

# Importance of Environmental Education and Sustainable Development

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**Abstract:** *Purpose of Environment education subject is to create awareness in the youth about various environmental issues as well as to inculcate the pattern of sustainability. From primary level to degree level, environment education is a part of curriculum as, today's young generation will be a future of country. Environment Education gives way to use resources sustainably and to reduce the exploitation of mother earth by adopting some small practices in our day today's life. If students are aware about the environment problems and solution, at individual level if everyone implements some small measures towards environment protection, it will reduce many problems. Purpose behind this research paper is to know about the awareness in the degree college students about environmental issues and sustainable development as well as to know about the importance of Environmental Studies.*

**Keyword:** sustainability, global warming, environmental issues, ozone depletion

## 1. Introduction

Environment protection is very important in today's scenario. Earth provides us all the natural resources, without these resources' life is impossible on the earth. Man is not only using natural resources in good condition but in return his giving polluted water, air, soil to earth. Environment education includes basics of environment, its function, ecosystem, natural resources, different environment issues and measures to protect environment. Environment education subject kept to all classes from primary level to degree level, purpose behind this is to create awareness about various environmental problems among youth as well as to make them responsible citizen, who will take initiative to resolve environmental problems. Young generation are future of country, if they are aware about environmental problems and solutions to solve it, then such generations will implement small level to large level measures to reduce environmental problems.

Environmental education is linked to the values of sustainable development, and this should be embedded in the curriculum, making it an essential part of all stages of education [1, 2]. The goal of environmental education is to achieve environmental awareness, develop respect for nature, and take actions that help protect the environment [1, 3].

Environment education Programme runs by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India. The Environment Education Division implements the 'Environment Education Programme (EEP)' - one of the components of the revamped Central Sector Scheme - 'Environment Education, Awareness, Research and Skill Development (EEARSD)'. This Scheme has been approved for continuation till the year 2025-26. The objective behind this program is to sensitize children/youth on issues related to Environment as well as to motivate them to adopt sustainable lifestyle through varied pedagogical initiatives like workshops, projects, exhibitions, campaigns, competitions, nature camps, summer vacation programmes etc. [4]

The Environment Education Programme aims to supplement the knowledge that the children and young generation gain from classrooms with experience from nature and hands-on activities. Psychological interventions to behaviour change like education, enablement, modelling, persuasion, training, etc. would be the building blocks of this programme laid on the foundation of principles envisaged in the National Education Policy, 2020. Additionally, the Division acts a link between the various Divisions of this Ministry and the Eco-club network for facilitating organization of educational activities for children. The Division also acts as the Nodal Division in the Ministry for matters related to National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. [4]

Environmental Education is the teaching of how natural environment function and how we human affects the environment through our behaviour. Today's youth will become tomorrow's leaders and as their form of guidance it is our responsibility to provide them with educational experiences, for them to make knowledgeable decisions regarding the environment. Many people believe that environmental education is one of the most important factors for preventing environmental problems. [5]

## 2. Methodology

In present study survey conducted among undergraduate students about importance of Environmental education for sustainable development. Survey conducted among 185 undergraduate students from different colleges in Mumbai. Questionnaire shared to undergraduate students from different colleges in Mumbai. Questionnaire made in such a way to know about the students knowledge about environment, its importance in human life and to know issues related with the Environment.

Following questions were included in the questionnaire.

