

Responsible environmental behaviour: A study of issues & awareness

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Abstract

The most severe and enduring threat facing the world is the danger that human actions are producing irreversible harmful changes to the environmental conditions that hold up and sustain life on Earth. If this problem is not overcome, there may be no viable world for our descendants to inhabit. Enormous changes to human lifestyles and cultural practices may be required to reach the goal of a sustainable level of impact on the environment i.e., one that can be maintained indefinitely. Environment is not only the sum of all the material things that constantly interact with each other and which make up the mosaic of the country side landscape. It is much more than this. It also includes the economic structures and the outlook and habits of the people in different parts of the world” (UNESCO, 1990). The formal education system should aid in reaching this goal by teaching about environmentally responsible behavior.

In this present paper an attempt has been made to discuss the various issues and awareness programs pertaining to environmental behaviour.

Keywords: environment, environmental behavior, environmental education

Introduction

The education should provide sound information and strengthen motivation and behavioral skills that are necessary to make the needed changes in behaviour and lifestyles. The National Policy on Education, 1986 states, “There is paramount need to create a consciousness of the Environment. It must permeate all ages and all sections of society, beginning with the child. Further, education at tertiary level should not consider only academic and professional achievements, but also an education to be a better citizen of society.”

Undoubtedly, over the past decade, support has steadily grown among environmental educationists for the importance of developing individuals who behave responsibly towards the environment. This support has grown to such an extent that it can now be said that the development of environmentally responsible behavior and active citizen has become the ultimate goal of environmental education. Despite this agreement the goal has yet not been achieved.

The teacher education programmes, in particular, need to work in the direction and develop an attitude of responsible behavior among its learners. This is because the teachers carry the legacy to the future generation. If the teachers are able to bring in attitude change and make them more responsible, then half the battle is won. The attitude change positively leads to the potential change towards responsible environmental behaviors. Mathews and Riley revealed that increase in knowledge lead to change in attitude, which in turn influence behavior. Jain studied Environmental Education in Nigerian School emphasizing the need to give more weightage to the practical aspects of science and reported that the time devoted to the teaching of natural science was less, compared to the amount of content provided in the syllabi. He further stated that lack of well-qualified teachers and laboratories are the major problems in effective teaching and greater emphasis on the environmental sciences

would establish human attitude for wide use of natural resources. Shahnawaj conducted a study on Environmental Awareness and Environmental Attitude of Secondary and Higher Secondary School Teachers and Students and the major findings of the study were that 95% teachers and 94% students possessed positive environment attitudes and teachers had more awareness of environment than students.

Praharaj explored the level of environmental knowledge, attitude and its perception among Pre-service and In-service Secondary school teachers in Puri district and stated that the level of environmental knowledge was low among Pre-service teachers although conceptual knowledge was moderate whereas among the In-service teachers, environmental knowledge was moderate and factual knowledge about the environment was low as well as mass media had a potential role to play in imparting environment education and teachers perceived that Environmental Education could be a core part of social science and general science. Sahoo implies that man’s domination over the environment has created complexities in the man-environment relationship and self-management is the best formula for good environmental management.

Environmental Issues: At Global Level

1. Today, about 1.1 billion people in the world lack access to clean water, while 2.4 billion people live without decent sanitation and 4 billion without sound waste water disposal.
2. According to a recent report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), about 6 billion people have no access to modern energy supplies like electricity and there is a wide spread use of wood and cow dung as fuels, which is highly undesirable due to the pollution it generates.
3. Toxic chemicals and other hazardous materials are basic elements of development. Yet, more than one billion people die each year from air pollution-two third of them

are poor people, mostly women and children, who die from indoor pollution caused by burning wood and dung. Tropical diseases such as Malaria and African guinea worm are closely linked with polluted water sources and poor sanitation. More than 880 million people lack access to healthy services and 17 million die each year from curable infectious diseases.

4. With the global population growing by 90 million a year, demand for food will further intensify. Meanwhile, unsustainable agriculture practices are compromising the natural resource based upon which all food production depends. In many regions, land productivity has begun to stagnate or even decline. Each year, about 5 to 10 million additional hectares become too degraded to be used.
5. Modern large-scale farming practices have promoted crop and livestock uniformity, leading to loss of genetic diversity that is the key to agricultural security and crop improvement.
6. Human activities have resulted in the destruction of the ecosystem and eventually a substantial loss in biological diversity. The global extinction rate has rapidly increased over the last fifty years. Species are disappearing at 50-100 times of the natural rate. Many of species that die out every year have never been discovered nor studied e.g. for production of the medicines, agriculture or any other economic use. Of the about 13 million species that scientists estimate to live on earth, only 1.75 million have been identified so far.

