



Role of Teachers in Achieving Sustainable Development Goals

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Abstract: Teachers can play a very important role in respect to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These are a set of 17 global objectives recognized by the United Nations to tackle challenges like poverty, hunger, climate change, and inequality across nation states. Teachers can be made responsible to educate students regarding the SDGs and their significance. Utilizing their expertise, teachers can integrate SDG-related concepts into class room lessons; take up SDG-themed activities and projects, and encourage students to successfully handle sustainable challenges and their solutions. At the same time educational institutions may organize training classes to sensitize teachers on the SDGs, enhance their comprehensive understanding and effectively integrate their knowledge with SDGs. In this way through joint efforts, teachers and institutions can figure out a generation of young minds competent of addressing global issues and thereby creating a sustainable future. Teachers are the role model for their students because in most of the cases students consider their teachers as the sole source of inspiration and store house of knowledge. Therefore equitable and quality education as SDGs earmarks and to make education a lifelong process, both teachers and educational institutions are required to work together to usher a new era. Here the supportive attitude from the part of the government is also very much crucial.

Keywords: Teachers, Higher Education, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), United Nations, global objectives, lifelong process

Introduction: Sustainable development is all about utilization of resources in a balanced way to fulfill present needs while preserving resources also for generations to come.

According to Brundtland Report (1987), instituted by the United Nations Organizations, sustainable development entails "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Among two words of sustainable development, the word 'sustainable' means feasibility and the capacity to continue in the long term without inflicting harm but benefiting all members of the society. Secondly 'Development' unfolds the evolution and transformation of the lively interaction between the environment, economy and society. Sustainable development, therefore, aims at the strategy to improve the quality of life for everyone in the present while ensuring the welfare and prosperity of the coming generations. This is an amicable approach that seeks to uphold economic progress, environmental conservation, and social equity in a balanced way. Its aim is to promote a harmonious and flourishing future for the humanity. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been formulated to guide global efforts to attain sustainable development by 2030. It provides a common proposal for governments, organizations, and individuals to work in connivance with each other towards a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable future. Out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the 193 Member States of the United Nations, SDG No.4 is about inclusive and equitable quality education that promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

The role of education cannot be undermined in case of progress and societal development of any nation. It creates human assets and in the long run these assets mould the future course of the nation. In India as education is in the concurrent list both the central and the state governments exercise power and shoulder responsibility to avail educational opportunities to all. The significance of high



quality education is now the clarion call of the day. Only an educated society can ensure advancements in an array of fields that include technology, business, economics, peace, social justice and human rights. The teacher is one of the significant parts of the educational system. Both teachers and institutions are indispensable for imparting education and basing on their foresightedness the future generations get a definite shape. A committed, well educated and trained teacher is generally dutiful and shoulders responsibilities without any hesitation. The success of SDGs is squarely depends on an educated population and educated population is the handiwork of dedicated teachers. Teachers shape the knowledge, values, and attitudes of the next generation.

1 A teacher's role in shaping SDGs is important from the following points of view.

Integration of Sustainability with the Syllabus:

The concept of sustainability is required to be integrated with the course outlines of various subjects. Socio-economic and environmental issues are to be presented in text books in such a manner that their interconnectedness should be highlighted. Students from a very tender age should understand the necessity of sustainable development. They should understand what the SDGs are, why they are important, and how they relate to everyday life. The role of the government and educational institutions are very crucial in this respect because preparation of the curricula rests with them.

Experiential Learning:²

Teachers are required to organize hands-on, experiential learning activities that help students to engage in issues pertaining to sustainability. Field trips, environmental projects and community service initiatives can enhance their understanding of sustainable practices. Sufficient scope should be given and funds are to be allocated for undertaking such activities. Government should made fiscal provision to implement such programs because financial condition of most of the guardians are not healthy in our country. In private educational institutions it is the responsibility of the management of the institutions to make available funds for such activities.

Environment friendly Initiatives in Schools:

Teachers are required to campaign for and participate in green initiatives along with their students within the school community. Awareness generation instill in students the knowledge needed to make informed choices and contribute to usher a more sustainable and equitable world. Issues like recycling programs, energy efficiency measures, and sustainable practices can be integrated within the school infrastructure.

Building Partnerships:

By building partnerships with local environmental organizations, businesses, and community groups, teaching fraternity can create conducive atmosphere for realization of SDGs. These off campus organizations may be moved to contribute financial resources, expertise and scope for students to engage in sustainability projects. By engaging students in various programs like cleaning up community places or by generating awareness on global issues which have their local impacts, a sense of social responsibility and empathy will be developed among the students. Teachers and educational institutions can work mutually with other teachers, schools, and people who respect the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to make their cause stronger. In-between they exchange ideas, resources, and experiences to uncover superior ways to attain the goals.