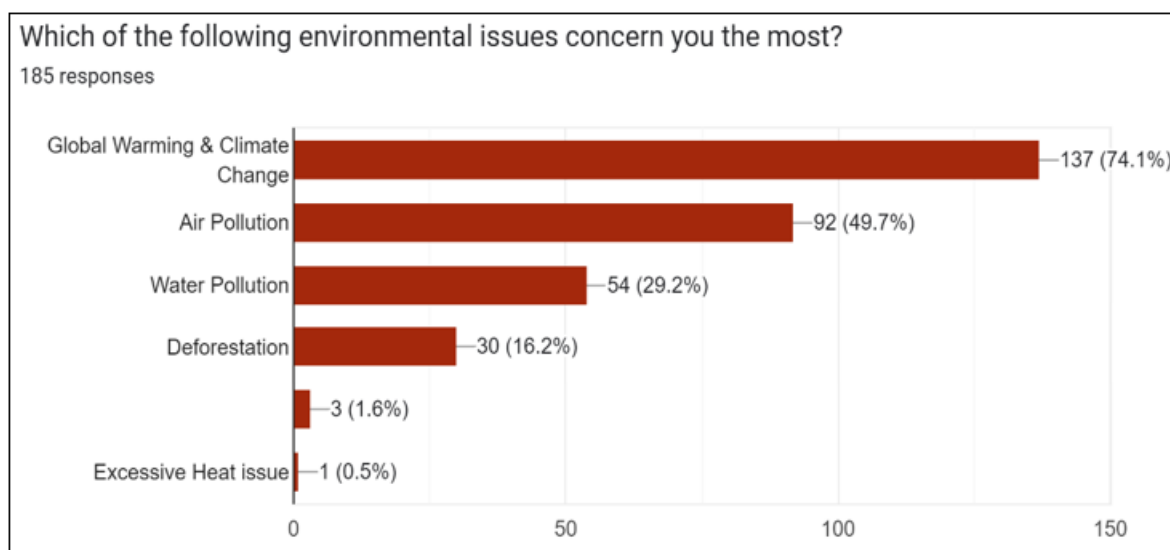
- 1) Which of the following environmental issues concern you the most?

- 2) Do you believe that environmental education can positively help in the environment protection?
- 3) What are the benefits of Environmental education?
- 4) Do you believe that environment education should be a mandatory part of college curriculum?
- 5) In your opinion, how effective are current environmental education programs in achieving their objectives?
- 6) In your opinion, how effective are current environmental education programs in achieving their objectives?
- 7) Do you believe that environmental education helps for achievement of sustainable Development?
- 8) Are you involved in any Environment Protection related initiatives?

- 9) Which factors do you think lacking in the effectiveness of environmental education?
- 10) How would you rate the overall impact of environmental education on society?

### 3. Research & Discussion

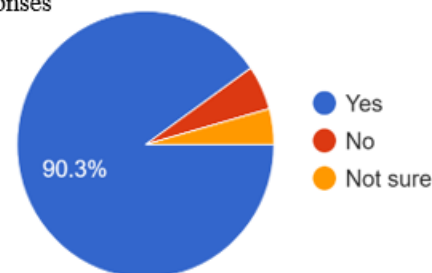
Responses received from 185 undergraduate students (age group from 18 to 24 yrs), whose having environmental studies subject compulsory in the first year of graduation as well as they already had Environment education in 12<sup>th</sup> Grade as well up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Received responses recorded below.



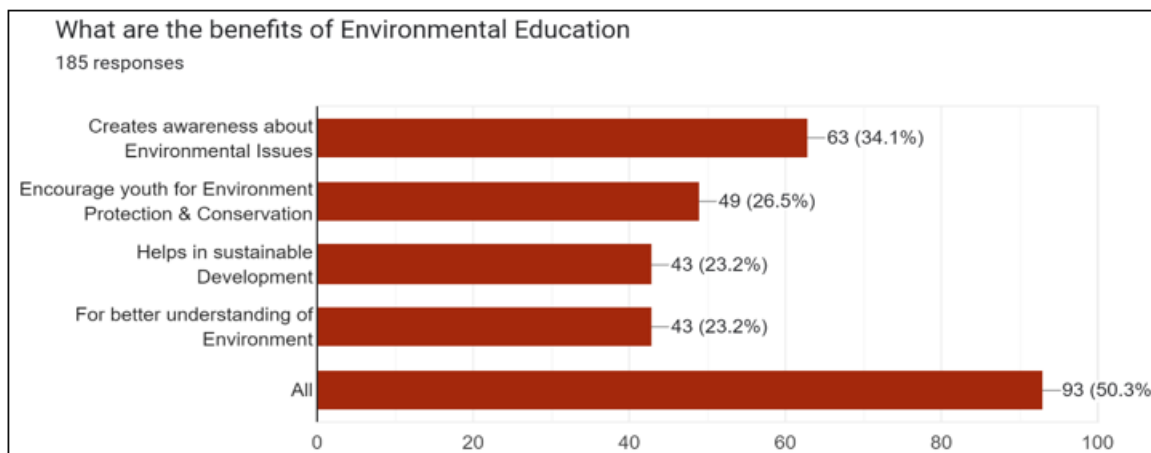
When respondents asked about the most concern environmental issue, 74.1% students said about global warming and climate change, 49.7% students responded for air pollution, 29.2% students said about water pollution, 16.2% responded for deforestation, 1.6% said about other issues and 0.5% said about excessive heat issue. With the help of many surveys and a lot of research, it has been found that more than 50% of people across the globe believe that abrupt climate change is the biggest global concern. It is seriously impacting the health of our planet and is the reason behind so many other problems, for example more droughts, more floods and many other extreme events. [6]

