Seeding the 'We' Factor in Every 'Me'

Yasmin Ghani Khan

Victoria College of Education, Nayapura, Bhopal - 462 042, Madya Pradesh, India

E-mail : yasminghani@rocketmail.com

(Received on 15 February 2012 and accepted on 10 April 2012)

Abstract - **Environment, its conservation and sustainable development are the talk of the day. While conducting researches on various age groups regarding their attitude and behavior towards this issue, it was felt that the '*tubula rasa*' could be developed as perfect weapon against environmental exploitation. These little ones ought to be caught juvenile to be moulded into socially constructive creatures instead of just being successful professionals indifferent to environment and mankind. Children have to be helped to groom the 'we-feeling' of belongingness in society so that they deal with their problems without creating problems for others with specific reference to environmental problems. Environmental education must be integrated with academics at all levels of education particularly the affective domain in primary school (rather than having it as a school subject that the learner may like or dislike). It also suggests that the bird (students) be caught early in the process of educating them for living a life ornamented with ethical boundaries yet open to new innovation and respect for co-existence.**

Keywords: **Social Imagination, Environmental Conservation, We-Factor, Social Action, Research**

I. Introduction

The status of the environment is itself a revealer of the fact that Environmental Studies or EVS has been unable to achieve the aims with which it was introduced into the school syllabus. The main aim of EVS in the classroom is to develop environmental protecting competencies. These competencies take the form of knowledge, behaviours, and skills which are necessary to effectively incorporate the environmental dimensions in daily life of school children who will be the adults tomorrow. The attitude and emotional behaviour of an individual towards his/her environment may be termed the 'Affective Domain Objectives' of EVS. Lessons in EVS stress on the nature of environmental change, methods of involving students and teachers in local community environmental problems and the development of environmental activities for school students. They also allow adolescent minds to share human and material resources, to receive individualized and group assistance in a cooperating not competing and threatening environment, and to make attitudinal improvements in the child's behaviour towards the environment.

A. The Problem: One of the serious challenges to changing behavior is the perception that individual contributions to environmental problems are small and, therefore, inconsequential. People's misapprehension of their role as a causative factor in environmental degradation leads them to resist changing their behavior, especially when behavior change is costly or inconvenient.

B. Statement of the Problem: Analysis of the achievement of affective domain objectives of teaching Environmental Studies in Secondary Schools.

II. Objectives Of The Study

1. To analyse the extent to which the affective domain aims of Environmental Studies have been achieved;
2. To compare the awareness of boys and girls about their environment;
3. To compare the attitude of boys and girls towards their responsibility towards the environment.

III. Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness of boys and girls about their environment.
2. There is a significant difference in attitude of boys and girls towards their responsibility towards the environment.

A. The Sample: 269 students (143 boys and 126 girls) studying in class IX in 7 schools in Bhopal. 105 (56 boys and 49 girls) students belonged government run schools and whereas 164 (87 boys and 77 girls) students studied in private owned schools.

IV. Methodology

A self made test was given to the students to analyse the students' awareness of environmental problems and two activities were performed in small groups of 10-15 students to observe individual and group efforts of the students towards their personal contribution to the conservation of environment and solving its problems at local level.

V. Findings

A. Test Results

1. 100% awareness was found among the students about environmental issues like excessive emission of green house gas CO_2 and its sources, Acid rain and Ozone depletion.
2. 27% students were able to name three green house gases.
3. Causes of deforestations and the need for aforestation were known to 67% students.
4. The boys scored insignificantly more than the girls.
5. All students were aware that environmental protection laws existed but only 3% students knew about them.

B. Activity Observations

1. All students worked cooperatively in the given tasks for team victory.
2. 17% students showed some complete indifference towards their personal contribution towards the environment.
3. 44% students plucked flowers and leaves to complete their assignments.
4. No novel idea for conservation of water could be generated by the students.
5. The girls showed insignificantly more responsibility towards the environment.
6. 56% students showed a positively attitude towards individual contribution towards the environment being a social responsibility.

VI. Results and Discussion

Someone using the sociological imagination 'thinks himself away' from the familiar routines of daily life. To acquire knowledge, through research it is important to not follow a routine, you have to break free from the immediacy of personal circumstances and put things into a wider context. This research needs to be trickled down to the main benefactors i.e., the masses; who in turn, should to modify the concept according to local requirements and to then make the research practically effective at grass root levels.

While working with students it was felt that this facet could be developed as perfect weapon against environmental exploitation. They ought to be caught young to be moulded into positively beneficial human beings instead of just being successful professionals indifferent to suffering in society. Children have to develop the 'we-feeling' of belongingness in society so that they deal with their problems without creating them for others.

Over a decade ago, former Environmental Protection Agency of America Administrator William Ruckelshaus recognized that fact: "The most significant threats to our environment now seem to lie, not with major industrial sites, but in the habits of ordinary Americans: we like to drive big powerful cars, use a lot of electricity, generate a lot of waste, enjoy cheap food, live in grassy suburbs, and collectively send pollution in massive amounts to often distant waterways and airsheds. Each one of us pollutes 'when we drive our cars, fertilize and mow our yards, pour household chemicals on the ground or down the drain, and engage in myriad other common activities. Although each activity contributes minute amounts of pollutants, when aggregated across millions of individuals, the total amounts are stunning.' The result is that while industrial sources continue to be a major cause of pollution, individuals are now the largest remaining source of many pollutants. Individuals release almost a third of the chemicals that form low-level ozone or smog. Households discharge as much mercury to wastewater as do all large industrial facilities combined. Common household products, like soft drinks, and toiletries, like shaving cream, deodorants, soap, shampoo, toothpaste, mouthwash, and detergents, are responsible for nearly 15% of mercury found in domestic wastewater. Individuals also release mercury when they dispose of household products, batteries, fluorescent lighting, thermometers, and electronic equipment like cell phones and computers in landfills or along the sides of roads. Measured levels of pollutants in the air inside homes have exceeded by several times the levels in the ambient air, and indoor air pollution is a leading human exposure route for many toxics.

While working with students, it was felt that this facet could be developed as perfect weapon against environmental exploitation. They ought to be caught young to be moulded into positively beneficial human beings instead of just being successful professionals indifferent to suffering in society. Children have to develop the 'we-feeling' of belongingness in society so that they deal with their problems without creating them for others with specific reference to environmental problems.

The role of environmental studies in developing environment conscious citizens can not be doubted but it requires the grooming of social imagination. Inculcating from childhood the qualities of exploring and creating original, locally applicable solutions to local environmental issues is yet to be an inseparable aspect of the objectives of teaching

environmental education. Social imagination blended with environmental studies will encourage individuals to act socially for the protection of their own environment. This alone can make environmental issues not only mass movements but also personal attitudes with a positive difference.

References

[1] John W Best, *Research in Education,* Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1977.

[2] Benjamin S Bloom, *Handbook I: Cognitive Domain,* N.Y. David McKay Co., New York, 1956.

[3] M. Babcock Hope, *Assuming Personal Responsibility for Improving the Environment:* Moving towards A New Environmental Norm http://www.law.harvard.edu/students

[4] Bruce Joyce and Marsha lleil, *Models of Teaching,* Prentice-Hall, New Jersey, 1972.

[5] F.N.Kerlinger, *Foundations of Behavioural Research,* Surjeet Publication, New Delhi, 2007.

[6] Piaget Jean, *The Moral judgment of the Child,* Free Press, New York, 1966.

[7] M.S.Prashanth, *Environmental Studies,* Diamond Publication, Pune, 2006.