Shaping future through Education for sustainable Development

Prof. Asfa M. Yasin¹ and Prof. R.B. Shivagunde²

²Professor & Head, Center for International Relations, PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (NCERT), Shyamala Hills, Bhopal India

asfayasin26@gmail.com

³Professor of Management – NITTTR Bhopal and Joint Director
PSS Central Institute of Vocational Education (NCERT), Shyamala Hills, Bhopal, India

rbshivagunde@gmail.com

Introduction

Education is an agent of change which rope in essential ingredients required for quality life of people. Existence of human being on the planet has been a boon to have genius people because of their valuable discoveries and inventions for the development of the world. But the other side of the coin shows the dark picture of human behavior i.e. violence, destruction of nature, inequalities, being unethical and many other negative personality attributes of human behavior cause imbalance in the nature and society. Education could be an agent of change in human behavior. Also, education is vital and offers support in creating a knowledge society consisting of systems and work force. The journey of education starts from school to higher education to lifelong education. Let us envision an education where there is scope and space for dealing with problems causing imbalance in the society. These problems may be referred to as ‘evils’, such as poverty, hunger, wars, destruction of nature, lack of health care and fighting diseases, and life expectancy issues. Some of these are directly contributing to low/high Human Development Index (HDI). The education, can be used as tool to fight these evils as a way forward for sustainable development, which according to UNESCO (2014) is ‘Everyone’s business’.

Dimensions of Sustainable Development

Sustainable development of any society, region, nation or the world depends upon whether there is peace, and prevailing happiness all over the region. Every human being has basic requirement of food, shelter and good health, skill development also means safe, healthy and pollution free environment, economic prosperity, good educational avenues accessible to all, youth is skilled, creative and good citizen, no gender biasness and cruelty with animals and no dangers to the environment. The quality education therefore is expected to be capable of delivering and addressing these issues. These dimensions have been well taken by the International Commission on Education by considering education to have four pillars viz. “Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to be and Learning to live together”.

It is imperative to note that understanding the dimensions of sustainable development is extremely important to formulate strategies. Different dimensions/concerns mentioned below have direct bearing on sustainable development:

- Quality of life of people
- Equal opportunities and access to health care, education and economy
- Conserving environment for present and future generations
- Cultural, social and geographical conditions
All the above stated dimensions have to be examined and formulate strategies for using education to make people aware and ensure sustainable development. In the above back drop let us take a view of the dimensions mentioned below for strategic planning for sustainable development:

- Healthy People
- Wealthy People
- Value based people
- Healthy environment
- Peace on Earth

**Healthy People**

Health related issues and concerns are seen across the globe. If go by statistics, there are one billion people lack access to health care systems. There are hundreds of diseases in the world which are caused by bacteria, virus or any other sources and some are life style diseases. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has labeled many of the diseases viz. tuberculosis, infection diseases, HIV/AIDS etc. as ‘disease of poverty’. This statement is linked to socio-economic conditions due to lack of money occur health care problems including malnutrition. According to Global Health Overview, some eye opening data are given below:

- Over 7.5 million children under the age of 5 die from malnutrition and mostly preventable diseases each year.
- In 2008, some 6.7 million died of infectious diseases.
- Tuberculosis kills 1.7 million people each year
- Malaria causes some 2.25 million acute illness and over 780,000 deaths annually
- Life style based diseases including diabetes, cardiac, pulmonary diseases etc. are also increasing phenomenally.
- Now the challenge before every nation is to envision and ensure effective health care programmes to keep their people healthy.

As we all know that Human Development Index (HDI) of countries has health related indicators besides poverty, education, etc. The sustainable development require attention towards envisaging systematic integrated approach for taking measures for health care systems using educational programmes at school/university and community levels. The programmes may include awareness for handling communicable (infectioius) diseases and advocacy for taking measures for healthy life style.