Environmental issues in India

1. The pressure on natural resources from an increasing population has reached an alarming rate. According to a study conducted by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute, India has been losing about one third of its GDP on account of destruction and degradation of the natural resources every year.
2. Of the 266 million hectare of land considered productive, about 175 m.ha. are degraded in various degrees (arid, alkaline, saline, waterlogged, ravines etc.) About 90 m.ha. are actually degraded, chiefly on account of a loss of vegetation cover and top soil.
3. The forest cover in India constitutes only about two percent of the world's total forest area. Even this forest cover in the country is under severe strain, as it has to support almost one-fifth of the total humanity and almost the same percentage of the world's total livestock population. Tata Energy Resource Institute has also estimated that due to the pressures of growing population, urbanisation, industrialisation, the growing stock of forests has reduced by about 90 percent of what it was in the year 1947. The target of bringing 33 percent of the total geographic area under forest cover (National Forest policy and 20 point Economic Programme) is yet to be achieved.
4. Threats to faunal and floral species and biological diversity because of disturbance of their habitat.
5. Degradation of fragile ecosystems, such as mangroves, wetlands, beaches and hilly areas for reasons such as over exploitation, lack of tree cover, ill-advised agriculture practices tourism and indiscriminate building activities.
6. Fresh water sources have also been polluted to a great extent. Pollution of all the 14 major river systems of

India, drying up of lakes and springs are clear examples of the havoc caused by pollution. The Ganga river system has been converted into a network of pools and drains due to the effluents of the industries and municipalities in the region.

7. Air pollution occurs due to emission from industries and vehicles. Both compete with each other in causing pollution, often supplementing each other efforts. The centre for science and environment conducted a survey in 1998 based on a model called Industrial Pollution Project System (IPPS) developed by the World Bank. It sought to estimate the rise in pollution load from the industrial and transport sectors in entire country. It revealed that the rate of pollution had overshoot the economic growth.
8. Adverse impacts of developmental activities such as mining, power generation, industrialization and irrigation.
9. Global warming, change in climatic and rainfall patterns.
10. Lack of sufficient environmental awareness.

Environmental Problem is three dimensional

1. Environmental pollution (air, water, soil, noise, thermal and radioactive pollution).
2. Ecological decay or destruction (Extinction of species, greenhouse effect, ozone layer depletion etc.).
3. Resource depletion (depletion of fossil fuels and forests etc.)

Concluded it is stated that there is nothing beyond nature, behind and other nature. Life does not occur in a vacuum. Man is an integral part of the natural environment. Today the delicate ecosystem of our planet is facing a danger of destruction on a scale as never before in the history of mankind. In the mad race for development man has been consuming natural resources and polluting the environment. Several species of animals and plants have already vanished from the face of earth and many are on the verge of extinction. Forests are diminishing at an alarming rate, landmasses are getting eroded, climate in different parts of the world is undergoing a change due to global warming and clean air and water are increasingly becoming rare commodities.

We have reached this state because we have been trained to look upon nature, as a resource. Therefore in the mindless competition for industrialization and progress, we have exploited the environment to the full, without any thought to the consequences. The attitude of our modern civilization is reflected in the criteria for the development which include such parameters as the consumption of electricity, water, newsprints, proteins etc. but do not take into account of garbage, level of pollution, number of suicides and so on. If the trend continuous, the world will soon become an in hospital place for mankind.

Rousseau said that, "Everything is good coming from the hands of the Creator; everything degenerates in the hands of man. Now the time has come when we should be careful. Since the present problem result largely from ignorance and indifferent trends of continues misuse of the environment, however, it can be altered by creating awareness among people of man's activities that affect the environment for good or ill. We cannot expect improvement unless attitude of people change, unless a better appreciation environmental process is inculcated in the present and future generations. Our great need today is knowledgeable citizens who are

conscious of their surroundings and willing to take necessary social, economic and political steps to assure a better environment for all. For the fulfilment of needs and wants of every citizen on earth and for balance and harmony between environment, world economist, educationalists and ecologists have to devise a new approach to education namely environmental education.

