

Environment literally means surrounding in which we are living. Environment includes all those things on which we are directly or indirectly dependent for our survival, whether it is living component like animals, plants or non-living components like soil, air water.

Environmental Protection Act (1986) defined “Environment as the sum total of water, air and land, their interrelationship among themselves and with the human beings, other living beings and property.”

The components of environmental education are:

1. Awareness and sensitivity to the environment and environmental challenges
2. Knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental challenges
3. Attitudes of concern for the environment and motivation to improve or maintain environmental quality
4. Skills to identify and help resolve environmental challenges
5. Participation in activities that lead to the resolution of environmental challenges

Environmental education teaches individuals how to weigh various sides of an issue through critical thinking and it enhances their own problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Environmental education is a process that allows individuals to explore environmental issues, engage in problem solving, and take action to improve the environment. As a result, individuals develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues and have the skills to make informed and responsible decisions.

Environmental Education (EE) is a process in which individuals gain awareness of their environment and acquire knowledge, skills, values, experiences, and also the determination, which will enable them to act - individually and collectively - to solve present and future environmental problems.

EE is a complex process, covering not just events, but a strong underlying approach to society building as a whole. EE provides people with the awareness needed to build partnerships, understand NGO activities, develop participatory approaches to urban planning, and ensure future markets for eco-business.

According to UNESCO, the guiding principles of environmental education should be as follows:

- (a) Environmental education should be compulsory, right from the primary up to the post graduate stage.
- (b) Environmental education should have an interdisciplinary approach by including physical, chemical, biological as well as socio-cultural aspects of the environment. It should build a bridge between biology and technology.
- (c) Environmental education should take into account the historical perspective, the current and the potential historical issues.

(d) Environmental education should emphasize the importance of sustainable development i.e., economic development without degrading the environment.

(e) Environmental education should emphasize the necessity of seeking international cooperation in environmental planning.

(f) Environmental education should lay more stress on practical activities and first hand experiences.

Definitions-

1. Mishra (1993) - "EE appears to be a process that equips human being with awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes & commitment to improve environment."

2. R. A. Sharma (1996) - "EE refers to the awareness of physical & cultural environment & perceive its relevance for real life situation."

3. Cook & Hearn (1971) - "EE is problem centered interdisciplinary, value- oriented, community-oriented & concerned with man's survival as species, based on student initiated activities & involves present & future oriented."

Objectives-

1. To develop an awareness of environment & sensitivity (feeling & attitudes) to the total environment & it's allied problems.
2. To help acquiring knowledge & variety of experience of environment associated problems.
3. To develop basic understanding of structure, process & problems of environment & interdependence of environmental components.
4. To develop attitudes, a set of values & feelings of concern about environment.
5. To provide an opportunity for an active participation or practice at all levels in working for solution of environmental problems.

Principles-

- 1) To consider the environment in its totality.
- 2) To consider a continuous life process from pre-school to all higher levels formal as well as non-formal.
- 3) To be interdisciplinary in approach in EE.
- 4) To emphasize active participation in prevention & solution of environmental problems. from local, national, international point of view.
- 5) To examine major environmental issues from local, national, international point of view.

- 6) To focus on current, potential environmental issues & situations.
- 7) To consider environmental aspects in plans for growth & development.
- 8) To emphasize the complexity of environmental problems & need to develop critical thinking & problem solving attitude.
- 9) To promote the values & necessity of local, national & international co-operation in the prevention & solution of environmental problems.
- 10) To help learners to discover the symptoms & the real causes of environmental problems.

Scope and Importance of Environmental Studies:

The disciplines included in environmental education are environmental sciences, environmental engineering and environmental management.

(a) Environmental Science:

It deals with the scientific study of environmental system (air, water, soil and land), the inherent or induced changes on organisms and the environmental damages incurred as a result of human interaction with the environment.

(b) Environmental Engineering:

It deals with the study of technical processes involved in the protection of environment from the potentially deleterious effects of human activity and improving the environmental quality for the health and well beings of humans.

(c) Environmental Management:

It promotes due regard for physical, social and economic environment of the enterprise or projects. It encourages planned investment at the start of the production chain rather than forced investment in cleaning up at the end.

The importance of environmental studies is as follows:

1. To clarify modern environmental concept like how to conserve biodiversity.
2. To know the more sustainable way of living.
3. To use natural resources more efficiently.
4. To know the behaviour of organism under natural conditions.
5. To know the interrelationship between organisms in populations and communities.
6. To aware and educate people regarding environmental issues and problems at local, national and international levels.

Need of environmental education

1. **Improving Academic Achievement:** EE improves test scores by providing students with engaging lessons about the natural world that can be applied to all subject areas and grades.
2. **Breaking the Indoor Habit:** EE offers an antidote to the plugged-in lives of today's generation, which is the first to grow up indoors. Children who experience school grounds or play areas with diverse natural settings are more physically active, more aware of good nutrition, more creative, and more civil to one another.
3. **Improving Student Health:** EE gets students outdoors and active, and helps to address common health issues in children today, such as obesity, attention deficit disorder, and depression.
4. **Supporting STEM:** EE offers an engaging platform for gaining and applying knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM):
5. **Improving Focus and Cognition:** EE increases the ability of students to focus and improves their cognitive abilities. Children with attention-deficit disorder also benefit from more exposure to nature—the greener a child's everyday environment, the more manageable are their symptoms.

References:

<https://www.plt.org/educator-tips/top-ten-benefits-environmental-education/>

<http://www.nea.org/home/Green-Schools-Environmental-Education.html>