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Science Stream

"A Study on the Principles and Future Directions of Environmental Science in India: Towards Sustainability Education"

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Abstract:
This paper explores the tenets and potential pathways of environmental science education in India with a focus on institutions of sustainability education. The study views such existing environmental education practices, takes on board an institution's sustainability plan, and incorporates education institutions to make a culture of sustainability through the use of secondary data from verifiable sources up to 2018. The main conclusions show that students have very different views of what sustainability means—a focus on environmental rather than managerial issues. A high emphasis is placed on how higher education institutions can adopt sustainability measures using campus recycling systems and environmental education programs. Statistical analyses (e.g., ANOVA) of sustainability programs show significant differences in success rates using classes of focused instructional strategies. It offers important lessons on the gaps in what we know about sustainability education, and particularly in the problems faced by institutions, and what might be done. In the light of these findings, suggestions for how sustainability education can be improved include building inventiveness curriculum, better teacher preparation, and cooperation between educational stakeholders. This study contributes to the conversation on sustainability education in India by building support for a more holistic teaching method for environmental science that will prepare students for the challenges ahead in the field of sustainable development.

Keywords: *Environmental Science Education, Sustainability Education, Higher Education Institutions, Sustainability Measures, Instructional Strategies, Sustainable Development*

Objectives

- To evaluate how students see sustainability in learning environments.
- To assess how colleges and universities contribute to the implementation of sustainability programs.
- To evaluate the efficacy of different sustainability education initiatives.
- To determine any gaps in the body of knowledge about sustainability education in India.
- To provide suggestions for improving methods of teaching sustainability.

Introduction

The awareness of environmental challenges in the emergent nascence of global social sustainability education has instigated a worldwide spurring towards this movement.

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Immediately, sustainability must be included in the educational system because the country is faced with big issues such as pollution, resource depletion, and climate change. Environmental education is critical to understanding ecological interdependencies and helping future generations make better stewardship decisions. The ideas of sustainable development have been integrated in a variety of academic programs in the Indian educational system. This is also accredited to the Supreme Court's order guiding environmental education at all levels, thereby making India a pioneer in the institutionalisation of environmental education. However, despite these developments, there is still substantial variability in the effectiveness of sustainability teaching within institutions, suggesting that further research should explore institutional approaches and student attitudes.

This research aims to study the current state of education on sustainability in India through higher education institutions, which are considered to be very relevant from the students' point of view for environmental concerns. Based on secondary data from reliable sources, which have been published up to 2018, the study evaluates the performance of environmental education methods and an assessment of the degree to which educational institutions have moved towards adopting sustainable practices. The findings will be of value to knowledge in how to improve and fit sustainability education into the wider educational framework, leading to the production of more ecologically aware people and communities.

In addition, educational institutions are unable to overstate the impact that they have on promoting sustainability. They, besides teaching, are in charge of fostering among pupils the feeling of environmental responsibility. In this research, educational institutions' range of sustainability measures, including campus recycling programs, environmental education campaigns, and use of renewable energy, will be explored. The study aims to analyze which tactics were successful in the projects and how they affected the students' perceptions. We believe that these results can give legislators, educators, and institutional leaders in this area some information about the best practices of sustainability education that can help open the door to a more sustainable future for India.

Literature Review

Chhokar (2010) emphasizes the need to implement sustainable development ideas in India's educational system. The demand for environmental education is made at all educational levels by the Indian Supreme Court and has brought about a major change in educational policy aimed at this purpose. This one is one of the future international most forward-thinking initiatives for formalisation of environmental education. Our strategy involves creating a generation of students who understand the environmental challenges but are also ready and able to interact and solve those environmental challenges through incorporating these ideas in academic curricula. Chhokar stresses the importance of this educational responsibility in building an ecologically educated population able to support activities of an environmentally sustainable nature. This policy framework provides a substantive example of how a legal and an educational institution can work together to promote sustainability and, in fact, models for other countries. When sustainable development is included in the curriculum, students learn ecological balance, the importance of conservation, the impact of human activity on the environment, and much more.