There is need to integrate skill development programmes related to health care in the TVET system. The strategies may include design, development and offering of short term/long duration courses through formal and non-formal system to prepare Para-professionals. There is also need to have organizations to work for this cause wherein Para professionals prepared through TVET, may be employed. This step will be a milestone for combating problems related to poverty, un-employment, negligence and lack of information about health care issues in the community. The report of WHO (2008) Commission on the “Social Determinants of Health”, noted that health inequalities were found not only in poor but also in developed countries like U. K. It states “The greater the social disadvantage, the worse the health”.

Action Research projects may also proved to serve as a resource for planning and implementation of specific TVET courses related to particular dimension of health care/combating and inculcating awareness for particular disease.
Suggested measures for designing educational programmes for awareness in keeping people healthy:

- Inculcating awareness for nutritional requirements of children and adult human beings for abating malnutrition
- Observing hygienic measures to prevent diseases
- Developing sensitivity in the family and community to prevent maternal deaths to lack of care of pregnant ladies.
- Inculcating awareness regarding life expectancy,
- Awareness regarding geriatric care (Gerontology)
- Promoting NGOs and society to take up measures for fulfilling basic needs to abate hunger and poverty alleviation
- Awareness and developing skilled par staff for delivery process.
- Awareness regarding infectious diseases, prevention and control of epidemics

Wealthy People

The economy of a nation should be a network of channels distributing happiness and sense of well being to its people. The sustainable employment generation opportunities have to be the priority for any nation. The basic needs of human beings like food, shelter and clothing must be available to every human being who is a ‘Gift of God’ to earth. The economic independence of people play major role in the sustainable development of nations, regions and people. The curse of poverty, hunger, death due to disease and malnutrition because of lack of money and resources can be handled through education and training system. It must be ensured that people must be physically and mentally fit to undertake trainings and able to work.

The strategies for economic prosperity primarily include skill based education and training. The basic education is crucial for bringing in change and cultivating values in children from the lower stages of education. In Indian context, Mahatma Gandhi (1939), placed before teachers ‘Education’ as an enjoyable experience for children, if teaching-learning involves productive work. He states “Those who do not train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education, lack ‘music’ in their life”. In the Gandhian philosophy, participation in productive work under conditions approximating to real life situations is pedagogically linked to learning and simultaneously becomes the medium of knowledge acquisition, developing values & skill formation. In addition, engagement with work will help to promote multidimensional attributes in the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in a holistic manner by the synergies integrating head, hand & heart. ‘Such a dimension is not there in today’s education system. “Our education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hands” (Position Paper for NCF (2005) on Work and Education).

The UN Decade of Education (2005-2014) has worked on a ESDA project in Africa. This project was implemented to create a reservoir of skilled people to undertake the development work in participating countries viz. Kenya, Ghana and South Africa. There is a need to look into the progress/achievement made through this project to find a ‘Way Forward’. Further, research undertaken in this project may be used for planning and strengthening existing programmes.
In the context of rich and poor people, it is the result of uneven distribution of resources, access to education and opportunities for wage/self employment avenues. According to Global Health Overview – Global issues, “In rich countries, low socio-economic position means poor education, lack of amenities, unemployment and job insecurity, poor working conditions and unsafe neighborhoods with their consequent impact on family life. The skill development initiatives through rigorously planned TVET programme in formal and non-formal system is the need of the hour for sustainable development. The TVET system could be used as a tool to fight against poverty.

Suggested measures through educational reforms and initiatives are mentioned below:

- Integration of component of entrepreneurship development in the curriculum from class 6th on wards
- Organizing guidance and counseling activities for school children and students of higher education.
- Development of soft skills suitable for job market viz. –communication skills, leadership qualities, confidence building, team work and cooperation, space for creativity in school education.
- Integration of vocational education (TVET) with general education for developing hard skills for local specific vocations/world of work.
- Institutionalisation of work centered education in school education which envisage that productive work could be used as the medium of instructions. This will help students to get to know various vocations as future world of work (Yasin 2013)

