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RESEARCH ARTICLE

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: SOME INITIATIVES TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITH REFERENCE TO NORTH EAST REGION OF INDIA.

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Abstract

In the year 1987 Brundtland Commission Report define the concept of Sustainable Development as development that meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Education for Sustainable Development which contributes a prospect to human beings to attain the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are required to shape a sustainable future. However, it will not be sufficient to only increase basic literacy to support a sustainable society. In fact, it is also crucial to increase the number of initiatives toward sustainable development in Higher Education Level specially in Academic and Research institutions in the country. This paper focuses on SDG 4 which is “Quality Education” and its different targets. It also includes an overview of SDG India index 2020-21 which was released by NITI Aayog and some of the initiatives towards sustainable development which are being taken up by a host of reputed research and educational institutions in the North – Eastern Region of India.

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Introduction:-

The concept of Education for sustainable development has its origin in environmental education, which has evolved since the 1960s and relate with a number of approaches to education with pertinence to personal, social, economic and environmental changes. In 21st century the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) emphasize the role of Education that can play universal journey with regard to the Sustainable Development around the globe and in recover the planet. Education for sustainable development imply a quality of change in academic practice. It expands the manpower for different levels of economy. Education for sustainable development (ESD) has become a principal or major issue in society. United Nations Decade for Education (DESD, 2005-2014) has inspired innovative approaches in education in order to provide societal change with regard to sustainability through both formal as well as informal education. Over the last decade a plenty of education for sustainable development (ESD) initiatives have grown at all the levels in society. Former United Nations Secretary-General, Ban ki-Moon talks about Education which is essential as well as fundamental right and the basis for growth in every country. Parents require knowledge about health and nutrition if they are to give their children the start in life they deserve. Prosperous countries rest on skilled and educated workers. The threats of conquering poverty, combating climate change and achieving truly sustainable development in the coming decades impel us to work together. With partnership, leadership and wise investment in education, we can reform individual lives, national economics and our world.

Meaning and Definition of Sustainable Development:

The world commission on Environment and development in the year 1987 define the concept of Education for sustainable development as it is about the learning required to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality-of-life generation to come. It is about providing individuals, communities' groups, businesses and environment to live and act sustainably; as well as giving them an insight of the environmental, social and economic success involved. It is about adopting for the world in which we will live in the next century, and making sure that we are not found wanting.

In this way, Education for sustainable development empower peoples to expand the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally that will enhance the quality of life now without crippling the planet for the future.

The Emergence of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD):

Education for sustainable development (ESD) has become a major essence of environmental policy making as well as sustainable development strategies. It is embedding seventies at many international conferences on Environmental Education (EE), including the Man and Environment conference held in Stockholm in 1972 and the UNESCO-UNEP conference on Environmental Education held in Tbilisi in 1997 and UNCED Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Chapter 36 of Agenda 21 highlight that education is an indispensable element in the promotion of sustainable development and as well as in the development of people's skill when concerning with developmental and environmental matters.

United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UNDESD) (2005-2014) was recommended and adopted at the World Summit of Sustainable development in 2002, where the Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development (UN, 2002) was issued.

Several educational policies of governments both in the South as well as North call for the incorporation of ESD and ESD -related, so called 'adjectival' educations which includes- climate change education, development education, health education, peace education, citizenship education and environmental education both in formal along with non-formal education. ESD has a prominent place in the international policy and acts as an instrument for realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and making ESD an crucial area of expertise.

On of another international policy named Sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) which was developed at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable developmental, held in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, 2012 to create a set of global goals for facing challenges in environmental as well as economic and political sector. In this way September 2015, UN formally adopted the 17 sustainable developmental goals (SDGs) for the period 2015-2030 and replaced the eight Millennium Development Goals. Among the 17 goals, Sustainable developmental goal 4 (SDG4) advocate for inclusive and quality education along with lifelong learning opportunities for all and come up with 10 targets.

1. **Target 4.1** asserts that by 2030 all boys and girls to accomplished free, equitable and quality primary & secondary education which leads to effective learning outcome and also ensures that learners obtain the knowledge and skills needed to assist sustainable development through education for sustainable life styles.
2. **Target 4.2** declare that by 2030 all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education by which they are ready for primary education.
3. **Target 4.3** ensure that by 2030 equal access for everyone women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.
4. **Target 4.4** assure to increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship by 2030.
5. **Target 4.5** ensure to eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training along with persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations by 2030.
6. **Target 4.6** declare that all children and a substantial proportion of adults have to achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.
7. **Target 4.7** provide that by 2030 every learners have to obtain the knowledge and skills required to foster sustainable development through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and nonviolence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development.

8. **Target 4.a** Raise and enhance education facilities for the child, disability and gender sensitive and equip safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for each and every one.
9. **Target 4.b** Ensure that by 2020, enlarging substantially globally in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island, developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education as well as vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.
10. **Target 4.c** Ensure that before 2030 substantially rise the number of qualified teachers through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, particularly least developed countries and small island developing States.

