

Sustainable Development Goals: A Peep through Classroom

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Abstract

Education can contribute maximum in the attainment of sustainable development goals due to which the role and responsibility of teachers become even more important. For achieving sustainable goals it is important that teachers should make such strategies by which quality education can be given. A teacher can contribute only when he himself is familiar with the goals of sustainable development. He cannot achieve success in his task until and unless he himself knows sustainability, its aims and objectives. And just knowing sustainability is not sufficient, he should be aware of it. Directly or indirectly a student is influenced by the personality of teacher. A teacher's behavior in classroom, his teaching methods, the way he connects individual and society and the activities he performs for a sustainable society, all these affect a child largely. What type of a behavior is performed by the teacher and students in a classroom? Is this behavior appropriate for achieving SDGs or not? Are the activities done by teacher and the responses given by students helpful in achieving SDGs? Such activities of classrooms were observed by the researcher. The study was conducted on the pupil teachers of Birla Campus, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna Central University. For this purpose a questionnaire was prepared and few questions were asked related to sustainable development goals. Work was completed on the basis of responses given by students and teachers.

Keywords: sustainable development, SDGs, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna University

We can't imagine a sustainable nation without the contribution of teachers. Teachers can contribute abundantly to sustainable development (Guidelines and recommendation for reorienting Teacher Education to address sustainability, 2005). In this document, only one aspect 'Teacher Education' was highly focused. To address sustainability we should focus specifically on the contribution of teacher education institutions and training teachers, future leaders and educationalists. The National Curriculum Framework for teacher education NCFTE 2009 has emphasized on sustainable development and stated, teachers are required to understand the need of its integration and implementation in the new teacher education curriculum framework.

The challenge is how to build the capacities of teachers, to initiate and enhance SD inspired forms of learning in schools, universities, workplaces and neighbourhoods. Most likely, competent teachers can be prepared through well-designed training programs that immerse them in real-world experiences related to ESD where they are challenged to excel. A training programme can be successful only, if it results in gaining some knowledge and skills which will increase the effectiveness and quality of the education.

Teachers play a key role in the socialization of young people for sustainable development. One cannot ignore the position of teacher and teacher training programmes in environmental perspectives. It is the responsibility of teachers and prospective teachers to sensitize their students and the public at large about important issues related to environment and Sustainable Development. To transform education systems, it is essential that teacher must have all the required skills, attitudes and values related to ESD.

Various discussions have been conducted on the different aspects of ESD viz. the learning content, pedagogy and learning environments, societal transformation and learning outcomes etc. Learning content includes integrating critical issues as climate change, biodiversity, disaster risk reduction and sustainable consumption and production, into the curriculum. Pedagogy and learning environments incorporates designing teaching and learning in an interactive, learner-centered way that enables exploratory, action-oriented and transformative learning, rethinking learning environment, physical as well as virtual and online to inspire learners to act for sustainability. Societal transformation deals with empowering learners of any age, in any education setting, to transform themselves and the society they live in and enabling a transition to greener economics and societies. It also equips learners with skills of 'green jobs' and motivating people to adopt sustainable lifestyles. Empowering people to be 'global citizens' who engage and assume active roles, both locally and globally, to face and to resolve global challenges and ultimately to become proactive contributors to

creating a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, secure and sustainable world. Learning outcomes can be measured by stimulating learning and promoting core competencies, such as critical and systematic thinking, collaborative decision-making and taking responsibility for present and future generations.

In recent times, the most talked about term is sustainability and sustainable development is the most focused agenda at present. To promote sustainable development its goals have also been set out last year. Duration has also been fixed to achieve these goals. But the question is- is it possible to achieve these goals at ground level? Present work was taken in hand with the objective that respondent (In service teachers and pupil teachers) should give some necessary suggestions related to pedagogy to achieve these goals(quality education, gender equality, peace and zero hunger) since teachers can contribute maximum in the achievement of these goals. But after analyzing the data, the most surprising actually shocking thing which came out was that they themselves were not aware of these goals. We can understand that it has only been one year since these goals have been framed but the concept of sustainability is not this much new. They didn't even know much about sustainability.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct this study, researchers prepared a questionnaire containing four questions –

- 1- What is sustainable development? What are its main pillars?
- 2- Do you have any idea about sustainable development goals?
- 3- According to you which goal is the most important? Rank these goals 1, 2, 3 according to your priorities.
 1- Quality Education 2- Peace 3- Gender Equality 4-Zero Hunger
- 4- According to you what should be the pedagogy to achieve these 4 goals?
 1- Quality Education 2- Peace 3- Gender Equality 4-Zero Hunger

For the purpose of the study data was collected from 50 respondents (In service teachers and pupil teachers) through purposive sampling. Out of these 50 respondents, 25 were In-service teachers pursuing B.Ed. teacher training program from IGNOU and 25 were pupil teachers of Birla campus, Hemvati Nandan Bahuguna University. They were asked to fill questionnaire and subsequently data was collected.