Environment has become the concern of all; the academicians, intellectuals, scientists, policy makers and government across the continents. Widespread and systematic concern for environmental issues has grown over the world particularly after the 1960s. The UN World conference on the environment in Stockholm in 1972, the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Global Forum, 1992 and the activities organized by the International NGO Forum show that Environment is on the agenda of the International community. People have become more concerned about the environment. The environmental movement has focused attention on the quality of the air we breathe and the water we drink, on how new dam construction harms wild life and how strip mining devastates the landscape and causes floods. We are beginning to realize that all aspects of the world around us can have profound and potential effects on our health and well-being.

There is an increasing realization that human race now stands at the crossroad in choosing the option it have in the areas of environment and development. The industrial countries have enjoyed more than their share of development, have achieved decent standard of living. This has given rise to the biosphere, pollution and ecodegradation, as a result of affluence and underlying greed. It has now become clear that such patterns of development, life styles and quality of life are unsustainable.

On the contrary, the developing countries are still struggling to achieve minimum level of sustenance. No doubt, they too have contributed to the eco degradation and pollution, but this essentially needed and poverty based issue. Thus both over development in the industrialized world and under development in the developing countries pollute and ecodegrade the environment; former out of greed and increased luxury; and latter out of the dire need to axe out an existence. The developing countries need abundant material growth to fulfil the basic needs of their people, but they cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of industrial countries. Decades ago, when environment was not a buzz word, Mahatma Gandhi has said, "The earth provides enough to satisfy everyman's needs, but not everyman's greed".

The relationship between environment and humankind is indeed deep and has recognized from the Vedic period. Furthermore, on-violence towards both animate and inanimate components of biosphere has been ingrained as guiding principle in the Indian psyche. Therefore, awareness and education of environment is the paramount concern of all the citizens of society. Environment protection starts by creating awareness among the people so that it becomes part of their lifestyle. The key to achieving this goal lies in environmental education and its related programmes. The objective of environmental education includes awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills and participation of people in protecting the environment.

Environmental Education

Environmental Education is comprised of two words: environment and education.

1. Environment is the aggregate of all the external conditions and influences affecting the life and development of man and other living organism.
2. Education is defined as the process of development.
"Environment education is the bond between the environment crisis and the education crisis".

World educators and environmental specialists have repeatedly pointed out that any solution to the environmental crisis will require environmental awareness and understanding to be deeply rooted in the education system at all levels. Environmental education constitutes a comprehensive, lifelong education; one responsive to changes in a rapidly changing world and understanding of the major problems of the contemporary complex world, the problems resulting from the interaction of biological physical, social and cultural aspects of the individual and the communities. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) has evolved the following definition of environmental education as an outcome of a conference called by it Nevada in 1970: "Environmental education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skill and attitudes necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his biophysical surrounding. Environmental education also entails practice in decision-making and self-formulation of code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality (Anon, 1970)

Environmental Education is inter-disciplinary in nature. It involves subject matter from natural sciences and the social sciences. It focuses on topics such as water, air, noise; land/soil, thermal, nuclear pollution, natural resources which cut across the various subject matter disciplines. EE recreates overall perspectives which acknowledges the facts that natural environment and man-made environment are profoundly interdependent and links the acts of today to the consequences for tomorrow. It demonstrates the economic, political and ecological interdependence among national communities and the need for solidarity among all mankind.

Principles of Environment Education

- To consider the environment in its totality (natural, artificial, social etc.)
- To consider it a continuous life long process (from conception to death)
- To be interdisciplinary in approach
- To emphasise active participation in prevention and solution to environmental problems.
- To focus on current, potential environmental issues.
- To consider environmental issues from local, national, regional and international view point.
- To emphasise the complexity of environmental problems and need to develop critical thinking and problem solving skill.
- To promote the value and necessity of local, regional, national and international cooperation in the prevention and solution of environment problems.
- To utilize diverse learning about environment and different approaches to teaching and learning about environment.

- To help the learner to discover the symptoms and real causes of environment problems.

Development of environment education programmes (EEP) at global level

Although conservationists have raised their voice of protest, though feebly, throughout the saga of human history yet the genuine concern for our living environment on a global scale began to be felt only after the Second World War. The episode of smoke and smog in London and other cities brought to light the dimensions of air pollution. The ecological imbalance initiated by the spread of chemical pest control agents was dramatised by Rachel Carson in her *Silent Spring*. The deformities observed in children born to parents who lived through the nightmare of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the phenomenal growth of industries making inroads into sources of energy, developmental activities for creating new human settlements to increase industrial and agricultural production which in turn involved deforestation and the consequent threat to the survival of rare species of wild animals, plants and birds were events that helped in stirring worldwide awareness of the threat to our environment.