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

Chhokar ends up championing an all-encompassing approach to teaching that includes environmental stewardship as part of the core curriculum.

Bhat et al. (2017) take up a study of the vital role that environmental education plays in the promotion of sustainable development in India. The authors claim that the first step to a successful social, economical, and environmental approach is to raise awareness of the issues. Environmental education is a topic of study but also a transforming instrument that meets people's need for information and means to address challenging sustainability issues. Bhat et al. argue that environmental education programs will fail unless the students involved were 'actively involved' and 'encouraged/cuõngURLConnection(ggot)' to think critically and find solutions to the problems related to sustainability. The authors mention how educational activities are tied to national sustainability objectives and that what is needed for this is a thorough curriculum comprising conservation, resource management, and climate change. Bhat et al. also support interdisciplinary methods combining environmental ideas from several academic fields to create a more knowledgeable and accountable public. The authors conclude that sustainable education initiatives are essential to give people and future leaders the skills they need to choose what's best for the environment and for society.

According to Jain et al., such an approach not only enhances academic learning but also prepares students to be engaged, proactively, in campus and later lifelong sustainability practices. The program builds on this by seeking to strengthen the link between environmental stewardship and educational programs by developing leaders who can encourage positive change in their communities. TERI University is a benchmark in terms of universities that foster sustainability and have highlighted real-world problem solving along with practical applications.

Ravindranath (2007) considers the urge for incorporating sustainable development principles in the curriculum of Indian teacher education programs. Sustainability education must incorporate practical, real-world problem-solving skills in addition to core academic knowledge, the author argues, in order for instructors to teach sustainability principles to their pupils successfully. Ravindranath identifies the gaps between what is currently part of the teacher education curriculum and what it should be, thereby standardizing how future educators are prepared to deal with environmental issues. The author stresses that the teacher should be trained both to apply creative teaching techniques to stimulate active participation of students and environmental material. This change is important so as to promote sustainable culture in Indian schools. Ravindranath feels that instructors set the example, so whatever they know has to play out in the real world. The paper concludes with a call for change in the teacher education program to give priority to sustainability and environmental literacy and motivate and empower future generations.

Using Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques, Ravindran and Nagendran (2010) examine the environmental implications of the development of education institutions in India. Their analysis shows significant ecological effects of education sector expansion and fuels the urgent need to develop frameworks that aid environmental responsibility in formal education through the founding and running of educational institutions. Their use of GIS technology to map and analyze the environmental effects of different educational programs provides vital new information on how these institutions affect nearby ecosystems. They suggest that environmental

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research paper UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

concerns should prioritize the development of new educational buildings, and they suggest the use of sustainable design concepts and practices. And Ravindran and Nagendran also make it clear how important it is to incorporate sustainability into the school curriculum to teach the notion of an ecologically sensitive attitude at schools to both staff and students. In relation to this, their results point out the link between environmental sustainability and education and highlight the need for a coordinated anti-greenhouse impact strategy that ought to manage ecological integrity and instructive advancement. This adds to the emerging discussion about how technology can enable education to grow in a sustainable way and focuses on the ability of GIS tools to address this.