RESULTS

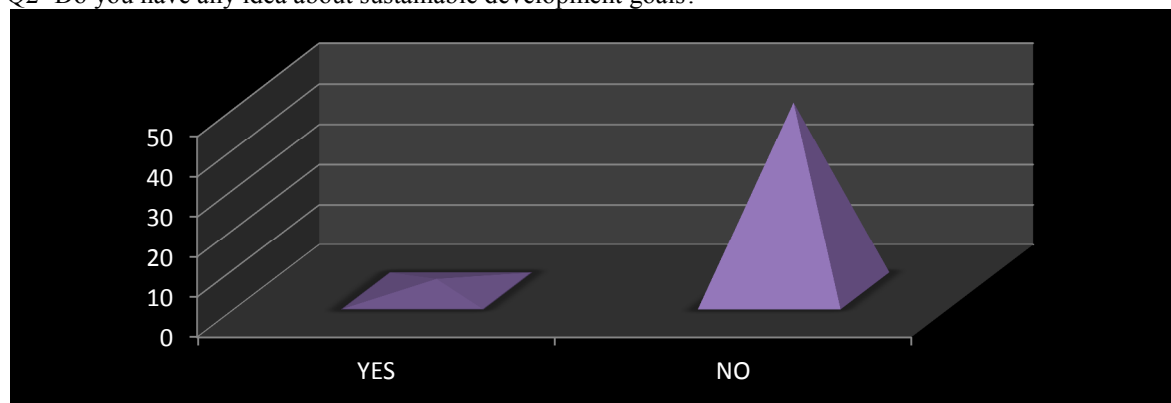
Responses obtained question wise are described below-

Q1- What is sustainable development? What are its main pillars?

Responses

In-service teachers don't have any knowledge of sustainable development. They did not show any interest for this topic and left this question unanswered. Pupil-teachers of Birla Campus H.N.B.G.U. are aware of the concept of sustainability and they have basic knowledge of sustainable development. Most of them know about the components and pillars of sustainable development.

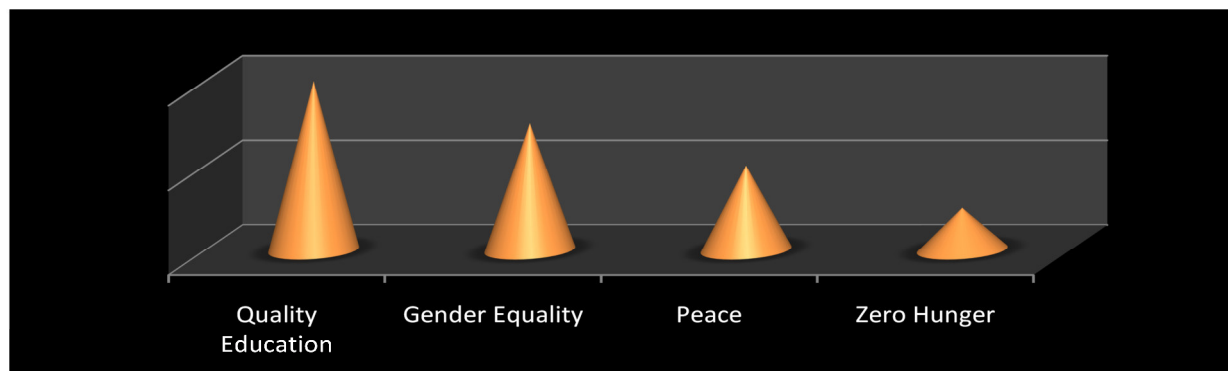
Q2- Do you have any idea about sustainable development goals?



Q3- According to you which goal is the most important? Rank these goals 1, 2, 3 according to your priorities.

- 1- Quality Education 2- Peace 3- Gender Equality 4-Zero Hunger

Quality Education	Goal 1
Gender Equality	Goal 2
Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions	Goal 3
Zero Hunger	Goal 4



1- Q4- According to you what should be the pedagogy to achieve these 4 goals?

1- Quality Education 2- Peace 3- Gender Equality 4- Zero Hunger

There were only few responses for this question. Most of the In-service teachers and pupil teachers left this question unanswered.

