



Role of Teachers as builders of a Sustainable Society

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An Ecolate individual is one who understands and uses in a very sustainable way the resources available to him keeping in mind the needs of the future generation. Just as we give importance to the rise of literates and numerates of a nation, it is equally important to give importance to its Ecolate population too. The responsibility of moulding children into Ecolate individuals lies with teachers since they are considered as the makers of the future. In order to build an Ecolate nation, it is extremely essential that teachers themselves should be Ecolate. Only then can they inculcate environmental responsibility among students which is the stepping stone to the creation of an Ecolate society. There is no doubt about the fact that teachers hold and create a lasting impression in the minds of the students and they are extremely capable of developing a sense of responsibility towards environment in their students. Teachers can help realise students the importance of environmental protection and can initiate strategies to create a positive environmental attitude among students. This in turn will help the students to identify the numerous environmental problems around them and will also ensure their wholehearted willingness to participate in the conservation of environmental problems. This article throws light on the importance of teachers as Ecolate educators for creating a sustainable society.

Keywords: *Ecolate, Sustainability, Environmental Responsibility.*



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1. INTRODUCTION

An Ecolate individual is one who understands and uses in a very sustainable way the resources available to him keeping in mind the needs of the future generation. The goal of Environmental Education is to help people to understand the complexities of environment and pursue sustainable developmental ways to prevent harm to the environment. For this, Environmental Education must adopt a wholesome approach which covers the ecological, social, cultural and other aspects of all

environmental problems. These environmental problems should be familiar to the learner in their own home, society and country and should help the learners acquire knowledge, values and skills necessary to solve these problems ([Gambro, J.S., & Switzky, H.N. 1999](#)).

The present Environmental Education curriculum develops only awareness, knowledge and understanding about the environment. There is no scope for the development of skills, Environmental Attitude or participation in environmental activities. This trend is seen reflected in the teacher community too ([Moakes, J., & Bond, A.J. 2001](#)). The teachers should

be well aware and informed about the importance of conserving the environment and the need to create a sustainable society. Only then can they be successful in moulding the students to become Ecolate citizens. The teachers should set up healthy examples before the students, this will help them to develop interest in the natural environment. They have the responsibility of ensuring that their educational offerings on creating a sustainable society is worthwhile for the community and nation at large. Thus, the creation of an Ecolate society mainly depends mainly on teachers as they can develop all the transactional skills to build knowledge regarding new facts and concepts in the environment and have an impressive role to play in all platforms of environmental education. The role of the teacher and students should go be in unison for the creation of an Ecolate society (Verma, Snehilata 2006).

2. IMPORTANCE OF ECOLATE STUDENTS IN THE SOCIETY

Environmental education plays a vital role in the development and well-being of students. Developing environmental awareness: Environmental education helps students develop an understanding of the natural world, including ecosystems, biodiversity, and the interconnections between humans and the environment. It raises awareness about environmental issues, such as climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction, imparting a sense of responsibility towards the environment and in turn towards the community at large.

- **Promoting sustainability:** Environmental education provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make sustainable choices and lead environmentally responsible lives. By learning about sustainable practices, resource conservation, and alternative energy sources, students can become active participants in building a more sustainable future.
- **Encouraging students to think critically and solve problems:** Environmental education encourages students to think critically, apprehend complex environmental issues, and consider multiple perspectives. It promotes problem-solving skills, as students are challenged to find innovative solutions to environmental challenges. This empowers them to become informed and active global citizens who can contribute to creating a more sustainable society.
- **Connecting to real-world issues:** Environmental education provides a pathway for the unison of classroom learning and real-

world environmental issues. By engaging in hands-on activities, field trips, and environmental projects, students can apply their knowledge and see the direct impact of their actions on the environment. This experiential learning fosters a deeper understanding and emotional connection to the natural world.