The International Biological Programme of UNESCO started in 1964 was first of its kind to deal with environmental problems. The Keele Conference in England in 1965, the general assembly meeting of International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural resources (IUCN) held in New Delhi in 1969, gave further impetus. The United Nations Organisation organised the first International Conference in 1972 (5th-16th June) on the Human environment in STOCKHOLM, Sweden. The conference was held to take concrete decisions on environmental problems in view of the widening interest in the environment. The most outstanding achievement of the conference was the establishment of the United Nations Environment programme (UNEP).

The conference was attended by 114 Government delegations and about 300 NGO's. More than 100 proposals for recommendation emerged from this conference divided into subject areas.

- Planning and management of human settlements.
- Environmental aspects of natural resources management.
- Identification and control of pollutants of international significance.
- Educational, informational, social and cultural aspects of environment.
- International organizational implications of action proposals.

The recommendations were finally discussed and approved the final draft of the 'Declaration of the Human Environment' discussed in the preliminary session on the last day.

In view of the importance attached to environmental training and education, the first phase of the "International Environmental Education programme" was conducted by UNESCO and UNEP from 1975-1977. This programme prepared a broad set of objectives and principles for developing environmental education at all levels in both formal and non-formal education settings within countries and for strengthening international and regional cooperation to the same end. The main sets of guidelines were developed at the International Workshop on Environmental Education" Convened in Belgrade in October 1975. They were reviewed at a series of regional meetings including the "Regional

meeting of experts on Environmental education in Asia" held in Bangkok in November 1976, and they were considered by the 'Inter-governmental conference on Environmental Education' at Tbilisi, USSR in October 1977. The following objectives of Environmental Education were formulated at the Tbilisi conference.

- **Awareness:** To help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness of and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.
- **Knowledge:** To help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience and a basic understanding of, environment and its associated problems.
- **Attitude:** To help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.
- **Skills:** To help social groups and individuals acquire skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.
- **Participation:** To provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working towards resolution of environmental problems.

At the same time, UNEP together with ICUN and with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) developed a world strategy first published in 1981. The purpose of this strategy is to stimulate improved management of living resources and to provide policy and guidance on how this can be done. It outlines the following major objectives:

- To maintain essential ecological processes and life support system.
- To preserve the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystem.

The Rio Summit brought global attention to the understanding that the planet's environmental problems were closely related to economic conditions and problems of social justice. It showed that if poverty is rampant, the populace is disgruntled and national economies are weak, the environment suffers. Likewise, if the environment is abused and resources are over consumed, people suffer and economies decline, thus establishing an undesirable link between the two. The new mantra that was adapted by the UNCED was that of sustainable development. It was taken as a workable objective for everyone around the world, whether at the local, national, regional or international level.

Subsequently, the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) was created in December 1992, to ensure effective follow-up of UNCED; to monitor and report on implementation of the Earth Summit agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels. The CSD is a functional commission of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), with 53 members. Over 50 ministers attend the CSD each year and more than 1000 NGO's are accredited to participate in the commission's work. The commission ensures the high visibility of sustainable development issues with the UN system and helps to improve the UN's coordination of environment and development activities. The CSD also encourages governments and international organisations to host workshops and conferences on different environmental and cross-sectorial issues.

The Sunday Times, New Delhi edition No. 17; Vol VII reports on Feb. 23, 1997 under the heading, "Lack of Political Will Sepletes Environment Study". According to the study, called Global Environment Outlook 1997 sponsored by

UNEP and released by the UN office on Friday, 21st Feb 1997, it is observed that after the Rio conference the number of environmental institutions has increased, environment legislation has been strengthened, community participation and regional co-operation has improved all over the world but there are no real signs that further degradation of the environment will be halted.

Ten Years after the Rio Summit, World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) was carried out at Johannesburg, South Africa from 22nd Aug- 4th Sept., 2002. Heads of more than hundred countries attended the summit. At the summit, mainly five themes- water, energy, health, agriculture and biodiversity were discussed. The most important victory of the WSSD was getting Russia, China and Canada to agree to ratify the 1997 'Kyoto Protocol' in order to make it implementable.

The Kyoto Protocol aims for a reduction of 5.2% of greenhouse gas emissions compared to 1990 levels. The protocol can now become operational even without US and Australia, the only two major countries now refusing to ratify it.

Another major outcome to the WSSD was the initiation of partnerships between governments, business, NGO's and local community groups.

During the post-Rio phase, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is one of the instruments that have emerged to give effect to various Rio agreements. The GEF was restricted in 1994 and its first assembly meeting was hosted by India on April 1, 1998.