Nurturing a Sense of Responsibility:

Teachers are capable to imbibe a sense of responsibility for the environment in students. By various teaching and learning methods already available and adopting new methods, teachers can mould sustainable behavioral patterns on issues like waste reduction, energy conservation, and responsible consumption among the students. They can encourage students to take up these practices in their daily lives.

Innovative Teaching Methods:

With the help of innovative teaching methods, personalized instruction, and focus on critical thinking, teachers can improve learning outcomes. They can prepare students with the knowledge and skills needed for the 21st century. Critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students are vital for addressing intricate global challenges and adaptation to a rapidly changing world. Poverty, climate change, global warming, inequality, terrorism, religious bigotry like global challenges need to be discussed in class rooms using various audio-visual aids and steps should be taken from the side of the teachers to engage all students in this discussion. The aim is to develop the ability among students to analyze critical issues and come out with innovative solutions. Technology is to be integrated with teaching and learning process and thereby the process will become more accessible and engaging.

Qualitative Education:

Qualitative education goes beyond just facts and figures. It includes subjects that have direct impact on individuals across nation states and its teaching is mostly based on skill building. Teachers can help students to understand difficult topics like Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and how they relate to our present day living in the world. With effective teaching methodology, teachers not only impart knowledge to the students but also train them with skills needed to deal with issues like poverty, climate change, and inequality in a positive manner. As a result students will contribute to create a more sustainable and equitable future. Educational institutions are required also to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education for all. At the same time teachers and institutions both should emphasis on multicultural education in order to aware students to diverse cultures, traditions, and histories. This promotes tolerance but also prepares students to interact respectfully with people from different backgrounds in an interconnected world. Along with teachers can take up gender-responsive academic approaches, thereby to look into distinctive needs and experiences of girls and boys. Educational institutions can play a major role in eliminating disparities in education and to establish gender equality.

Become Role Model:

Teachers become role models by practicing sustainable behaviors and ethical values themselves. They can demonstrate students how to reduce waste, conserve energy, and make eco-friendly choices by their own experiences. In this way teachers emphasize about the significance of these actions and also prevail upon students to adopt similar practices in their daily life. In addition to this, they nurture ethical values like fairness, kindness, and respect in their interactions with others. They instruct students about the importance of ethical choices and benefit of consuming resources mindfully. They become themselves instrumental in promoting peace, justice, and strong institutions, which are indispensable for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This helps students comprehend the importance of these values in achieving the Sustainable



Development Goals (SDGs). Such actions by teachers guide students to become responsible and compassionate individuals who contribute substantially to society and the world.

Lifelong Learning Opportunities:

Teachers are capable to uphold a tradition of lifelong learning and continuous education on SDGs for both students and themselves. By using their expertise they can create an ambience where learning never stops, paves way for further learning. They encourage students to keep up investigating and find out new things about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) even after they leave school. Teachers themselves also persist to learn about these goals and share their knowledge among students. In this way learning becomes a lifelong journey. By staying ever inquisitive and conversant, both teachers and students can continuously contribute towards a better and more sustainable world.

Relying on Research and Innovation:

Teachers can research and identify what issues need attention on priority basis like poverty or environmental problems. Thereafter with the help of books, videos, or websites they can explain these issues in a way that students can comprehend. They inspire students to explore new ideas and create innovative solutions for global challenges. This is another way, teachers can impart their students with the knowledge and skills they need to make a positive impact on the world and work towards fulfilling the SDGs successfully. Educational institutions can serve as center for partnership and networking of research and innovation, contributing to technological developments and economic growth. Being facilitating agency, they can help to establish partnerships between students, faculty, and external stakeholders, creating possibilities for common initiatives that address specific SDGs.

Conclusion: Both teachers and institutions perform important roles in molding the attitudes and values of students, facilitating them to become learned and responsible citizens. Teachers through teaching and demonstration imbibe problem-solving, decisionmaking, and critical thinking skills in students. Students become empowered to make erudite choices, while institutions become supportive to help accomplish Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both foster values like quality education, gender equality, peace, environmental awareness, and respect for the rights of all within the society. Teachers and educational institutions jointly are capable to make the world a better place for living through SDGs. They also establish partnerships with other institutions and industrial houses to achieve these global goals. In reality teachers and educational institutions occupy central place in achieving SDGs.

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Bio -note:



Dr. Ray is a lecturer by profession and his passion for literature has driven him to write poems both in Odia and English. He is a published poet and has written two poetry anthologies i.e. one in English and the other one in Odia. He has edited two international level both bilingual and multilingual poetry anthologies as well. He has edited three books consisting of scholastic articles of different genres

Regularly he contributes educational and academic articles to various newspapers, periodicals, edited books and tabloids.

Text books in Political Science, authored by him are being taught in different universities of North - East India and Odisha. To cherish his academic pursuits, he has attended more than fifty national and international level seminars and conferences, read papers also. He has more than 30 years of illustrious professional career. In the field of social services, being the member of Indian Red Cross Society and Rotary International he has established a good track record. Now he lives in Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India with his family members.

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