



EDUCATING FOR SUSTAINABILITY TO PRESERVE THE WORLD

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Abstract: Sustainability fundamentally focuses on the quality environment for the generations to follow by maintaining as well as developing earth's environment while working towards an economic expansion (Scerri & James, 2010). Educating for Sustainability (EFS) have become a paramount way to preserve this world. Officially introduced at the UN General Assembly in 1987, Sustainable Development was defined as the development that “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations”. It is described as the ability of human development to fulfil the needs of humanity while sustaining the natural systems to provide natural resources which are the backbone of our society and economy (Glavič, 2020). EFS is a globally recognised as an educational approach which aims at allowing every human being to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to establish a sustainable and better future (Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts [DEWHA], 2009). The EFS encompasses underlying objectives such as; the preservation and correct use of various resources, identification of sustainable sources and usage, planning of economic growth with at least environmental impact and meeting current economic and technological needs without compromising global environment conditions for future generations (Hensley, 2020). EFS not only includes environmental sustainability, but it has a very broad perspective which also includes social, economic and political stability (UNESCO, 2002).

Keywords: social, economic and political stability.

Introduction:

The aim of EFS is to empower teachers and students and to provide them with all the skills, knowledge and capacities to foster sustainable perspectives (Department of Environment and Heritage [DEH], 2005). The students are required to develop critical thinking skills and ability to make decisions for environment stability.

They need to know the current state of our world, that how much damage have been done to the earth and how we can save it. According to Ecological Footprint, it takes the earth one year eight months to regenerate resources humans use in a year (Global Footprint Network, 2012). That is why, this age is also called the age of Anthropocene because humans have a powerful impact on earth's environment through technology and advancements in every field along with population growth, giving rise to all forms of pollution, mass extinction of forests and species and reduction of many resources (Monastersky, 2015). Likewise, the rescope project by Frank Fisher has given more importance to sustainability which aims at bringing communities and culture to work together to live environmentally friendly such as finding solutions for climate change and reduction of carbon dioxide gases as we are aware that burning of fossil fuels and coal and transportation is the biggest cause of emission of CO₂ and climate change (The Rescope Project, 2016). With equipping young generation with sustainable knowledge, we can contribute towards making the world sustainable.

Literature Review:

EFS is based on seven principles which are embedded in all sustainable practices. The first principle is transformation and change which elaborates that all individuals and communities should get skills and knowledge to plan and manage change towards sustainability within the organisation and community (DEWHA, 2009). According to this principle, all of us have to change our lifestyle and values to protect our environment and this can only happen through our ability to embrace change and develop intrinsic motivation. Related with this principle is another principle which advocates for the participation of everyone in all the platforms for sustainable living. In order to save the future of our future generations, we must collaborate to find solutions for our current sustainable issues. We, the adults, should be the role model for our younger generations to take wise decisions and think critically to foster sustainability. The EFS demands participation of all individuals in a society, community and nation to make the world a sustainable place and this participation leads to collaboration among communities to build networks and relationships (DEWHA, 2009).

I am not strictly following sustainable practice, but I have a concern for our earth's sustainability. I try my best to contribute to make our environment more sustainable by practising small endeavours. This unit is an eye-opener for me to take the environment sustainability seriously. According to wake-up syndrome, my behaviour towards sustainability is at level 6; the stage of acceptance, empowerment and action (Edwards & Buzzell, 2008). I don't have a denial or semi-conscious attitude, or it is not the case that I have recently realised the importance of current environmental issues. I am not living in despair or grief that we have done irreversible damage. I believe that with certain changes in our perspectives and lifestyle, we can do better for our future generation with collaboration in all platforms including social, economic and environmental. My ecological footprint from week 1 is 3.1 which is quite better than my peers as majority have footprints above 4. But there are many things which are not supportive for sustainable environment. For instance, I use a car to give pick and drop to my son to school which is only 10 minutes away by walk. I can easily avoid using car to protect environment from emissions of carbon dioxide and it can also lead to the less consumption of petrol. I am happy that I am involved in sustainable practices such as, I have installed solar panel and I do dishwashing, laundry, baking or cooking at daytime to save electricity.

Although, there are many issues around environmental sustainability, but I have discovered through research that there are certain issues which are more eminent and cause challenge for humans to overcome. Increasing rate of

population growth is the biggest cause of concern as it leads to the maximisation of consumption of the natural resources such as oxygen, land, vegetation, animal life and water along with some artificial products dependent on these environmental resources (Desonie, 2011). Along with the increase in population comes the fast-paced urbanisation, industrialisation and reduction of greenery, which is the major source of oxygen (Ness, 2009). Similarly, greenwash is another major environmental issue and many major world companies are making false claims of environmentally friendly products, but they are causing more damage to our environment (Rejikumar, 2016). For instance, Charmin Freshmates are claimed as flushable but in re it is holding up water and is not safe for sewer systems. If I critically reflect on our present situation, I believe that it is very challenging to control world population and use of natural resources in a descent way in an effort to meet to terms with current economic and technological developments. Likewise, it is also very challenging for all the countries to get along with strategies or to collaborate to take serious and urgent actions for environmental sustainability (Singh, 2011). For instance, many companies do not support radical transparency because it reveals comprehensively about ecological and carbon footprints of their products (Goleman, 2009). If we look at individual level, commitment, action and collaboration are very hard to obtain because people have different perspectives to environmental sustainability, and they are on different stages of wake-up syndrome. Not all of them are on stage 6 like me. My biggest concern is the lack of cooperation of human beings for sustainable environment. For how much time, we have to wait for everyone to accept their fault, take action and promote empowerment?

I believe that a teacher with genuine concern and motivation for sustainability can infuse those values into their students. As a teacher, I have the opportunity to inspire my students to make a difference locally and globally and I can complete this task appropriately because my personal values are aligned with principles of EFS because I believe in intrinsic motivation to change our attitudes, lifestyle and perspectives towards sustainability in all the platforms (Lim, Søgaaard Jørgensen, & Wyborn, 2018). Immediate action through skills and capacities within communities, organisations and nations can bring drastic transformation in environmental sustainability (Baker, 2015). Likewise, my thinking is very much similar to another principle of EFS that it is the most powerful source of making relationships and communications among individuals and communities as people who share a common vision and work towards a goal, becomes partners (DEWHA, 2009).

Conclusions and Findings:

Teachers with the positive attitude towards sustainability are more likely to teach sustainable education effectively and incorporate it in curriculum and pedagogy because they are aware of their responsibility as part of a civil society and they are always guided by ethics and consequently, they teach about sustainable values and practices with passion (Aye, Win, & Maw, 2019). My aim is to make my students reflective thinker, ethical and responsible citizen and connected and independent learners and I should provide them with opportunities to do problem-solving and high order thinking skills related to environmental issues such as biodiversity, ecological system, climate change, human rights, life cycle, economic development or sustainable consumption (Robertson, 2014). I can involve my students in discussion about greenwash and radical transparency and give them a task to research about the ecological sustainability of the products they use more often. Apart from that, I can make my class sustainable by adopting certain changes: let in more sunlight and switching lights off; performing an energy audit together with students to check which lights/appliances are unnecessary switched on; try a monthly light off hour; recycling as much as much as possible by separating paper, glass, plastic and food waste; make watercolours using

dried markers to make them aware that things can be reused again; apply more Aboriginal pedagogies such as doing maths activities with natural materials including counting with stones and sticks and involving in more kitchen garden activities or even creating a small vegie patch inside the class. Thus, sustainable education should be integrated in all the learning areas in the curriculum to make students aware of its importance and our collective responsibility for the environment.

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