



Environmental Awareness And Sustainable Practices In Primary Education

MD MABUD HOQUE

Abstract

Environmental awareness has emerged as a critical component of primary education in response to growing ecological challenges such as climate change, pollution, deforestation, and resource depletion. This paper examines the importance of environmental education at the primary level in fostering sustainable attitudes and responsible behaviors among young learners. It explores how early exposure to environmental concepts enhances ecological sensitivity, conservation values, critical thinking, community responsibility, and lifelong sustainable practices. Key areas discussed include environmental literacy, conservation ethics, experiential learning, teacher-led sustainability initiatives, school-based eco-programs, parental involvement, curriculum integration, and institutional support. The study highlights that structured environmental education at the primary stage plays a vital role in shaping environmentally responsible citizens for a sustainable future.

Key Words: Environmental Awareness, Primary Education, Sustainability, Environmental Literacy, Conservation, Eco-friendly Practices

I. Introduction

Primary education serves as the foundation for shaping children's values, attitudes, and behaviors. Introducing environmental awareness at this stage is essential, as children are naturally curious and receptive to learning about the world around them. With increasing environmental degradation and climate-related challenges, education systems must prepare learners to understand ecological issues and adopt sustainable practices from an early age.

Educational thinkers like Rabindranath Tagore emphasized learning through nature, while Jean Piaget highlighted experiential learning as a key element of cognitive development. Environmental education aligns with these ideas by promoting hands-on learning, observation, and responsibility. At the primary level, students can develop respect for nature, understand the consequences of human actions on the environment, and practice simple eco-friendly habits. Thus, environmental education not only supports academic growth but also fosters moral responsibility and global citizenship.

II. Literature Review

Major theories and frameworks supporting environmental education include:

- ✓ UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- ✓ Experiential Learning Theory (David Kolb)
- ✓ Constructivist Learning Theory (Jean Piaget)
- ✓ National Curriculum Framework (NCF) on Environmental Studies

These frameworks emphasize learner-centered, activity-based, and value-oriented environmental learning. The sewage quality can be predictably

determined by measuring some key physico-chemical parameters like DO and BOD. However, all the biotic and physico-chemical factors undergo composite and cumulative interactions towards developing an ecosystem (Wetzel 2001). In conventional sewage management, three different ponds e.g., sedimentation or anaerobic, facultative and maturation pond are employed consecutively (Sarkar et al. 2009). Each pond has precise activities to add in the purification course. The exclusive feature of this system is that here only one pond is used instead of three sequential ponds, where all the physicochemical activities needed for the purification process, take place

III. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive methodology based on secondary data analysis. Educational research articles, environmental education policies, curriculum guidelines, school eco-club programs, and sustainability initiatives were reviewed. Thematic analysis was used to identify effective strategies, challenges, and outcomes of environmental awareness programs at the primary level.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1 Environmental Literacy in Primary Learners

Environmental education helps students develop:

- Basic understanding of nature and ecosystems
- Awareness of environmental problems
- Knowledge of conservation methods
- Sense of responsibility toward natural resources
- Eco-friendly habits such as recycling and saving water

4.2 Role of Teachers in Environmental Education

Teachers contribute by implementing:

- Nature-based learning activities
- Environmental storytelling and discussions
- Gardening and plantation drives
- Project-based learning on sustainability
- Observation of environment-related days

4.3 School Environment and Eco-Friendly Practices

A supportive learning environment includes:

- Clean and green school campuses
- Waste segregation systems
- Rainwater harvesting awareness
- Use of eco-friendly materials
- Formation of eco-clubs and green teams

4.4 Challenges and Solutions

Challenges include lack of resources, limited teacher training, and minimal parental awareness. Solutions involve teacher training programs, community participation, integration of environmental topics across subjects, low-cost sustainability activities, and parent–school collaboration.

V. Conclusion

Environmental awareness education at the primary level:

- ✓ Promotes sustainable values and behaviors
- ✓ Encourages respect for nature
- ✓ Develops responsible future citizens
- ✓ Enhances experiential and value-based learning
- ✓ Supports long-term environmental sustainability

To ensure effectiveness, environmental education should be integrated into the core curriculum, supported by trained teachers, reinforced through practical activities, and strengthened by community involvement. Early environmental education empowers children to protect and preserve the planet with awareness, responsibility, and commitment.

References

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