- **Enhancing interdisciplinary learning:** Environmental education integrates various disciplines such as science, geography, social studies, and ethics. It promotes a holistic approach to learning, helping students understand the interconnectedness of environmental, social, economic, and cultural systems. This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' overall education and prepares them to address complex environmental challenges.
- **Fostering personal and social development:** Environmental education nurtures personal growth by instilling values of respect, empathy, and responsibility towards nature and the environment. It promotes teamwork, collaboration, and communication skills through group projects and environmental initiatives. Additionally, spending time in nature has been shown to improve mental and physical well-being, reducing stress and enhancing overall health. In summary, environmental education is crucial for students as it develops environmental awareness, promotes sustainability, encourages critical thinking, connects to real-world issues, enhances interdisciplinary learning, and fosters personal and social development. By equipping students with knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges, environmental education empowers them to become informed and active participants in shaping a sustainable future.

Teachers play a crucial role as environmental educators in promoting awareness, knowledge, and action related to environmental issues. Outlined below are some areas where Ecolate teachers can succeed in making a world of difference to the students and society at large.

- **Environmental education curriculum:** Teachers can incorporate environmental education into their curriculum by designing lessons and activities that raise awareness about environmental issues, explore sustainability concepts, and promote responsible behaviour. They can integrate

environmental topics across subjects such as science, geography, social studies, and even art and literature.

- **Field trips and outdoor activities:** Teachers can organize field trips to nature reserves, parks, or environmental centres to provide students with hands-on experiences and a deeper understanding of the natural world. Outdoor activities, such as nature walks or gardening projects, can also help students connect with nature and develop a sense of environmental responsibility.
- **Role modelling and personal behaviour:** Teachers can serve as role models by practicing environmentally responsible behaviour in their own lives. By demonstrating actions like conserving energy, reducing waste, and using sustainable resources, teachers can inspire students to adopt similar practices and understand the importance of individual actions.
- **Encouraging critical thinking and action:** Teachers can foster critical thinking skills by encouraging students to analyse and discuss environmental issues, explore different perspectives, and develop their own solutions. They can facilitate debates, projects, and initiatives that encourage students to act, such as organizing environmental campaigns or participating in community clean-up events.
- **Collaboration and partnerships:** Teachers can collaborate with local environmental organizations, experts, or community members to enhance the learning experience. Guest speakers, workshops, and partnerships can provide additional resources, expertise, and real-world examples to enrich students' understanding of environmental issues.
- **Empowering students as change-makers:** Teachers can empower students to become active agents of change by helping them identify environmental problems in their communities and develop projects or initiatives to address them. This can include organizing recycling programs, initiating energy-saving campaigns, or advocating for environmental policies.

By assuming the role of environmental educators, teachers have the potential to inspire and equip students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become environmentally conscious and responsible citizens. Their efforts can contribute to building a more sustainable and environmentally conscious society.

The environmental responsibility of school teachers is extremely important, as it can have a significant effect on the future of our planet.

- **Educating the next generation:** School teachers have a crucial role in educating the next generation about environmental issues, including climate change, pollution, and the importance of conservation. By modelling responsible environmental behaviour, teachers can inspire their students to become responsible citizens and advocates for the environment.
- **Reducing the carbon footprint of schools:** Schools have a significant carbon footprint due to energy consumption, transportation, and waste generation. By practicing environmentally responsible behaviour, teachers can reduce the environmental impact of their school, which can lead to cost savings and contribute to a more sustainable future.
- **Leading by example:** Teachers are role models for their students, and by taking environmental responsibility seriously, they can set a positive example that students can emulate. When students see their teachers recycling, conserving energy, and reducing waste, they are more likely to do the same.
- **Supporting the school's sustainability goals:** Many schools have adopted sustainability goals as part of their mission, and teachers play a critical role in achieving those goals. By incorporating environmental responsibility into their teaching, teachers can support the school's sustainability initiatives and help create a more sustainable future.

Overall, the environmental responsibility of secondary school teachers is vital for the well-being of the planet and the future of our children. By practicing environmentally responsible behaviour and incorporating environmental education into their teaching, teachers can make a significant contribution to a more sustainable future.

