar is a powerful way of nurturing the attitude and behavior required for sustainable future (Howick, 1999).

Community Knowledge:

Sustainable environment behavior can also be enhanced through school curriculum, provided the study material provided to the learners is rich with examples from their surrounding, relevant to the real life. The concepts in the learning materials should have direct local relevance with local stories, history and community experiences of change and how people lived in the same place in the distant past.

Action Project

The learning objectives in the school curriculum should include activities a month or a term such as caring the vegetation in the vicinity of school, visiting and helping senior citizens, spending a day in orphanage, and so on.

Resource Use

The school building and school premise can act as wonderful resource to inculcate the value of developing sustainable environment among the school children.

Teaching and learning practices

Teaching learning practices at school make a momentous impact on the minds of learners. How students learn is often more important than what they learn. This is because the ‘medium’ is as important as the ‘message; hence the teaching learning processes should be student centered.

Team project

Including team projects in the school curriculum is very common feature in present day educational practices. This should be emphasized even strongly; since this provides opportunity to the students to work in group. Here the students learn about group dynamics.

Student clubs

Many extra-curricular activities can be organized by/for students at lunch time, after school, at weekends, and during vacations. Student clubs (e.g. Environment Clubs, Scouts, Guides, etc.) are an ideal way of integrating sustainable development issues into young people's thinking (Howick, 1998). Other than the above stated ways, many more ways as discussed below are there.

Integrating through educational objectives

The school curriculum should have educational objectives such that the values such as critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, analysis, co operative learning, leadership and communication skills required for establishing sustainable future can be inculcated in the learners.

Integrating through learning experiences

Education for sustainable environment can be developed by designing the learning experiences for the subjects at the school such that it stimulates concern and efforts for sustainable future. For example while designing the learning experiences for subjects such as arts, science, Maths, language and social science (Howick, 1998) can be explained as follows:

In the teaching of **arts**, the learning experiences can be

- To develop a picture that portraits the critical issues bothering the area where you stay.

Likewise learning experiences can also be designed in the other school subjects like science, social science, languages and so on (Gough, N. 1992). Few of which are as follows:

- ▶ Virtual note making and book keeping.
- ▶ Emphasizing on fuel free commuting to school.
- ▶ Arranging no electricity days in the week or the month.
- ▶ Arranging assessment based activity as plant nurturing in and around the school premise.
- ▶ Solar energy units in schools as source of energy for all energy purpose.

Integrating through enquiry based learning:

Enquiry based learning is one of the most effective way of providing education for sustainability.

Conclusion:

Attainment of sustainable environment can be realized in the near future, provided the educationists, policy makers and teachers across the globe make immediate, sincere, consistent efforts in redesigning the curriculum and focus towards attainment of sustainable environment as need of time and adapt the concept of green class rooms that lead towards attainment of sustainable future.