



ROLE OF LIBRARY IN EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The World Commission on Environment and Development WCED (Popularly known as the Brundtland Commission) 1987 defined sustainable development as "meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". As far as the role of library in education for sustainable development is concerned this can be interpreted to mean the continuous process of change in which the library resources and technological advancements are utilized for storage, retrieval and communication of information to satisfy the needs of the present as well as future generations.

Keyword : *Library Sustainable development, ESD, EESD*

A well equipped and well managed library is the foundation of modern educational structure. The importance of library in education can be appreciated properly and precisely only if we try to understand the changing concepts of education of today. Education bereft of library service is like a body without soul, a vehicle without an engine and an edifice merely a collection of bricks without cement. Education and library service are twin sisters.

Education is a life long process. In the whole life a man receives education in two forms : *formal education* and *informal education*. The library plays vital role by helping the citizen pursue both forms of education. The formal education is achieved through educational institutions like schools, colleges, universities and other institutions. Here, there will be a continuous interaction between the teacher and the taught. But formal education ends after a certain stage in one's life. It is through informal education, man keeps himself abreast with the new knowledge, new skills and new means and methods of development. here libraries play a major role. There is no limit to knowledge and there will be no limit to learning through libraries. This is the reason why public libraries are described as "people's university".

As a social agency, the library has to stimulate reading habit. Attract the readers to the library and make them beneficiaries of the knowledge available in various documents. Public libraries since long has been playing a vital role in disseminating to literates as well as lilliterates and neo-literates through adult education classes, reading programmes, book talks, displays and exhibitions, special lectures, organizing fairs and festives etc. One of the main objectives of library is to educate the illiterate, diffuse knowledge amongst them and dispel their ignorance.

Significance for Education

Education and libraries have an integral relationship. Libraries play an important role in all instruments of education - the informal and semi-formal.

Distance Education

It is through the home that the child makes his first contact with the world and it is in the home that he learns his first lessons in the arts of life. We shall even concede that when his circle of experience widens so as to include other formal and informal instruments of education, the home does continue

to exert some influence. But the limitations of the home as an instrument of universal education have now been, for long realized. In our present time, due to the crowded condition of our homes are found to be more and more wanting in its capacity to discharge the duties of an instrument of universal education.

Academic Institutions

In formal education, men and women receive education of a specified level based on a specified syllabi. This form of education is imparted in academic institutions, such as schools, colleges, universities, research institutions etc. The library does occupy a significant place in academic institutions. Educationists and scholars hold that is is a "better proof of education to know how to use a library than to possess university degree".

In India, Commission after Commission has emphasized the importance of libraries in higher education. In this respect, the Radhakrishnan University Education Commission (1948-49) observed that "The library is the heat of all the University's work; directly so as regards; research work, and indirectly as regards its educational work, which derives its life from research. Scientific research needs a library as well as its laboratories, while for humanistic research the library is both library and the laboratory is in one Both for humanistic and scientific studies, a first-class library is essential in a University".

The Kothari Education Commission (1964-66) was very much pertinent about the importance of a library in an educational institution when it pointed out that, "Nothing could be more damaging to a growing department than to neglect its library or give it a low priority. On the contrary, the library should be an important centre of attraction on the college and University Campus". There is no dearth of such expert opinions on this matter even in foreign countries. For example, the University Grants Committee of the United Kingdom (1921) observed that "The character and efficiency of a university may be gauged by its treatment of its Central Organ, the library. We regard the fullest provision for library maintenance as the primary and most vital need in the equipment of a University. An adequate library is not only the basis of all teaching and study it is the essential conditions of research, without which addition cannot be made to the sum of human knowledge".

Universal Concept

One of the main purpose of the Library Movement is to educate the illiterate, diffuse knowledge amongst them and dispel their ignorance. In a country where large masses of the people are steeped in ignorance and illiteracy and consequently lead maimed and imperfect lives, the least part of our duty is to help them to lead more virtuous and perfect lives by educating them to that end.

Library as a Centre of Literacy

Many Government and non-government agencies are engaged in the problem of illiteracy and they are working for eradication of the malady. But the magnitude of the problem is so high that a comprehensive and combined effort by all the individuals and organizations together is called for. Libraries can lend their strong helping hand to tackle the problem. The first noticeable factor is that adults do have appetite for education and ability to learn. The library should, therefore, function as a centre for adult education; planning its activities in the following manner:

i) **Setting up Literacy class :**

The literacy teacher and the library staff should work in close co-operation on various literacy programmes.

ii) **Motivating the illiterates :**

The illiterate adults should be attracted to the class through various audio-visual aids and literature. The entertaining programmes of music, drama and film show should be arranged frequently to allure the illiterates to the class. The nature and content of these programmes should identify with the individual and community needs of the people.

iii) **Follow-up Programmes :**

This is very important because even after achieving literacy, adults again become illiterates in the absence of any reading programme. The first task of the postliteracy programme is the adequate supply of reading literature-books and magazine to the neo-literates which may be easy for them to read. It is a vital role of the library to make provisions for such reading material, keep them in organized collection and supply them free of any charge to the neo-literates.