### Do you believe that environmental education can positively help in the environment protection

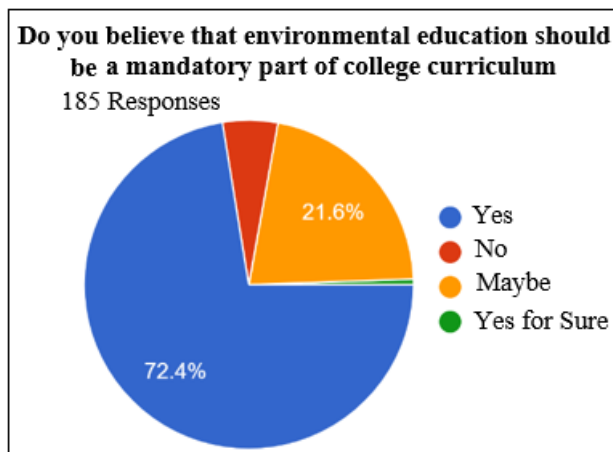
185 Responses



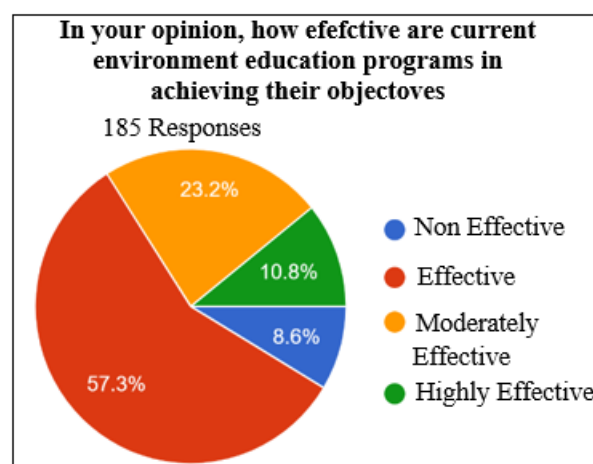
When students asked about environment education can positively help in the environment protection, then 90.3% students said yes and 5% students said no and 5% students are not sure about it. According to EARTH.ORG Environmental education is vital to winning the fight against climate change. Without it, the leaders of tomorrow will be ill-equipped to overcome the environmental challenges the world will face. [7]



