

A Study on Awareness of Post Graduate Students of Dibrugarh University Regarding Education for Sustainable Development

Surajit Borah¹, Sweety Neog²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Dhemaji College, Assam, India

²Assistant Professor, Department of education, Bahona College, Assam, India

Abstract: *The main slogan of 21st century is sustainable development. It means development which is sustainable that can be sustained or maintained, preserved, continued or conserved. In order to successfully meet and resolve the contemporary global environmental crisis sustainable development is essential. The citizens must be aware or empowered with essential knowledge and information regarding sustainable development. Education has long been considered as one of the most powerful instrument to achieve sustainable development. It also plays an important role to make people aware about sustainable development. The post graduate students are in the highest step of formal educational ladder and needs to be fully aware about sustainable development to achieve the acceptable level of global environmental sustainability through education. The present study had been carried out to study the level of their awareness regarding education for sustainable development and suggest way to achieve sustainable development through education.*

Keyword: Development, Sustainable development, Education for sustainable development, Post-graduate students, Awareness.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been a lot of discussion on sustainable development. It means development which is sustainable that can be sustained or maintained, preserved, continued or conserved. In the Brundtland Commission, 'sustainable development' was first time introduced as-Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987).

In subsequent years there are a lot of environmental problems in everywhere which has posed serious threat to the existence of life on this planet. In order to successfully meet and resolve the contemporary global environmental crisis sustainable development is essential as it equally considered the importance of ecological, social, economical and moral aspects for protection of environment in a wise manner and intelligent way. To achieve sustainable development education is essential as it create awareness among the people about the importance of sustainable development. Therefore, education for sustainable development becomes a primary agenda throughout the world to achieve the acceptable level of global environmental sustainability.

2. Significance of the Study

Now-a-days several environmental problems become a serious threat to the existence of life on this planet. Therefore, everybody should concern with sustainable development for the protection of our environment. There is a great need of environmentally conscious citizens who will save our environment from disasters. Raising awareness among the people about the importance of sustainable development through education will therefore remain of the utmost importance for the coming decade.

The post graduate students are in the highest step of formal educational ladder and needs to be fully aware about sustainable development to achieve the acceptable level of global environmental sustainability through education. They have to develop healthy attitude, knowledge and skills towards environment. Therefore, the present study is very significant to analyze the level of their awareness regarding education for sustainable development and suggest way to achieve sustainable development through education.

3. Objectives of the Study

Following are the objectives for the present study:

- 1.To study the level of awareness of the post graduate students of Dibrugarh University regarding Education for Sustainable Development.
- 2.To provide suggestion to achieve sustainable development through education.

4. Definition of the Key Terms used in the Study

- 1)**Post graduate students:** In the present study, post graduate students refer to the students pursuing general post graduate courses in the various post graduate departments of Dibrugarh University.
- 2)**Awareness:** According to the oxford dictionary 'awareness' means well informed, interested especially in current events. The present study is also related with 'awareness' in the same sense.
- 3)**Sustainable development:** Sustainable development is understood in terms of economic growth integrated with environment protection and intellectual, emotional, moral and spiritual development of human beings.
- 4)**Education for sustainable development:** Education for sustainable development good mean a pattern of resource

used that aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that this needs can be met not only in the present but will also be available for future generation. ESD is a dynamic concept that utilizes all aspects of public awareness, education and training to create an understanding of the linkages among the issues of sustainable development.

5. Methodology

Methodology is an important part of research activity. In the present study methodology has been presented under the following heads:

- 1) **Method:** Descriptive research method was adopted in this study.
- 2) **Population:** The population of the study comprised of all the post-graduate students studying general post graduate courses in the 15 general post graduate departments of Dibrugarh University in the academic session 2012-13 and 2013-14.
- 3) **Sample:** For the present study, the researcher had selected 9 general post graduate departments of Dibrugarh University using purposive sampling technique. Then samples of 100 students were selected from the sample departments using incidental sampling technique.

6. Tools of Data Collection

- **Questionnaire:** For the collection of primary data one questionnaire was prepared by the investigators to study the awareness level of the post-graduate students of Dibrugarh University regarding Education for Sustainable Development and then the questionnaire were distributed among the students of sample departments and filled in forms were collected later on.
- Secondary data were collected from various books, publications, research report, internet etc.
- **Analysis of Data:**
Qualitative and quantitative analysis were done in present study. Percentage was used to carry out the analysis task of the data.

7. Findings of the Study

The findings of the study are mentioned below---

In the study, it was observed that regarding the concept of sustainable development 85% of students agree with the definition given by Brundtland Commission. It was also observed that 76% of students agree on the three dimensions of sustainable development. 88% of students opined that sustainable development is very important for proper development of a nation and majority of students (90%) consider education as the single weapon to achieve sustainable development.

Regarding the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development, 55% of students had given correct responses. Majority of students (81%) opined that Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) simply means Education for Environment Protection, whereas 75% of students opined that Education for Sustainable Development should

include environment protection as well as social justice and economic wellbeing.

A major part of students (66%) opined to make students able to evaluate many different perspectives of environment and development as the main goal of ESD. Whereas only 10% of students opined to get knowledge about environmental issues by studying scientific facts and 15% of students opined to make students able to develop an environment friendly behavior as the main goal of ESD.

Regarding the central subjects of ESD, majority of students (75%) choose ecological, economical, social and ethical aspects.

A small minority of students preferred natural and social science should be the central subjects of ESD. A major part of students (66%) preferred critical discussion among students and teachers as the teaching and learning method of ESD. Regarding the major thrust of ESD only 47% of students had given correct response.

Regarding the lessons and materials for ESD, the study showed that, new separate optional courses are not supported widely by students. Majority of students choose new separate compulsory courses and inclusion of sustainable development in some existing courses (56%). Regarding the best means of teaching and learning of ESD 89% of students choose-- lectures gives by specialist from various relevant areas. 34% choose story-telling, 41% choose field trip, 10% choose class discussion, 11% choose class project and 15% of students choose assigned reading as teaching and learning method of ESD.

Majority of students (87%) opined that all human being must adopt energy saving and resource conservation life style for sustainable development. On the other hand, 69% of students opined that preservation of environmental quality and ecosystem is must for sustainable development. 79% of students opined that research and education activity towards sustainable development should be encouraged.

8. Suggestion and Conclusion

The findings of the study reveal that the Post-Graduate students of Dibrugarh University are found to be highly aware regarding ESD. But it is also seen that in some areas a small minority of students are not found to be aware. Therefore, on the basis of these findings we may suggest to organize conferences, seminars, discussions on sustainable development issues and encourage them to participate in the same. It is also suggested to encourage research and education activity towards sustainable development. As education is the most powerful instrument to make students able to aware regarding any issues, therefore, it is necessary to include all the aspects of sustainable development into formal educational settings as a new separate optional courses or a compulsory course or can be included in some existing courses.

Post-Graduate students are the architect of future society and so they should be aware about ESD to prevent the life in this planet from the serious threat of environmental pollution and to achieve global environmental sustainability.

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Author Profile



Mr Surajit Borah is working as Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Dhemaji College and also a research scholar, Dibrugarh University. He has presented two papers in International conference and six papers in National conference.



Sweety Neog is working as Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Bahona College. She has presented one paper in International conference and two papers in National conference.