Teachers play a crucial role as environmental educators in shaping students' understanding and behaviour towards the environment. Teachers possess the knowledge and expertise to educate students about environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and sustainable practices. They can provide accurate information, raise awareness, and foster a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness between human actions and the environment. Through their teachings, teachers can

inspire students to participate in solving environmental problems and make a sustainable change in the environment. They can encourage students to adopt sustainable habits, participate in conservation initiatives, and become responsible stewards of the environment. Environmental education involves developing critical thinking skills and problem-solving abilities. Teachers can facilitate discussions, engage students in analysing environmental challenges, and empower them to develop innovative solutions. This cultivates a sense of agency and empowers students to address environmental issues. Teachers can organize field trips, outdoor activities, and practical experiments that allow students to engage directly with nature. These hands-on experiences foster a deeper connection to the environment and provide opportunities for students to observe, appreciate, and understand the natural world. Teachers can empower students to become environmental advocates. By encouraging them to voice their concerns, participate in environmental campaigns, and engage with local communities, teachers can instil a sense of environmental responsibility and empower students to make a difference. Overall, teachers as environmental educators have the power to shape students' attitudes, values, and behaviours towards the environment. By imparting knowledge, inspiring action, fostering critical thinking, providing hands-on experiences, and promoting advocacy, teachers can nurture environmentally conscious individuals who are committed to protecting our planet.

3. STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BY TEACHERS

Teachers can incorporate a variety of activities to promote environmental education and engage students in learning about the environment.

- **Nature walks and field trips:** Take students on nature walks or field trips to local parks, nature reserves, or environmental centres. Allow them to observe and explore natural habitats, ecosystems, and biodiversity first hand. Encourage students to ask questions, take notes, and engage in discussions about what they observe.
- **Environmental experiments and investigations:** Conduct hands-on experiments or investigations related to environmental topics. For example, students can measure and analyse water quality, test soil pH levels, study the impact of pollution on plants or animals, or create models to understand concepts like greenhouse gases or the water cycle.

- **Recycling and waste reduction initiatives:** Implement recycling and waste reduction initiatives in the classroom or school. Set up recycling stations, educate students about proper waste sorting, and involve them in monitoring and managing the recycling process. Encourage students to reduce waste by promoting reusable items and discouraging single-use plastics.
- **Community engagement projects:** Encourage students to get involved in community projects that focus on environmental conservation or sustainability. This could include organizing a community clean-up day, planting trees or gardens, or collaborating with local organizations to address environmental issues specific to the community.
- **Environmental debates and discussions:** Organize debates or discussions on environmental topics, allowing students to explore different perspectives and develop critical thinking skills. Assign roles for students to represent different stakeholders, such as environmental activists, policymakers, or industry representatives, and encourage respectful dialogue.
- **Documentary screenings and discussions:** Show relevant environmental documentaries or films in the classroom, followed by group discussions. This can help students gain insights into environmental challenges and spark conversations about potential solutions and actions they can take.
- **Environmental art and creative projects:** Encourage students to express their understanding and feelings about the environment through art and creative projects. This could include creating environmental-themed artwork, writing poems or stories, designing posters or infographics, or even producing short videos or presentations to raise awareness about specific environmental issues.
- **Sustainable lifestyle challenges:** Assign sustainable lifestyle challenges to students, such as tracking their energy consumption, reducing water usage, or adopting eco-friendly habits at home. Encourage students to document their progress and share their experiences, allowing them to reflect on their personal impact and develop a sense of responsibility.
- **Developing environmental awareness:** Environmental education helps students develop an understanding of the natural world, including ecosystems, biodiversity, and the

interconnections between humans and the environment. It raises awareness about environmental issues, such as climate change, pollution, and habitat destruction, fostering a sense of accountability and responsibility towards the environment. towards the environment.