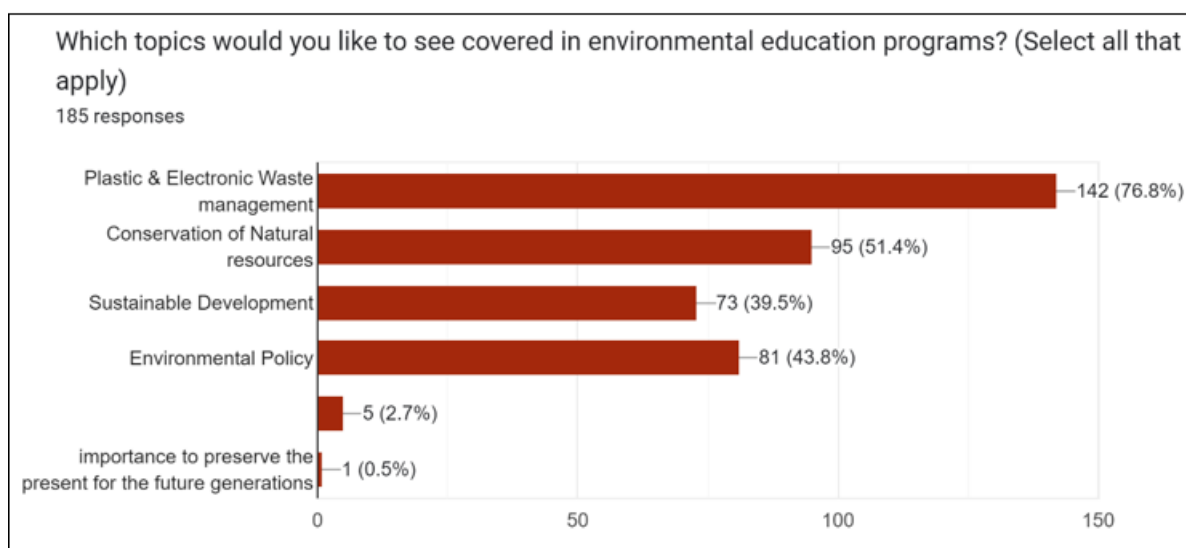
When asked about the benefits of Environmental education 34.1% students said that Environment education subject has benefit of creating awareness about Environmental issues. 26.5% students said that it encourages youth for Environment Protection and conservation. 23.2% students said that Environment education helps in sustainable development, 23.2% students said that Environment education is for better understanding of environment and 50.3% students said that Environment education not only creates environment awareness but helps in sustainable development, help for protection and conservation of environment as well as it gives better understanding of environment.



When students asked about do you believe that environment education should be a mandatory part of college curriculum then 72.4% students said yes and 21.6% said maybe it's a mandatory, 5.4% said no, it's not mandatory and 0.5% said yes for sure.

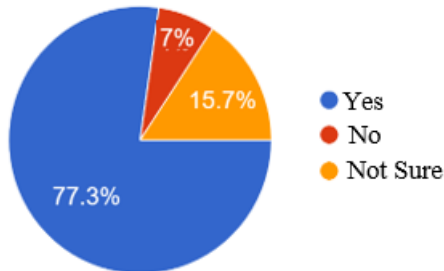


When students asked about their opinion about effectiveness of current environment education programs in achieving their objectives, 57.3% students said it is effective, 23.2% students said its moderately effective, 10.8% students it is highly effective and 8.6% students said its not effective.



When students asked about which topics would you like to see covered in environmental education programs, then 76.8% students said about Plastic and electronic waste management, 51.4% students said about conservation of natural resources, 39.5% students said about sustainable development, 43.8% students said about environmental policy, 0.5% said about importance to preserve the present for the future generations.

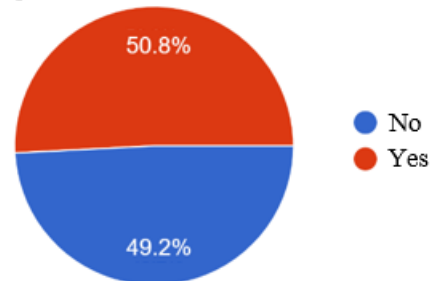
**Do you believe that environment education helps for achievement of Sustainable Development**  
185 Responses



When students asked question, do you believe that environment education helps for achievement of sustainable

