DEEP ECOLOGY: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION

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Abstract

Environment is everything that surrounds us. It includes living organisms, non-living things and physical, chemical and other natural forces. There are interactions between animals, plants, soil, water, and other living and non-living things in the environment. ***Deep ecology*** *considers humankind as an integral part of environment. It underlines the interdependent value of human and non-human life as well as the importance of the ecosystem and natural processes. It provides a foundation for the environmental and green movements. Deep ecology* ***being a holistic approach,*** *environmental philosophy and social movement calls for human beings to fundamentally change their relationship to nature from one that values nature solely for its usefulness to human beings to one that recognizes that nature has an inherent value. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer introduced the term "deep ecology" to environmental literature in 1973. B.Ed. student-teachers as future teachers, have high stakes in developing awareness and commitment towards deep ecology among adolescent students, who are future citizens of the Nation. However, this is possible only when they themselves have experience of deep ecology. The present paper attempts to decipher the concept of deep ecology and suggests some of the deep ecology based activities and programmes at B.Ed. Colleges for student-teachers.*
Keywords: *Environment, Deep Ecology and B.Ed. Student-teachers*

Introduction

Environment is everything that surrounds us. There is nothing beyond environment, behind environment and other than environment. It includes living organisms, non-living things and physical, chemical and other natural forces. There are interactions between animals, plants, soil, water, and other living and non-living things in the environment. It is from the environment that we get food to eat, water to drink, air to breathe, clothing, medicines, shelter, and all necessities of day to day life.

Ecology and Deep Ecology

Ecology is the scientific analysis and study of interactions among organisms and their environment. It is an interdisciplinary field that includes biology, geography, and Earth science. Ecology includes the study of interactions that organisms have with each other, other organisms, and with abiotic components of their environment.

Deep ecology considers humankind as an integral part of environment. It underlines the interdependent value of human and non-human life as well as the importance of the ecosystem and natural processes. It provides a foundation for the environmental and green movements. Deep ecology **being a holistic approach,** environmental philosophy and social movement calls for human beings to fundamentally change their relationship to nature from one that values nature solely for its usefulness to human beings to one that recognizes that nature has an inherent value.

Emergence of the Phrase "Deep Ecology"

Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher and mountaineer introduced the term "deep ecology" to environmental literature in 1973. Naess made a presentation in Bucharest, Romania at the Third World Future Research Conference In 1972. In his talk, he discussed the longer-range background of the ecology movement and its concern with an ethic respecting nature and the inherent worth of other beings. As a mountaineer who had climbed all over the world, Naess had enjoyed the opportunity to observe political and social activism in diverse cultures. He saw two different forms of environmentalism. One he called the "long-range deep ecology movement" and the other, the "shallow ecology movement." The "deep" movement involves deep questioning, right down to fundamental root causes. The short-term, shallow approach stops before the ultimate level of fundamental change, often promoting technological fixes (e.g. recycling, increased automotive efficiency, export-driven monocultural organic agriculture) based on the same consumption-oriented values and methods of the industrial economy. The long-range deep approach involves redesigning our whole systems based on values and methods that truly preserve the ecological and cultural diversity of natural systems.

Deciphering the Concept of Deep Ecology

Deep ecology movement is not anti-human. Naess's platform principle number 1 begins with recognizing the inherent worth of all beings, including humans. Non-violence, proposed by Mahatma Gandhi is a tenet of deep ecology activism in word and deed. Supporters of the deep ecology movement deplore anti-human statements and actions.

Accepting the Deep Ecology Platform principles involves a commitment to respecting the intrinsic values of richness and diversity of ecology. This, in turn, leads one to criticize industrial culture, which construe the planet Earth only as raw materials to be used to satisfy consumption and production to meet not only vital needs but extravagant desires whose satisfaction requires more and more consumption. Endorsing the Deep Ecology Platform principles enables human beings to work with civility toward harmony with other creatures and beings.

George Sessions and Arne Naess summarized 15 years of thinking on the principles of deep ecology in April 1984 while camping in Death Valley, California. They articulated these principles in a literal, somewhat neutral way, hoping that they would be understood and accepted by persons coming from different philosophical and religious positions.

