

## TEACHING FOR BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The term biodiversity is a combination of two terms viz., 'bio' which means life and 'diversity' which means variety or richness. Biodiversity is the number and variety of species found within a specified geographic region. The term biological diversity was used first by wildlife scientist and conservationist Raymond F. Dasmann in 1968. The term's contracted form 'biodiversity' was coined by W.G. Rosen in 1985. UNESCO designated 2011-2020 as the UN Decade on biodiversity. Before that, the year 2010 was celebrated by UN as International Year of Biodiversity. The slogan of the biodiversity year was "Biodiversity is life, Biodiversity is our life". Various programmes on this regard were conducted all around the globe, which emphasized the need and importance of the participation of people from all walks of life, especially students all around the globe in the biodiversity conservation activities. Education, being the most powerful tool for social change is the precise weapon to fight against biodiversity depletion and degradation. This paper is an attempt to describe the various strategies to empower students for biodiversity conservation.*

**Key terms:** *Biodiversity, Empowerment strategies, Conservation.*

It is a curious situation that the sea, from which life first arose, should now be threatened by the activities of one form of that life. But the sea, though changed in a sinister way, will continue to exist; the threat is rather to life itself. **(Rachel Carson-1951)**

The very existence of man in a food chain turns a threat to that entire food web. Excessive consumption of fossil fuels, massive destruction of forests and ecosystems, over exploitation of natural resources and indiscriminate release of hazardous pollutants into the environment are depleting the available natural resources. Future generations may not be able to get the benefits of these natural resources, as our present generation would already have consumed them completely. Therefore we should consume all natural resources only at a sustainable rate. Not only that, every developmental activity should consider the importance of conserving natural resources without exhausting their supply for the present and future generations. Natural resources should be used with care so as to enable the nature to replenish them. The future of life on earth depends primarily on the conservation of biodiversity. People all around the globe and from all walks of life must have awareness about the vital importance of biodiversity conservation. Channelizing the constructive and creative energy of the youth for the conservation and up gradation of environment is a need of the hour. The year 2010 was celebrated by UN as the International Year of Biodiversity; the people all over the world are working to safe guard this irreplaceable natural wealth and reduce biodiversity loss. This is vital for current and future human well being.

### **The 2010 Biodiversity Target of UN**

“To achieve, by 2010, a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level, as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on earth.”

### **Main Goals of Biodiversity Year 2010**

- **Enhance** public awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity and of the underlying threats to biodiversity.
- **Raise** awareness of accomplishments to save biodiversity as realized by communities and governments.
- **Promote** innovative solutions to reduce the threats to biodiversity.
- **Encourage** individuals, organizations and governments to take immediate steps to halt biodiversity loss.
- **Encourage** dialogue between stake holders for the steps to be taken in post 2010.

A global multiyear campaign named as “Green Wave” that enables children and youth to make a difference – one school, one tree, one step at a time was launched worldwide. The Green Wave brought together children and youth from around the world to raise awareness about biodiversity and the need to reduce its loss. The Green Wave contributes to the plant for the Planet Billion Tree Campaign.

The Green Wave was a mass movement to empower youth especially students for biodiversity conservation. A better quality of life should be assured for everyone, now and for generations to come.

### **Principles of Biodiversity Education**

- Create Biodiversity awareness
- Provide Knowledge, Attitude and Skills to conserve and improve Biodiversity.
- Create positive behavior towards environment.

### **Scope of Biodiversity Education**

- Education about Biodiversity
- Education for Biodiversity
- Education in and through Nature

### **Aims and Objectives of Biodiversity Education**

- To create responsible attitude towards environment.
- To create responsible attitude towards sustainable development.
- To create environmental citizenship.
- To save the earth.
- To increase active public participation.
- To suggest possible solutions.
- To develop habits at grass root level.

### **Approaches to Biodiversity Education**

1. Inter Disciplinary Approach: Teach environmental education including elements from all subjects.
2. Multi Disciplinary Approach: There will not be any separate unit for environmental education. Incorporate it wherever applicable.
3. Infusion: Carefully include environmental education to existing syllabus.

### **Strategies for Biodiversity Education**

The strategies depend upon situation and circumstances. The enthusiasm and vision of the teachers play crucial role in the adoption of appropriate strategies. A visionary teacher can mould the students to environmental citizenship. The major strategies are listed below:

- Field Trips, Tours & Visits
- Discussion & Debate
- Exhibitions
- Drama & Role play
- Expert lectures
- Case study
- Brain Storming
- Nature Rambling
- Projects
- Campaigns.

### **Importance of Biodiversity Education**

- Future of the life on planet earth depends solely on conservation of Biodiversity.
- Environmental issues create international problems.
- To promote public participation in conservation of biodiversity
- Problems aroused and followed with development and population explosion
- Need for alternative solutions
- To save humanity from extinction.
- To reduce poverty, degradation of land, pollution etc.
- To protect forests, oceans, glaciers & other natural resources.
- To solve environmental crisis.
- To think globally and act locally
- To change the attitudes and life styles.

### **Conclusion**

Everyone in this world, including future generations, should get the benefits of prosperity and clean environment. Eradication of unemployment, poverty, poor housing and pollution are social aims of sustainable development. In the world economy the stronger nations have been over-exploiting natural resources to become rich. This should not be so and the fruits of development should reach all. Various environmental conservation and biodiversity restoration programmes are being

organized worldwide. As the quality of environment depends upon the quality of environmental education, empowering teachers and students to safeguard biodiversity is essential. Now a days most of the governmental programmes for environmental conservation are carried out through students at various levels. The synergy of youth can be creatively channelized by visionary teachers. Students and youth empowered with adequate knowledge, attitude and skills will definitely help the biodiversity conservation of any nation.

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