Value Based People

The word ‘Value’ is self explanatory i.e. something ‘valuable’, important and enriching. Perhaps we would wish to try to define this word. This is difficult. Values may be experienced than to define. Evolution of mankind and pace of human development has witnessed and has brought great behavioural changes; these changes can be attributed to attitudinal changes, practices, ways of living, certain norms and changes in human behavior. The large canvas of attitude, behavior, manners, positive thinking and social concerns, and care can be ‘housed’ in one word ‘Values’. No entity can exist without value (Yasin, 2007) Our youth has to shoulder the responsibility of making of nation and cohesive society to live a peaceful and happy life. Since ancient times, education has been the ‘flesh and blood’ for human development. Value development is the essence of human development. The journey of childhoood to adulthood passes pathways, through education, therefore education is considered as a launch vehicle of values inculation.

Also, National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of NCERT, 2005 has given recommendation for inclusion of peace education in the school curriculum, as education helps to create a humane society to live in harmony with fellow citizens and with nature. According to UNESD, 2005-14, the concrete examples of Sustainable Development are fostering peace, fighting against global warming, reducing North/South inequalities and fighting against poverty and marginalisation of women and girls etc. The sustainability basically involves practicing values. The values of making peace by tolerance, patience, sacrifice so on and so forth can be seen in the perspective of Sustainable Development. Hence, a society of even few value based people, can bring change for the sustainable development.

Suggested measures for inculation of values

- Inculcation of values as a part of curricular in different subjects.
• Value inculcation by role play methods, organizing invited lectures by value practicing persons.
• Demonstration of values and work ethics at real job situations viz. Food shops, Repair work shops, Hospitals/Medical laboratories.
• Organizing video sessions to portray lives of great personality who observed value based life
• Highlighting value based activities/social work for the sustainable development undertaken by various voluntary organizations
• Preparation of guidelines for implementation of value inculcation in school education.

Activities may be undertaken with respect to vocations and ‘world of work’ to show case values and their importance. Exemplar strategies for work ethics and value inculcation are given below:

• Values/work Ethics: Honesty, judicious use of raw material, timeliness, safe disposal of wastes, safety measures, hygienic conditions, legislation etc.
• Situations for value inculcation/work ethics:
  i) Class room – During theory teaching in the class room, teacher may elaborate on the value of honesty in terms of using of raw materials in right quality and quantity for making quality product.
  ii) Workshop/laboratory – During practical / workshops while preparing a food product many values, work ethics and safety measures may be demonstrated and reinforced.
  iii) Retail outlet – Timeliness may be demonstrated that as per order, date and time may be adhered to, so that customers may be satisfied. Using safety measures while cooking, using microwaves and as per work ethics use of gloves, caps to cover head may also be followed at the food products outlets.

Healthy Environment

Human interventions in the name of development are at their climax causing imbalance in ecosystem which is directly related to the health of the people and environment. The overall impact of imbalance in the ecosystem result in global warming, climate change, rising sea levels, de-forestation, floods, draught, etc. It is obligatory on our part that we pass on treasure of natural resources to future generations. Therefore, suitable intensive environment conservation measures must be under taken. The carrying capacity of environment and natural resources should be a major consideration in these conservation measures. Healthy and safe environment is a pre-requisite for sustainable development.

Environment and sustainable development co-exist. There are serious issues like displacement of people, urbanization and rural migration are to be handle carefully for sustainability of the society and the ecosystem. Also geographical distribution disturbance due to migration of people, besides issues of human rights, cultural, social and economic disturbances are factors affecting sustainable development. Educational inputs could be fruitful in addressing these issues. According to Singh (2010), “Education to develop wide spread understanding of the inter dependence and fragility of planetary life support system and natural resource base upon human well being depends at the core of education for sustainable development.
Suggested measures for Healthy Environment
Curriculum may be designed for lower to higher classes to view problems and issues related to over exploitation of natural resources and conservation measures. Various aspects may include:

