

BA 2nd year

Education (Major)

Paper 4.2: Environmental and Population education

Environmental Sustainability:

Environmental sustainability is defined as responsible interaction with the environment to avoid degradation of natural resources and allow for long term environmental quality.

Sustainability focuses on meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs (Brundtland Commission 1987). The concept of sustainability is composed of three pillars: economic, environmental and social also known informally as profits, planet and people. If we look at the natural environment, we see that it has a ability to rejuvenate itself. For example- when a tree falls, it decomposes, adding nutrients to the soil. These nutrients help to sustain suitable conditions so that future saplings can grow. When nature is left alone they have the ability to take care itself. But when people enter and use natural resources things change. Human actions ultimately degraded the natural resources and without the application of environmental sustainability methods, long run viability can be compromised.

Environmental sustainability does not mean living without luxuries but rather being aware of resource consumption and reducing unnecessary waste. Sustainability is important for many reasons including: environmental quality in order to have healthy communities, we need clean air, natural resources and a nontoxic environment. Sustainability and healthcare are intricately related since the quality of our environment affects public health. Efficient waste management is an important factor in reducing environmental impact and promoting sustainability. The three keywords are reduce, reuse and recycle which can significantly minimize global impact and conserve natural resources, reduce pollution and reduce our carbon footprint.

One way environmental sustainability is being applied is through sustainable agriculture. It means using of farming techniques that protect the environment. Sustainable agriculture has grown out of concerns over the industrialization of agriculture that began in the 20th century.

Similarly Sustainable forestry is another application of environmental sustainability. It is defined as the practice of regulating forest resources to meet the needs of society and industry while preserving the forest's health. Forest is very important for the local and national economy. Wood can be used as a source of fuel, timbers can be used in the construction of industry and wood pulp can be used in the manufacture of paper. Apart from that trees are store house of carbon dioxide, keeping it out of the atmosphere.

Nature has a tremendous capacity to sustain itself. Maintenance of the soil fertility or the process of forestation, when left alone nature can rejuvenate itself. But the way natural resources are depleted, it is not possible for the nature to sustain itself anymore. So, to maintain the ecological balance, we must make changes in the way we utilize the natural resources for our benefits. Everybody should employ environmentally sustainable methods to ensure that the future generations can enjoy the natural resources of our planet in the same way as we are utilizing it. Many steps have been taken towards environmental sustainability to reduce the impact of the environment.

At present sustainability is not a choice but a necessity. There are certain things that everybody should do to promote sustainability. These are-

- **Recycle:** Recycling is one of the best things to promote sustainability. Recycling and buying products made with recycled materials has many far reaching benefits. It reduces pressure on raw materials, reduces mining and the fuel and other costs associated with extracting, transporting and processing minerals.
- **Make informed choices:** People make a shift in purchasing things by choosing sustainable goods and services. Always gather information and buy things that he/she really need it. People make the habit that when they buy anything, first of all compare different products and make sure that the buying products must promote sustainability. Buying in bulk will also reduce packaging waste.
- **Grow own garden:** One can help reduce carbon footprint and reduce negative environmental impacts by growing own food in own backyard. Planting vegetables in own garden has many benefits. It can grow without using any chemicals or pesticides, recycle kitchen waste as fertilizer and enjoy freshly grown vegetables.

- **Minimize waste:** It is seen that 50% of the food produced in the USA never reaches the table of the consumers. It is wasted in the process of transportation, packaging and marketing. Some of the food is also waste by consumers by throw it away. Reducing food waste can significantly help the environment as well as save everyone on grocery bills.
- **Watch your utility bills:** Conserving energy and minimizing waste will help one reducing utility bills as well as promoting sustainability. One can save energy bills significantly by replacing all the faulty appliances and fittings. Everybody should have the habit of turn off lights and air conditioning when leave the room. Little things like unplugging appliances while not in use or closing windows when heat or air conditioning is on, make a big difference in the long run to save energy, reduce environmental footprint and will also show up as a reduction on bills.
- **Purchase energy efficient appliances:** Replace all old home appliances with energy efficient ones. Energy efficient appliances are better insulated and save energy. Such as – new water heater, thermostats, heat pumps, air-conditioning, washing machines etc.
- **Compost kitchen waste:** Try to use as much food from your kitchen as possible and employ many of the clever left over cooking ideas given by popular cook books. Any unusable raw waste can make great compost fertilizer for your garden. Avoid using chemical fertilizer to reduce negative impacts on the environment.
- **Carpool or use public transportation:** Carpooling or using public transportation more often will reduce transportation cost as well as reduce carbon emissions from car. If we all look the bus to work once in a while, it would have a great impact on the air quality of our cities.
- **Plant more trees:** Planting more trees and plants has many environmental, economic and social benefits. Trees improve air quality of the place we live in by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen and give us food and shade. A regular sized tree can clear about 330 pounds of carbon dioxide while producing oxygen for the whole community every year. Trees also combat the greenhouse effect, reduce the pressure on heating and cooling, therefore saves energy.
- **Support organization dedicated to sustainability:** Everyone should help by joining the Non- profit organization that works to promote sustainability. There are also many

organizations promoting sustainability and environmental awareness on the internet. One can easily get involved and help these organizations to promote sustainability.

It is very important that we all get together to save the environment from further depletion. The effects of the thoughtless exploitation by human beings are more apparent now than it was ever before. The catastrophic implications can be avoided by a stringent adherence to environment friendly methods which will help to sustain the environment for longer. In short, sustainability looks to protect our natural environment, human and ecological health, while driving innovation and not compromising our way of life.

References:

1. Environmental Professionals Network
2. www.investopedia.com
3. www.study.com
4. planningtank.com