With direct reference to Education, there are 5 SDG's:

1. The first one is on Health and well-being which comes under SDG 3 and target 3.7. This SDG will work on ensuring universal access to health care service related to sexual and reproductive health by 2030. It will also include family planning, education, information and the integration of reproductive health into national programmes.
2. The next SDG is based on Gender Equality. It is numbered as SDG 5 and target is 5.6. This SDG guarantees women aged between 15-49 years' access to healthcare on sexual and reproductive health and also provide information and education.
3. The next SDG is based on Decent Work and Sustainable Growth. It is referred as SDG 8 and target is 8.6. This SDG aims at substantially reducing the proportion of youth not in employment and providing them with training and education.
4. SDG 12 with the target 12.8 is based on responsible consumption and production. This SDG aims at ensuring by 2030 that people everywhere have relevant awareness and information about sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.
5. SDG 13 with the target 13.3 is on climate change mitigation. Its objective is the improvement of education, awareness raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) India Index 2020-21 by NITI- Aayog

The SDG India Index computes goal-wise scores on the 17 SDGs for each State and Union Territory. The Performance of States and Union Territories on SDGs are given below:

Performance of States on SDGs:

Sl No	State	Score Range
1.	Kerala	75
2.	Himachal Pradesh	74
3.	Tamil Nadu	74
4.	Andhra Pradesh	72
5.	Goa	72
6.	Karnataka	72
7.	Uttarakhand	72
8.	Sikkim	71
9.	Maharashtra	70
10.	Gujarat	69
11.	Telangana	69
12.	Mizoram	68
13.	Punjab	68
14.	Haryana	67
15.	Tripura	65
16.	Manipur	64
17.	Madhya Pradesh	62
18.	West-Bengal	62
19.	Chhattisgarh	61
20.	Nagaland	61
21.	Odisha	61

22.	Arunachal Pradesh	60
23.	Meghalaya	60
24.	Rajasthan	60
25.	Uttar Pradesh	60
26.	Assam	57
27.	Jharkhand	56
28.	Bihar	52

Union territories:

Chandigarh ranked 1st with a score rank of 79, Delhi was Second with a rank of 68 followed by Puducherry, Lakshadweep with the same score rank. Andaman and Nicobar Islands got the fifth rank with 67 score rank. Jammu and Kashmir is in the sixth rank with 66 score rank followed by Ladakh with 66 score rank and Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu with 62 score rank.

Some of the Initiatives towards Sustainable Development in the North-Eastern Region of India:

Institute of Biodiversity and Sustainability Development was established in 2001. It was established under the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India. The institute has research centers in the state of Sikkim, Mizoram and Meghalaya. The main mandate of IBSD is on conservation of resources and sustainably utilizing the resources for socio-economic development of the region. The institute includes the study of medicinal plants and cultural resources and in vitro conservation of selected plant resources for sustainable utilization. IBSD also includes Entrepreneurship Development Programme for unemployed youth on sustainable utilization of microbial and botanical products. (IBSD 2016)

NERCORMP is a project working on rural development. It covers 6 districts in 3 states of North East India like Meghalaya, Assam and Manipur. The main objective of North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Project is of improving the livelihood of groups of people who are vulnerable. This improvement is to be done in a sustainable manner and by improving the way resources are managed. The institute of NERCORMP undertakes various programmes and activities where communities are assisted to conserve their unique and natural resources. (2017 NERCORMP)

North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST), is located in Jorhat. It was established in the year 1961. It is one of the multidisciplinary laboratories of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The mandate of the institute is to put to fruitful use the vast material resources of North East region and to give ideas and inputs on research and development so that the economy of the region develops.

North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) is located in Nirjuli, Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh. This institute is funded by the MHRD, Government of India. The Forestry Department in the institute offers various courses with the objective to generate intellectual human resources with better understanding of the conservation aspects and sustainable management of large forest covers in North eastern India.

ICAR Research Complex for North Eastern Hill Region, Umiam, Meghalaya. It was established in the year 1975 by the Indian Council of Agricultural research (ICAR). Its mandate includes the improvement and development of sustainable farming systems for different socio-economic and agro climatic conditions of the North East region.

NEHU is an institute located in Shillong, Meghalaya and the objective of this institute is to spread knowledge and provide facilities for research and instruction in different fields of learning. It also aims to improve social and economic conditions and also work on the welfare of the people of the hill areas of North Eastern Region.

Conclusion:-

There is an urgent need to reorient existing educational programmes from early childhood to higher education to address sustainability. Students need to be given awareness of the possible environment related challenges which they may be exposed to in the future. When educating on issues like Sustainable Development, it is important to incorporate issues like climate change, sustainable consumption, biodiversity etc. as they are considered to be important issues related to sustainable development. All this should be incorporated into teaching and learning. It should also develop methodology that motivates students to alter their attitude as well as behavior towards

sustainable development and start taking action on important issues like conservation of resources. Research and innovation are equally important to attain the goals of Sustainable development. Youths need to be trained and made aware of issues related to Sustainable Development and so Institutes of research and Universities can play an important role in this regard. Higher Education Institutes (HEI's) also have an important role to sensitize students and local people to transform themselves socially through research and education and in creating and facilitating environments to learn and live in sustainability. India being a signatory to the resolution of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which adopts 17 Sustainable Goals (SDGs) and each state has the obligation to adopt these 17 SDGs for its Vision 2030 plan including the North Eastern States. NITI Aayog has a SDG India Index and several North Eastern States ranked on the top. In the coming days the states will be partnering with NITI Aayog to strengthen their resolve for the SDGs. Many states in India have already taken important steps so as to integrate the agenda 2030 framework in their developmental planning and vision documents. All these will definitely go a long way and be a contributing factor so that the SDG's are implemented in the North East Region of India.

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