Environmental education in India

Conservation, protection and preservation of the environment have been the cornerstone of the Indian ethos, culture and tradition. The Indo-Aryans lived in the midst of the grandeur and sublimit of nature. The towering snow peaks of the Himalayas, the gigantic rivers, the vast green meadows, the boundless seas, and the ineffable splendour of the seasons, all produced an abiding effect upon them. Nurtured amidst such an environment, the Aryans in India must have developed a deep introspective mind which separated them from the rest of the world.

In the Pre-Vedic period, their poetic temperament must have been deeply stirred by some of the grand aspects of nature and they sang hymns to nature and addressed supplications to her. Mitra, the sun; Varuna, the God of the night or the blue sky; Dyu and Prithvi, the sky and the earth; and Agni or fire- all of them are pre-Vedic deities who were worshipped with simple or complex rites from the most ancient days of Aryan history.

Our wealth of literature, scriptures and folklore are replete with examples which indicate that our ancestors were environmentally conscious. They not only advocated, but also practised suitable usage of resources and disseminated this difficult concept among the masses through many social customs, myths, taboos, traditions and religions. For example, all of us know that the plant 'Tulsi' is venerated by most Indians. The basic idea behind this could have been the recognition of the environment and medicinal importance of this herb by our ancestors. The five elements of nature-land, water, air, fire and space or atmosphere were also worshipped by our ancestors. This certainty helped to create a respect among the people for these resources, eventually leading to

their utilisation in a sensible and careful manner. Thus, in traditional societies from the natural environment and with changing social relationships, this kind of education ceased to be a part of the natural learning process. This necessitated the initiation of special efforts to impart Environmental education.

Concern for the environment has been enshrined in our constitution which enjoins the 'States to take measure to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the forest and wildlife of the country, it also makes it a 'fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife and to have ecological compassion for the living creatures.

The Modern Environmental education Movement began with the 'Keele Conference but the first concerted expression on EE was the Belgrade workshop. India as an active participant, hosted two International conferences on EE, first in December 1981 and the second in October 1989. It is interesting to know that in India, the EE was included in the school curriculum much before the Keele Conference of 1965 and before the UN initiative. Mahatma Gandhi, a perceptive and practical educator, initiated the movement of "Basic Education" particularly seeking to correlate education with productive work and with physical and social environment of the student.

The spectrum of EE has four major, intergrading and interrelated components:

1. Awareness, that includes making the individual conscious about the physical, social and aesthetic aspects of environment. The environmental regime is linked with the life support system which in itself has six elements: air, water, land flora and fauna and the incoming sunlight. These have dynamic relationship. Man, being most important species has major responsibility.
2. Real-life situations that link environment to life, these conditions are location-specific.
3. Conservation, the idea is that all resources are to be used in wise manner.
4. Sustainable development, where spot light would be on utilisation and not exploitation. Sustainable development aims at utilisation of resources not only by the present but also by the future generations in a manner that utilisation (and not exploitation) is balanced. Utilisation of resources for development is always associated with some negative impacts. Thus efforts are to be made to contain or minimise them. These inputs will have to be suitably matched with different levels of formal education, namely, primary, secondary & tertiary.

At the primary level awareness about the environment (the immediate surroundings) should be integrated and should permeate through all the curricula. Maximum use of school surroundings as well as other educational settings such as parks, zoos have to be emphasised. At the secondary level, as the children move up in the educational ladder, they should be introduced to increase knowledge about real life situations and should be provided with adequate opportunities for environmental action.

Obviously, instruction in these areas cannot be confined to the class room; out-of-school activities through nature and eco-development camps will become the main settings for effective learning leaving a relatively permanent impact on

the growing mind.

Environmental awareness-concept and its meaning

The concern for the environment has emerged as a prominent social issue affecting the people of all walks of life. Singh pointed out, *“Changes occur in our society at a binding rate. Polluted water, polluted air, solid waste, energy crisis, radioactive debris, noise pollution, improper and overuse of pesticides and fertilisers, unwise management of natural resources and unprecedented population growth have convinced that we are encountered with serious environment crisis.”* Our country is no exception to these effects.