DISCUSSION

Initially when the questionnaire was distributed to In-service teachers, they did not show any interest. Their unawareness of the sustainability concept could be a reason to this. In the first question they were asked about sustainable development and its pillar. Almost all In-service teachers did not answer this question. On the other hand pupil teacher have basic knowledge of SD, its components and pillars. But most of them connected it to environment only. In the second question, they were asked about sustainable development goals. 94% of the In-service teachers and pupil teachers had no knowledge of these goals. Only 6% of the students knew that such goals have been set out but they did not know what these goals exactly stand for. Then the researcher told them about sustainable development goals and discussed it with the respondents. In the next question they were supposed to prioritize four sustainable development goals according to their importance. The four goals were- quality education, peace, gender equality and zero hunger. After analyzing the data it was found that most of the respondents feel that “Quality Education” is the most important goal among all. They kept it at first position in their priority list. On the second and third number they kept “Gender Equality” and “Peace” respectively. “Zero Hunger” was considered least important by the respondents. Last question was related to pedagogy to achieve these four goals i.e. Quality Education, Gender Equality, Peace and Zero Hunger. They knew pedagogy and suggested a few. But they did not suggest any specific pedagogy to achieve sustainable development goals. They couldn’t relate their suggestions to these goals. They had some vague idea of the possible pedagogy but they were unable to connect pedagogy with these goals.

These goals can only be achieved when teachers know about sustainability and SDGs because teachers are the one who can inculcate required skills, values and knowledge of sustainability in their students. They can make them practice sustainability as a part of their day to day life. Teachers should reflect sustainability in their behavior so that students can learn it from them. But the results of present study show that our teachers are not much aware of this concept. They themselves don’t know about SDGs, then how can we expect them to aware their students. Lack of proper promotion, training, content in curriculum might be the reasons for this. Some training programs should be conducted to aware them about sustainable development and SDGs. Training manual and awareness program can play a major role in making people aware of this concept. Once the teacher knows what sustainability is and what SDGs are about and how important they are for the society, they can frame their own pedagogy according to the local conditions and requirements. In this way they can help in achieving SDGs and making a sustainable society.

Like if we talk about “Quality Education”, first teachers and students both need to understand that it is a right of every child to get good quality education. Peer tutoring and collaborative learning can play a significant role to achieve this goal. When it’s come to “Gender Equality”, we know that this is one of the most sensitive goals. We hope to make this world a better place to live in without any discrimination on any ground. Teachers should treat both the gender equally and should make their students believe in equality through their pedagogy in and outside of the classroom. Hunger is one of the major problems which are being faced in many parts of the world. “Zero hunger” goal supports food security to each and every individual. There are number of children in our country who don’t get proper food. Mid-day meal program was launched by the Government in order to provide at least one proper meal to children. But in this program also they don’t get nutritious diet. Teachers and students both should know the importance of good food, balance diet and nutritious diet. Some programs should be run in order to achieve Zero Hunger world-wide.

Peace is one goal which researcher chose as one of four goals. In today’s scenario this goal seems to be

very important. If we all have a feeling of oneness, then only we can live in this world together happily. With this feeling of oneness we can establish a peaceful world to live in.

CONCLUSION

Almost in every corner of the world, Government, organizations, NGOs, colleges and universities are trying to achieve sustainable development goals. Their aim is to achieve these goals by 2030. Almost every aspect of life has been included in these goals from “No poverty” to “Quality education”, from “Gender equality” to “Zero hunger”. Efforts are being made to establish a sustainable society through SDGs. But the problem is people are not aware of these goals. Lack of promotion could be a major reason of this. Teachers are neutral to the concept of sustainability. They don’t have any interest in sustainable development and its goals. If we talk about local level, most of the teachers and pupil teachers are not aware of the concept of sustainability, SDGs are a long way from them. To achieve these goals it is very important that their promotion should be done largely. And this promotion should not be confined to cities only. Rural areas need this promotion much. Lack of proper promotion is one of the major reasons for their unawareness. We should organize seminars, workshops and conferences in urban areas at local level. It is not necessary that their scale should be large; initially we can organize them at university and college level. Participation of local population must be ensured. Students in colleges and universities should be made aware of sustainability. Social media can play a major role in its promotion. There are number of Apps available which are frequently used by people. We can use these Apps to make people aware of sustainable development and its goals. Primarily this study was taken in hand with the objective of taking some suggestion from In-service teachers and pupil teachers related to pedagogy in classroom to achieve these goals but sadly they don’t have knowledge of sustainable development goals. Sustainable development should be included as an important part in teacher training program. It shouldn’t be just a theory based program rather it should be an activity based awareness program. In their internship program some activities related to SDGs should be conducted. So that pupil teachers can understand its importance for themselves and for the society. They should be able to connect it with practicality so that when in future they teach in their classrooms they can ensure sustainability and can contribute in the development of a sustainable society.

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