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and nonhuman life on Earth have value in themselves (synonyms: intrinsic value, inherent value). These values are independent of the usefulness of the nonhuman world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy essential needs.

4. Present human interference with the nonhuman world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.
5. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantial decrease of the human population. The flourishing of nonhuman life requires such a decrease.
6. Policies must therefore be changed. The changes in policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.
7. The ideological change is mainly that of appreciating life quality (dwelling in situations of inherent worth) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between big and great.
8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to participate in the attempt to implement the necessary changes.

Deep Ecology Based Activities and Programmes at B.Ed. Colleges

B.Ed. student-teachers as future teachers, have high stakes in developing awareness and commitment towards deep ecology among adolescent students, who are future citizens of the Nation. However, this is possible only when they themselves have the experience of deep ecology. B.Ed. Colleges should take more initiatives in organizing deep ecology based activities and programmes for student-teachers:

Curricular Initiatives

Now B.Ed. Programme in India being two years programme, has ample scope for developing awareness and commitment towards deep ecology in moderate spirit.

Participation in Extension Activities: The educational excursion and activities of community living camp should be organized with the due focus on environment among other issues which gives practical exposure to student-teachers in valuing and taking initiatives to protect the various components of environment. Student-teachers can be taken to hills, rivers, forests, sea, pond etc. wherein they can have firsthand experience about ecosystem, diversity of flora and fauna etc.

Action Research Projects: The student-teachers should be guided to take up projects like survey of utilization of energy resources in local community, attitude towards resources of nature, eco-friendly practices etc. Finally student-teachers are asked to give a summative report on the project.

Environmental Education: There is either a separate unit or subject on Environmental Education in B.Ed. curriculum. Teacher Educators can take up more spirited efforts in giving due importance to deep ecology while discussing about other topics like environment; environmental pollution; meaning, importance, objectives and strategies for teaching environmental education at secondary school. Beside lecture method, discussion method, other strategies and techniques of teaching like project method, problem solving method, brainstorming etc. can be taken up while teaching about environmental education. Student-

teachers should be guided in preparing and presentation of seminars on various issues of environment including deep ecology.

Eco Club

B.Ed. Colleges should have Eco-club which can take more initiatives in organizing deep ecology based activities and programmes for student-teachers in a way in which the constraints of the classroom and curriculum will not allow. It provides the great opportunities to create awareness, build attitudes and empowers them for eco-friendly life style. Eco-club can be the hub for most of the deep ecology based activities.

Quiz

Quiz contest can be used by teacher educators to examine the knowledge of the student-teachers on ecology and allied issues. Quiz enables the student-teachers to get involved in correct information collection and encourages them to be initiative. It helps them to retain and recall correct information. It helps them to be precise in their information.

Seminars

Seminars are theoretical in nature which mainly involves the presentation and discussion on the various aspects of a topic and problems by the participants and experts. They provide a formal platform for an exchange of ideas. B.Ed. Teacher Educators can organize seminar for student-teachers on varying issues of deep ecology like inter-relationship between living and non-living things; Human beings and animals; importance of the ecosystem and natural processes etc. At the end of the seminar questioning session can be arranged. This activity builds the confidence of the students, strengthens their communication ability and promotes tolerance to divergent perceptions.

Debate

Debate is a method of interactive and broader representational argument. It is a technique of persuasion that includes logical consistency, factual accuracy and emotional appeal to the audience. Thus in debating, one side often prevails over the other side by presenting a superior "context" of the issue. Debate can enable the student-teachers to understand and develop the tolerance to the divergent perceptions. Teacher educators can organize debate on the topics like 'Life style of the modern human beings is the main cause of deterioration of environment' etc.

Workshops

Workshops combine theory and practice. They adopt practical approach for formulating solutions for the environmental protection by experts and participants. Teacher educators can invite the experts to give demonstration and guidance to the students on the following topics in the context of deep ecology: framing of slogans, preparing of nature songs, preparation of

posters, rainwater harvesting, making decorative items from waste, conservation of natural resources etc.

Campaigns

Campaigns can be organized to create awareness among the public about the issues of environment. The students can raise slogans on animal rights; interdependent value of human and non-human life, conservation of natural resources etc.