The Council of Environment Quality sounded a warning for developing countries stating, *“If the present trend continues, then the world in the end of the 20th century will be more crowded, more polluted, less stable ecologically and more vulnerable to disruption than the world we live in now.”* If further added to the gravity of the problem by stating, *“For hundreds of millions of poor, the outlook for food and other necessities of life will be no better. For hundreds of millions of poor, the outlook for food and other necessities of life will be no better. For many, it will be worse.”*

Obviously, time will not be kind because of rapidly increasing scarcity of certain non-renewable resources, and lack of understanding of the consequences of environmental crisis on the part of the citizenry. The challenges then are, to co-ordinate and focus our efforts, on conservation of resources and to generate tremendous amount of opportunities for the citizenry to develop positive attitudes, concern and acquisition of knowledge towards and about the environment. The coming years are the crucial ones, if the cornucopia is to contain enough for the generations to come.

According to Singh (1984, p.11): *“Environmental Awareness is defined as the sum total of responses that people make to various thematic aspects of the construct environment, in a combination reaction of cognitive intent and action influences, reported on a paper and pencil instrument, employing attitudes and fact statement formats. It also entails practice in decision making and self-formulating of a code of behaviour about issues concerning environmental quality.”*

Awareness of the environmental phenomena cannot be achieved in day. An improvement of man-environment relationship should be achieved through practical environmental projects which are to be introduced at each stage of education. Children can be taken to the actual spot of the problem areas through field work and visual learning. Young minds will be able to develop a new sense of moral behaviour towards the environment which they belong to. For adults, monthly meetings can be organised at local level to rise collective cleaning the area on one hand and their respective responsibilities to maintain public health and clean environment on the other hand. Awareness can also be increased through Government publications, periodicals, books, visual aids, television & radio, exhibitions, community meetings and social surveys.

National environmental awareness programme

The Ministry of Environment and Forests, GOVT. of India has one full division called Education and Information Division called Education and Information Division whose main role is to create awareness among all classes of people, help in informal education related to environment and

provide information related to environment. In order to create general awareness, this division undertakes various programmes such as the National Environment Awareness Campaign, Eco-clubs, Paryavaran vahinis, and production of audio-visuals on environment. The National Environment Awareness Campaign has been organised every year since 1986. The campaign aims at creating environmental awareness at the national level.

Environment month is the period of maximum activity under this programme. Funds are provided to voluntary organisation, universities, colleges, government agencies to conduct programmes for environmental awareness. These organisation create awareness through rallies, exhibitions, padyatras, dramas, dances, and film shows, essay competitions, painting and drawing contest, seminars, workshops etc. The MOEF provides funds for organising eco-clubs in educational institutions, for holding seminars and workshops, for making films on environment and various other activities which can create awareness.

A large number of NGOs over the past few years have taken up general awareness and action driver for local environmental issues such as tree protection, pollution control, reducing traffic noise and clean cities etc. The most established and well known organisation are the ‘Nature Clubs of India’ (NCI), a movement of W.W.F. launched in 1976. The W.W.F. India’s Nature club’s operates through a network of organised nature club’s movement operates through a network of organised nature clubs in schools, colleges and other educational institutions, neighbourhoods and even in army units.

The Chennai based CPR Environmental Education Centre has also been conducting a variety of programmes to spread awareness and interest among the public, particularly among NGO’s, women, youth and children on all aspects of the environment and ecology, with the purpose promoting conservation of nature and natural resources.

Over the years, the centre has reached out to many groups of people in India covering Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Orissa and the Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Pondicherry, with the rapid developments in the field of computers, information can be accessed from any part of the world through the Internet and the Centre decided to create awareness not only in India but to cover the whole world through W.W.N. cpreec. Org. launched on Aug. 23, 1998. It is first website on environment from India. The homepage shows four sections- About Us, Environmental Education, Publication and Eco-News.

In India, environmental movements have initiated a new political struggle for protecting the interests of the poor and deprived. Among them are tribal groups, women and farmers. The main environmental movements are ‘Chipko Andolan’ (movement of hugging trees) ‘Silent valley movement in Kerala ‘Save the Narmada Movement’ ‘Save the Bhagirathi’ and ‘Stop Tehri project committee in U.P., ‘Save the Narmada Movement’ (Narmada Bachao Andolan) in M.P. & Gujarat. Tribal people and youth organisations in Gandhamardan Hills (Their survival is directly threatened by mining of Bauxite deposits), the Bali pal and Bhogoria test range in Orissa. The ‘Appiko movement in Western Ghats, Opposition by groups to the ‘Kaiga’ nuclear power plant in Karnataka, The ‘Gramin Mahila Shramik Unnayam Smiti (Rural Women’s Advancement Society) to reclaim waste

land in Bankura district, West Bengal and the groups opposing to the Gumti Dam in Tripura.

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