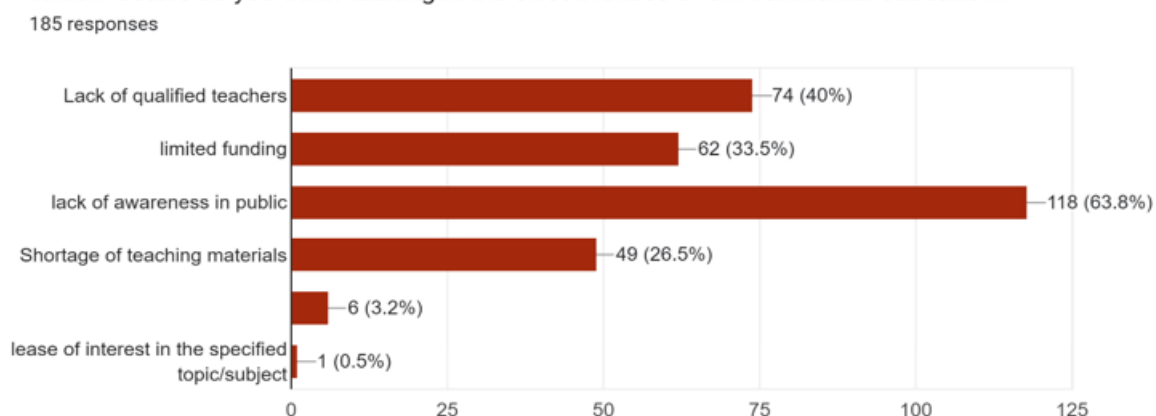
development, then 77.3% students said yes it helps for achievement of sustainable development, 15.7% students are not sure about it and 7% students said No, Environment education not help for a sustainable development.

**Are you involved in any Environment Protection related initiatives?**  
185 Responses



When students asked are you involved in any Environment Protection related initiatives, then 50.8% students said yes, they are involved in activities like tree plantation, beach cleaning. 49.2% students said they are not involved in any Environment Protection related initiatives.

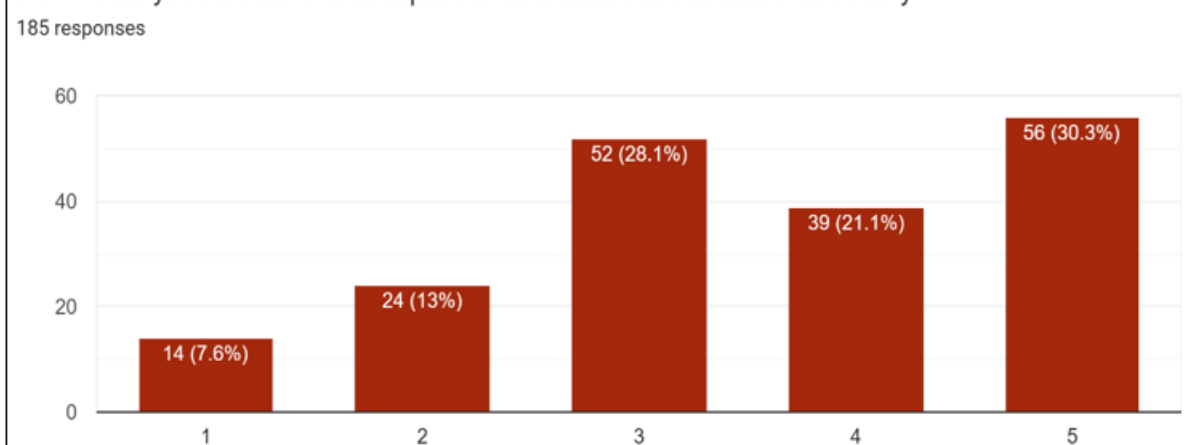
**Which factors do you think lacking in the effectiveness of environmental education?**  
185 responses



When students asked about which factors do you think lacking in the effectiveness of environmental education, then 63.8% students said that lack of awareness in the public, 40% students said that lack of qualified teachers, 33.5% students

said that limited funding causes lack of effectiveness of environmental education, 26.5% students said that due to shortage of teaching materials there is lack of effectiveness, 3.25 students given other reasons.

**How would you rate the overall impact of environmental education on society?**  
185 responses



In last when students asked about how would they rate the overall impact of Environmental Education in the society, then 30.3% said its highly effective, 28.1 %students said its medium effective, 21.1% students said its effective, 13% students said its effective 7.6% students said its not effective.

#### 4. Conclusion

Environment education subject play a crucial role in understanding of different environmental issues like Climate change, Global warming, different types of pollution, their causes & effects, problems related with plastic etc. Environment education creates awareness in the youth about importance of environment and sustainable development, therefore this subject is an important part of curriculum. Today's youth is a future of our country, when they are having knowledge about environmental issues and solution, at their level they are taking care of the earth and try to reduce problems at a local level. Even small efforts from youth towards environment protection will help to get a sustainable development.

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