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## Conceptual Development of Education for sustainable development.

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**Major Theme** : Education for sustainable Development

**Sub Theme** : Structuring & Placing ESD in the Curriculum.

**Title of the Paper** : Conceptual Development of Education for sustainable development.

### ABSTRACT :

The Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has Indicated that the nation sustainability further complements human development, "The long term viability of the development process, the improvement of the standard of living of the on showing regard for natural future generations and environment on which all life depends. There are many definitions of sustainable development, and it can be better understood as an emerging vision, rather than a neatly defined concept or relationship. Education in its role for sustainable development is the most effective means for humankind to preserve the long accepted traditions, transforming the society of today.

Thus, more dynamic meaning of ESD utilizes all aspects of public awareness, education and training as powerful instruments to create both understanding about sustainability. The concept of development has considerably evolved and broadly redefined, which transcends economics to encompass its social, ethical, cultural and ecological dimensions as well. ESD has evolved from Environment Education and Environment Population and Development, which have been introduced into many countries worldwide. Teacher training and professional development to support ESD should be a priority in member countries.

Some of the teaching learning approaches that could support ESD include: (a) hands-on experiential learning, (b) inquiry/problem based learning (c) project based, (d) utilizing term learning approaches (e) Promoting creative and innovative learning (f) development of integrating values education and (g) using ICT and media/popular culture in the learning situations. Students will need a supportive learning environment for active learning.

|                           |          |                                                                         |
|---------------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Major Theme</b>        | <b>:</b> | <b>Education for sustainable Development</b>                            |
| <b>Sub Theme</b>          | <b>:</b> | <b>Structuring &amp; Placing ESD in the Curriculum.</b>                 |
| <b>Title of the Paper</b> | <b>:</b> | <b>Conceptual Development of Education for sustainable development.</b> |

## **i. Introduction:**

The commission on Education for the 21st Century (Delor's Report) has indicated that the notion of 'sustainability' further complements to human development, which stress "the long-term viability of the development process, the improvement of the standard of living of future generations and on showing regard for the natural environment on which all life depends." Actions will be according to local context, priorities and approaches. There will be no single 'right' definition or rather an overall agreement on the concept of sustainable development addressed by education. Four major thrusts: (1) promotion and improvement of basic education; (2) re-orienting existing education at all levels to address sustainable development; (3) development of public understanding; and (4) awareness of sustainability and training. These thrusts were originally identified and have been expanded for Sustainable Development Work Programmed.

There are many definitions of sustainable development, and it can be better understood as an emerging vision, rather than a neatly defined concept or relationship. 'It is not a fixed notion, but rather a process of change in the relationships between social, economic, and natural systems.' The UNDP's concept and index of Human Development focus attention on the ends, namely the people that development must serve, rather than on means, such as increased production, alone. It has been defined as development of the people, for the people, by the people. It includes economic, social, environmental, scientific- technological and cultural dimensions, and is a continuously evolving process and expanding, moving towards a 'holistic' approach to the future of society.

## **ii. Role of ESD in Education:**

Education in its role for sustainable development is the most effective means for humankind to preserve the long accepted traditions, transforming the society of today, and shaping the world of tomorrow. Human progress increasingly depends on the products of educated minds: upon research, invention, innovation, creation and application of knowledge, and adaptation to change. Education in its broadest sense is a vital part of all efforts in creating new relations for sustainable development. UNESCO (2002) defines ESD as a dynamic concept that encompasses a new vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating and enjoying a sustainable future." It is not so much education about sustainable development, but education for sustainable development, which makes the concept participatory a comprehensive. It is an information driven and participatory concept that encourages educators and learners to interact, debate and foster learning that emerges from experiences and creativity. This more dynamic meaning of ESD utilizes all aspects of

public awareness, education and training as powerful instruments to create both understanding about sustainability, but also to develop the knowledge, skills, perspectives and values to participate in individual and collective decisions that will improve the quality of life.

ESD came about from a broad understanding of development, which includes equitable distribution of wealth, participation by the population in the process of decision-making, protection of environment, and preservation of the cultural identity of the community. Later revision also added a global dimension, aimed at correcting the imbalance and inequality in the international distribution of the benefits of the global process, thus conceived as a process of societal change, and it has become a normative, rather than a descriptive concept which stipulates how things ought to be, not how they really are. With the shift of development models from 'all for economic growth' to 'equitable and sustainable people-centered development' in the late 20th century, the concept of development has considerably evolved and broadly redefined, which transcends economics to encompass its social, ethical, cultural and ecological dimensions as well.