Besides the nature and the standard of the literature, the language is also important. The reading, material should be supplied in the language of their interest. Therefore, it is the work of the library to know the subject and language preference of the neo-literates and thereby help the literacy teachers in selecting the texts.

iv) **Keeping Literacy Organisers Informed :**

A great deal of research is being carried out on the methods and techniques of literacy programmes in and outside the country, the details of which are published in various books and journals. The library should keep the literacy organizers informed in its area so that they may take advantage of such findings in planning their programmes.

v) **Self-Education :**

To put it in plainer terms, we must develop in the students the capacity to find facts, ideas, and information promptly and accurately as and when required. According to the new outlood, work at the formal school should be mainly for educating the student for life-long self education with the aid of materials published from time to time.

vi) **Government's View :**

Population explosion and education explosion takes place in two different lines. It is very hard to elevant the growth of education to the level of population. The existing traditional system of education will not help to bridge the gap. So, the traditional leaning system would have to be reformed and the new Education Policy is to be introduced. As such, the Non-formal Education System was introduced to cater to the needs of aspiring citizens.

Teacher and Librarian

A teacher's task is to impart formal education. A librarian is concerned with the stupendous work of introducing self-education without much spoon feeding. A librarian's main job is to guide the readers "how and where to find out the information" and to acquaint them with the 'hide and seek' character of most of the book which baffle even the high-ups. It is very disheartening feature of our education that few of our teachers themselves are ignorant about the information sources which can be usefully brought into use. They do not know much about common reference books. A teacher should invariable give the students the full references, mentioning the author, the title and location of the books which they consider to be worth reading. When a library user is at a loss to lay his hands upon the document required for his studies, it is the librarian who comes to the help of these users. All this makes a library an indispensable part of an educational programme.

Concept of Sustainable Development

The concept of sustainable development was popularized in 1987 with the publication of the "Brundtland Report" - the Report of the World Commission on Evironment and Development. Five years later in 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) met in Rio-de-Janeiro (South America Brajil) to discuss the planet's dwindling resources. It has generally been accepted that achieving sustainable development will require balancing environmental, societal and economic considerations in the pursuit of development and an improved quality of life. A number of ideals and principles underlying sustainable have been identified.

These were :

Improve the quality of basic education; Reorient existing education programmes to address sustainable development; Develop public awareness and understanding ; and Provide training for all sectors of private and civil society

Despite much effort in these and other areas, reports prepared by countries for the World Submit on Sustainable



Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002, the ten-year review of Agenda 21, revealed that the goals laid out in Rio were still a long way from becoming reality. There was clearly a need to rethink education. Education for Sustainable Development paves the way for this “rethinking”.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a vision of education that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. Central to ESD is the concept of culture as an essential underlying theme. It has been acknowledged that there is no “single route” to sustainable development. Further, it is clear that understandings of, and visions for, sustainability will be different for each of us and that we will need to work together to negotiate the process of achieving sustainability. There are many different stakeholders in sustainable development (i.e. government, businesses, educational institutions, media, youth, etc.). Each of these sectors has a different vision of sustainable development and how it can contribute. Some are interested in environmental preservation and protection, some have economic development interest while others may be more interested in social development.

What are the core characteristics of ESD?

If ESD is to be an effective tool for engaging people in negotiating a sustainable future, making decisions and acting on them, it must first address the way we think about sustainable development and about education in general. Essential to ESD are the following skills :

Envisioning - being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that if we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there.

Critical thinking and reflection - learning to question our current belief systems and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspective and opinions. Critical thinking skills help people learn to examine economic, environmental, social and cultural structures in the sustainable development.

Systemic thinking - acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies when trying to find solutions to problems.

Building partnerships - promoting dialogue and negotiation, learning to work together.

Participation in decision - making - empowering people.

These skills should be learnt and applied according to the cultural contexts of different groups and stakeholders.

Who will be involved in ESD?

Some key stakeholder groups for ESD include : Governments and intergovernmental bodies; Mass media; Civil society and non-governmental organizations; The private sector; Formal education institutions.

This sectors can be further divided into sub-groups to allow for fuller engagement of a wider range of people. Stakeholders will choose to become engaged in different ways. It will be important to develop partnerships so that people learn from, and support each other in their endeavors.

The United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD)

In recognition of the importance of ESD, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2005-2014 the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). UNESCO was requested to lead the Decade and to develop an International Implementation Scheme (IIS) for the Decade. The IIS identifies two goals for the Decade :

To provide an opportunity for refining and promoting the vision of, an transition to, sustainable development- through all forms of education, public awareness and training.

To give an enhanced profile to the important role of education and learning in sustainable development.

The objectives of the DESD are to: Facilitate networking linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD; Foster increased quality of teaching and learning in ESD; Help countries make progress towards and attain the Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts; Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.

Conclusion

It can be concluded with the remarks that the role of library in all sorts of educational programmes need not be over-emphasized. From cradle to the grave and from the primary stage to the highest stage of learning, library serves as an unfailing companion. Every educational programme must be preceded by the provision of library service if the national expenditure on formal education is to be utilized and justified in a proper manner.

Survey of learning materials of Education for Sustainable Development within the framework of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and in order to widely disseminate information on existing learning materials on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), UNESCO wishes to identify available teaching and learning materials related to ESD such as : teaching approaches, teacher guidelines, teaching kits, toolkits. Textbooks, CD-ROMs; etc. any other teaching aids. All these learning materials can be made available through libraries.

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