Dramatization

Teacher Educators can guide the student-teachers in preparation of script and enacting roles through drama on the themes like pollution of natural sources like water, soil and air; deforestation; destruction of environment by man etc. After this the discussion can be arranged.

Street Play

Street play is a form of theatrical performance and presentation in outdoor public spaces like shopping centers, car parks, recreational reserves and street corners. Doing of street play need simple costumes and props, and often there is little or no amplification of sound, with actors depending on their natural vocal and physical ability. The performances need to be highly visible, loud and simple to follow in order to attract a crowd. Street play can be organized on the importance of natural resources, inter-dependence of living and non-living things. Teacher educator can prepare scripts and select student-teachers to perform various roles. The play should be ended with a question and answer sessions. The usefulness of the play should be judged by giving a questionnaire to the local community. It builds more confidence among student-teachers to take up more initiatives towards deep ecology in collaboration with local community.

Role Play

Role play is a literary piece consisting of dialogues between various roles. It is simple when compared to drama as it won't require all the facilities. It needs less time and little preparation. It can be organized in the class. Teacher Educators can use it to create awareness on deep ecology. They can ask the student-teachers to play it on the relationship between our life style and environmental degradation. Discussion can be arranged at the end of role play. The student-teachers can be made to understand that environmental degradation is a big problem caused as a result of the activities we perform every day. Thus the solutions for it are also rooted in our actions; if we perform our everyday actions like shopping, moving, eating, drinking, working etc. carefully, we can contribute to the wellbeing of our planet earth.

Case Studies

Case study describes a situation or a problem that the group has to solve. These are designated to give people information, help them to consider their attitudes and values and

discuss the skills they might need to deal with the problem. Teacher Educators can provide case studies on eco-friendly life style of nations, effects of industrialization on environment etc. to the student-teachers by means of multimedia. Then during the discussion, student-teachers can be asked to analyze and come up with solutions. Teacher Educators should summarize the discussion by clarifying the misconceptions.

Articles and Essay Competition

Writing of articles and essay competition accelerate creative expression among students. It helps them to reflect on various aspects of issue like deep ecology. Teacher educators can motivate the students to write articles on environment and allied topics which can be displayed on bulletin board. The best articles can be published in the newspapers, magazines etc. Essay competition on the topics like climate change, eco-friendly life style, sustainable development etc. can also be conducted. A panel of judges can assess the essays. The best essays can be read out by students in the classroom and they can be published in the school magazine.

Screening of Documentaries

Documentaries are a potential audio-visual mass media that document reality. They enormously impact on awareness, attitude, values, decision making and practices among the student-teachers towards ecology. Documentaries on nature, environmental pollution, eco-friendly life style etc. can be screened to the student-teachers and later discussion can be arranged.

Celebration of Environmental Days

Celebration of days of environmental importance helps to expand and strengthen the worldwide effort to address the challenges of environmental degradation. Eco-club can organize days of environmental importance like World Forestry Day (March 21), World Water Day (March 22), World Meteorological Day (March 23), Earth Hour (March 28), International Mother Earth Day (April 22), World Environmental Day (June 5), World Ocean Day (June 8), World Day to Combat Desertification (June 17), World Population Day (July 11), World Nature Conservation Day (July 28), International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer (September 16), International Day of Climate Action (October 24) etc.

Guest Lecturing

Environmentalists, experts on environment, social workers, government and NGOs etc. Can be invited by B.Ed. Colleges to give talk on the topics of environmental importance. The talk can be ended with question and answer session.

Taking up of Projects

Projects help the student-teachers to get exposure to the realities of environment and help them to apply knowledge from different subjects. The student-teachers should be guided to take up projects like rain water harvesting, solar heating, preparation of best out of waste etc.

Conclusion

B.Ed. colleges and teacher educators have more responsibility in educating their student-teachers who are set to become future teachers in developing understanding and abilities in push forwarding the spirit of deep ecology. It is because they have a vital influence on the adolescent students (who are future citizens of the country) learning, shaping their attitude and developing desirable behaviour towards protection of earth. Thus beside curricular initiatives, efforts should be made by B.Ed. colleges and teacher educators in planning and organizing various activities and programmes on "deep ecology" for their student-teachers who in fact can be called as the builders of eco-friendly generation.

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