From another perspective, ESD can be defined as a transdisciplinary approach to education an instrument for action, in devising options for a future based on the concept of sustainability, equity, justice and peace (UNESCO, 2004). It goes beyond conventional models in different disciplines to develop new vision of learning and new global consciousness for changes in behavior and lifestyles conducive to social, economic cultural and environment sustainability (UNESCO, 2004).

ESD promotes social cohesion and inclusion based on shared activities, purposes, and values, which represent different aspects of the desire to live together. The alarming picture of the present social situation is an example of the acute crisis in social cohesion. Education has had its central place among the forces at work in society. Faced with the crisis of social cohesion, education has to full fill one of its functions as a melting pot to combat all forms of exclusion, promoting public awareness of the wide range of cultural backgrounds of the groups making up a society. Education could contribute to social cohesion and sustainable development in many ways. Education has been placed at the core of the value order, and values as the sustaining force in education. In serving the development needs of the people, both education and culture becomes a means to and an end of development.

### **iii. ESD for Human Development:**

ESD has evolved from Environment Education (EE) and Environment Population and Development (EPD), which has been introduced into many countries worldwide, with a view of enhancing the incorporation of the broader education for sustainable development. EPD to focus on the meant sustainable development taking into account the importance of human dignity in improving the quality of life and of the environment, while promoting a culture of peace, solidarity and International understanding; the diversity of life and the balance between reasonable human activities and the need to preserve natural ecosystems; a global and local perspective with regard to the impact of global environment and population change; building human capacities, promoting people participation and cooperation among the people and institutions; and re-orienting and improving the quality of education and the means to disseminate knowledge on aspects of human sustainable development.

### **iv. Issues in ESD:**

Sustainable development requires active and knowledgeable citizen, and informed economic decision maker, capable of making the right choice while taking necessary

complex interrelated economic, social and environmental decision. Education for sustainable development becomes prerequisites to this end.

- In defining the broad framework and defining objectives for ESD and to be able to evaluate relevancy of choices, the following mapping strategies may be undertaken:
  - i. Ways of learning to support ESD (teacher's pedagogy, learning theories, supportive learning environments;
  - ii. Existing materials/development of materials (learning resources and building relationships);
  - iii. Learning environments/context for learning, both at the formal - early childhood, primary, secondary, higher education and technical education and informal levels involving the community - family, neighborhoods, media/government and industry; and
  - iv. Evaluation of learning achievements.
- In terms of policy framework, most countries may have existing national policies that include a number of core content areas of ESD, but not in a very strategic way. There is a need felt to reorient policies and revise the curriculum for an aligned cohesive framework of ESD, which is research-based and with identified benchmark/ competencies to be achieved at national levels. ESD could be a separate subject or a cross disciplinary subject. A separate supporting body within the existing National Educational management structure is being encouraged as a means for supporting the development of the national level policies in ESD (move from margins to the center) and this body will facilitate the ongoing development, design and evaluation of ESD within the country. Teacher training and professional development to support ESD should be a priority in member countries.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) could be utilized as learning tools on line and for distance learning. The different strategies could promote equitable access and extend opportunities for students, teachers and schools to connect and link among them in exploring real life issues. A variety of youth forums for students have been organized by UNESCO and UNICED to discuss issues in different contexts. Many teaching and learning materials are available relevant to students' needs, and taking into account their experiences in the local context. However, the materials need to be reviewed and re-oriented to be user-friendly, adaptable and flexible, its content and pedagogy which can be used across a variety of learning situations at the formal, informal, non formal and community levels. The different sectors in the schools, community, and industry must also be involved. Building teacher capacity should be an important element of national policy to ensure that teachers acquire adequate skills and knowledge for taking up ESD in the teaching-learning process.

Appropriate pedagogy, use of current learning theories and supportive learning environments are needed to support ESD.

**v. Conclusion:**

Learning should be enjoyable, embedded in real life experiences and finding relevant solutions to issues and problems. Learner-centered pedagogies utilizing constructivist theories of learning supports this real world learning. Some of the teaching learning approaches that could support ESD

**Include:**

- a. Hands-on experiential learning;
  - b. inquiry/problem based learning (exploring cause and effect-consequences);
  - c. Project based
  - d. Utilizing team learning approaches;
  - e. Promoting creative and innovative learning;
  - f. Integrating values education; and
  - g. Using ICT and Media/popular culture in the learning situation.
- Students would need a supportive learning environment for active learning.

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