- Environmental degradation
- Conservation of natural resources viz. water, fuel, electricity etc.
- Observing desirable practices in agriculture production with limited use of chemicals
- Awareness about causes of global warming
- Promotion of ‘vegetarian’ diet to reduce animal production practices
- Avoidance on use of plastics
- Advocacy for use of solar system to minimize the use of cooking gas and electricity by replacing cooking systems and geysers
- Creating understanding of bio-diversity and developing competencies to conserve the biodiversity
- Designing of modular courses for skill development to prepare work force environment conservation professionals

Peace on Earth
The planet ‘Earth’ co-exist with mutually bounded people, cultures, religions, languages and skills. Sustainability of these co-existing entities depends upon tolerance, patience, care and concern for each other. The absence of these traits results in conflicts, wars, imbalance of economy, lives of people and violation of rights of people. We have witnessed so many wars in the past and also in the present. Future is no exception, the economic imbalance, the violation of the rights of people, criminal and anti-social activities and will be on the rise worldwide. Hence, educational programme must be designed to curb these problems. All the issues destroy peace of people, place, nation, and the world leading to hamper the development. We must believe that sustainable development is a mix of peace, social justice, respect for people, religions, culture and traditions of the world. How to achieve this? The only alternative is educating children through school education and adults through awareness and motivational programmes. In light of this, the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) is a major international effort to main stream sustainable development in the education sector.

Sustainable development is a serious concern and is the buzz word in the present scenario because of inflow of technology, development programmes for infrastructure and businesses, globalization, environmental concerns, numerous features of modernization along population explosion and diversity of people, languages and culture. This entails issues of equity, access, values, life styles, behaviors and divides of urban-rural, rich-poor. All these issues can be addressed by educational therapy. Primarily, we have to focus on two things; first to makes people (largely children and youth) aware and strong to face challenges of life. The law of nature is ‘Change’, that can be positive or negative or both. So education can prepare people for ‘change’ and to equip them for accepting challenges as the resultant of change. From the perspective of planning, enabling policy makers, leaders, key functionaries through educational discourses and research studies could be very effective strategy. These educational inputs and programmes may focus on soft skills like conflict management, rational decision making, the problem solving abilities, besides critical and creative thinking.
There is also a need to showcase the importance and respect of our earth and diversity of its family. Creating awareness amongst people to promote democratic and non-violent ways to settle conflicts could be helpful to keep the planet peaceful.

Suggested Measures in relation to making and maintaining Peace

i. Highlighting factors responsible for maintaining peace on earth/society may be included in the curriculum

ii. Celebrations of national days and highlighting sacrifices of people for the nation

iii. In political science/social science, building national character in children/youth by highlighting importance and contributions required for national development

Strategies

“Education for sustainable Development is not an option but a priority” UN Decade for Education for Sustainable Development 2005-2014.

Millennium Development Goals (MDG’s) set by UN in 2005 included amongst eight goals Education for All (EFA). This encompass that every person must get education for self, national, regional and global development. We want development to be sustainable to offer to future generation. Education is a gamut of tools for energizing, catalyzing and channelizing vital inputs for sustainable development. The process involves methods of equipping people with knowledge, skills and developing desirable personality traits besides value development. The output of the conference could be in the form of the comprehensive plan for sustainable development through education and training requires:

- Polity, policy and budget for sustainable development
- Sustainable Development Education Framework
- Educational Research for sustainable Development
- Skill Development Initiative through TVET
- Measures for Human Development
- Educational Reforms for integration of value based and vocational education in general education.
- National Vocational Education Qualifications Framework for Nigeria

It is expected that synthesis of lectures and papers presented in the conference will yield inputs in respect to the above mentioned requirements and formulation of strategies. Using these inputs vision 2025 may be carved out followed by the development of an action plan for next 5 years as “Road Ahead” towards ‘Education for Sustainable Development’ including TVET.

**TVET facilitates acquiring knowledge and developing skills, attitude, values, creativity and innovations. Mix of these makes people “Great”.**

References


Global Health Overview: http://www.globalissues.org/print/article/588

Asfa M. Yasin (2013). Paper entitled ‘Inculcation of Values in Youth to Become Youthful’ presented in National Seminar on Yoga for Fostering Youth Energy organized by Barkatullah University, Bhopal