- **Promoting sustainability:** Environmental education provides students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to make sustainable choices and lead environmentally responsible lives. By learning about sustainable practices, resource conservation, and alternative energy sources, students can become active participants in building a more sustainable future.
- **Encouraging critical thinking and problem-solving:** Environmental education encourages students to think critically, analyze complex environmental issues, and consider multiple perspectives. It promotes problem-solving skills, as students are challenged to find innovative solutions to environmental challenges. This empowers them to become informed and active global citizens who can contribute to creating a more sustainable society.
- **Connecting to real-world issues:** Environmental education provides a pathway for the meeting of classroom learning and real-world environmental issues. By engaging in hands-on activities, field trips, and environmental projects, students can apply their knowledge and see the direct impact of their actions on the environment. This experiential learning fosters a deeper understanding and emotional connection to the natural world.
- **Enhancing interdisciplinary learning:** Environmental education integrates various disciplines such as science, geography, social studies, and ethics. It promotes a holistic approach to learning, helping students understand the interconnectedness of environmental, social, economic, and cultural systems. This interdisciplinary approach enhances students' overall education and prepares them to address complex environmental challenges.
- **Fostering personal and social development:** Environmental education nurtures personal growth by instilling values of respect, empathy, and responsibility towards nature and the environment. It promotes teamwork, collaboration, and communication skills through group projects and environmental

initiatives. Additionally, spending time in nature has been shown to improve mental and physical well-being, reducing stress and enhancing overall health.

4. ROLE OF ECOLATE TEACHERS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Teachers play a crucial role in promoting a sustainable future. There are a multitude of ways by which this can be achieved.

- **Incorporate sustainability across the curriculum:** Infuse sustainability principles into various subjects and lessons, not just in science or environmental studies. Show students how sustainability relates to topics such as mathematics, social studies, language arts, and art. This interdisciplinary approach helps students understand the relevance and interconnectedness of sustainability in different aspects of their lives.
- **Model sustainable behavior:** Teachers should lead by example and practice sustainable behaviors in their classrooms and personal lives. This includes conserving energy, reducing waste, using sustainable materials, promoting recycling, and minimizing the use of single-use plastics. By modeling sustainable behavior, teachers inspire and encourage students to adopt similar practices.
- **To help students think critically and solve problems:** Encourage students to think critically about sustainability challenges and engage them in problem-solving activities. Teach them to analyse complex issues, consider multiple perspectives, and develop creative solutions to real-world sustainability problems. Encourage students to take ownership of their learning and become active participants in finding sustainable solutions.
- **Promote environmental stewardship:** Instil a sense of responsibility and stewardship towards the environment in students. Help them understand that they have the power to make a great change on the world through their choices and actions. Encourage them to take care of their local environment, participate in environmental initiatives, and become advocates for sustainable practices in their communities.
- **Integrate technology for sustainability:** Utilize technology to enhance sustainability education. Use online resources, virtual field trips, interactive simulations, and educational apps focused on sustainability and environmental issues. Help students understand how technology can be harnessed for sustainable development, such as

renewable energy, green transportation, and environmental monitoring.

- **Engage in community partnerships:** Collaborate with local organizations, environmental groups, and experts to bring real-world experiences and expertise into the classroom. Arrange guest speakers, organize field trips to sustainability-focused businesses or projects, or invite community members to share their experiences and knowledge. These partnerships help students connect their learning to the broader community and understand the practical applications of sustainability.
- **Encourage student projects and initiatives:** Provide opportunities for students to take the lead in sustainability projects and initiatives. Support and guide them in designing and implementing projects related to waste reduction, energy conservation, water conservation, biodiversity preservation, or sustainable gardening. These hands-on experiences empower students to become agents of change and develop leadership skills.
- **Foster global awareness and citizenship:** Help students understand the global dimensions of sustainability and their role as global citizens. Explore environmental issues and sustainability practices around the world. Foster cross-cultural understanding and empathy towards different communities and ecosystems. Encourage students to think beyond their local context and consider the broader impact of their actions on a global scale. By integrating sustainability into teaching practices, inspiring students to act, and fostering a sense of responsibility, teachers can make a significant contribution to building a sustainable future. They have the power to shape the mindset and values of future generations, creating a more environmentally conscious and responsible society.

5. CONCLUSION

In summary, environmental education is crucial for students as it develops environmental awareness, promotes sustainability, encourages critical thinking, connects to real-world issues, enhances interdisciplinary learning, and fosters personal and social development. By equipping students with knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges, environmental education empowers them to become informed and active participants in shaping a sustainable future. These activities not only provide valuable environmental education but also promote student engagement, critical thinking, and a sense of ownership in addressing environmental issues. By making the learning experience interactive and meaningful, teachers can inspire and empower students to become environmentally conscious and active participants in creating a sustainable future.

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