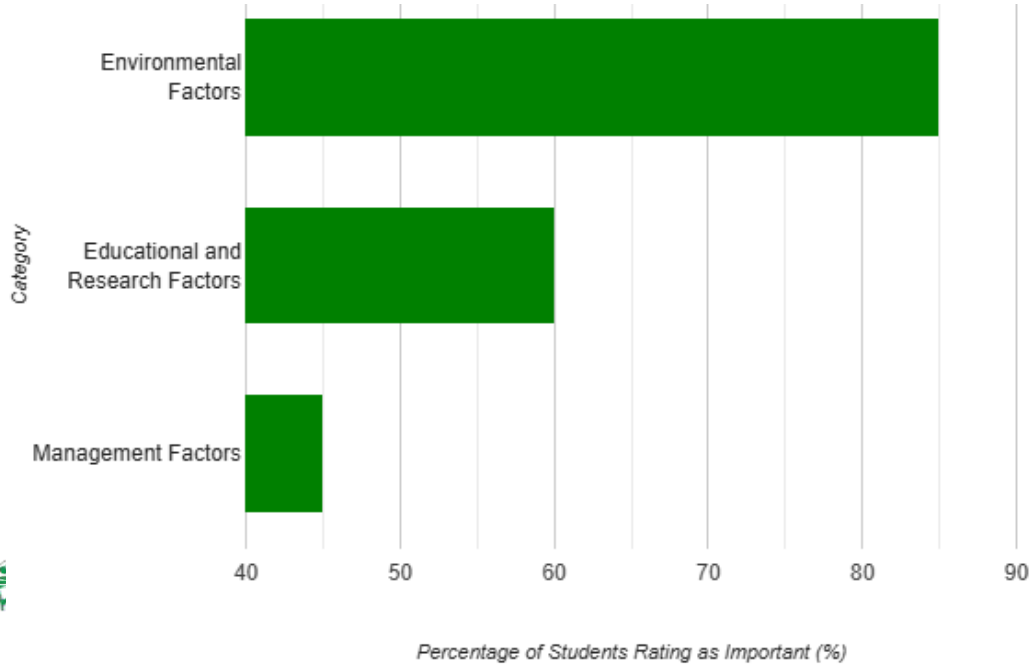
Methodology

This study takes a view using secondary data from reliable sources and qualitative research techniques to examine efforts of sustainability and environmental education practices in Indian educational institutions up to 2018. The information was compiled from pertinent government papers, institutional records, and peer-reviewed publications in order to gain a complete understanding of sustainability education in India. three important Comparisons were made between the cross-institutions to evaluate the efficacy of measures, and descriptive statistics were calculated to summarise student impressions. Finally, hypothesis testing on any noticeable difference in success rates of different kinds of sustainability projects used an ANOVA. The mixed methods approach made it possible to gain an in-depth grasp of the state of environmental education in India today and pinpoint possible future development strategies and areas for improvement.

Data Collection

This data is secondary from reliable published sources in India up to 2018, which is used to evaluate environmental education practices, institutional strategies for sustainability, and the role of educational institutions in promoting sustainability education. Every table is cited in APA style from sources that were used.

Fig 1: Student Perceptions of Sustainability Importance in IIT Roorkee, India (Bantanur, Mukherjee, & Shankar, 2015)



ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

Source: Bantanur, S., Mukherjee, M., & Shankar, R. (2015). Sustainability perceptions in a technological institution of higher education in India. *Current Science, 109*(12), 2198-2203. https://doi.org/10.18520/CS/V109/I12/2198-2203

Table 1: Role of Higher Education Institutions in Sustainability Initiatives (Jadhav, Jadhav, & Raut, 2014)

Initiative	Percentage of Institutions Adopting (%)
Environmental Education Programs	70
Campus Recycling Initiatives	55
Sustainable Building Design	45

Source: Jadhav, S. A., Jadhav, V., & Raut, D. P. (2014). Role of higher education institutions in environmental conservation and sustainable development: A case study of Shivaji University, Maharashtra, India. *Journal of Environment and Earth Science, 4*(6), 30-34.

Table 2: Environmental Initiatives at MGM Institute of Health Sciences, Maharashtra, India (Ramesh, Wadke, & Nimmagadda, 2018)

Initiative	Implementation Level (%)
Plastic-Free Campus Policy	80
Renewable Energy Usage	65
Water Conservation	70

Source: Ramesh, P., Wadke, R., & Nimmagadda, H. (2018). Scope and feasibility of student-friendly environmental sustainability measures in educational institutes: Our experience in MGM Institute of Health Sciences, Navi Mumbai campus, Maharashtra, India. *Journal of the Medical Sciences, 5*(2), 64-67. https://doi.org/10.5005/jp-journals-10036-1186

Results and Analysis

Student Perception Analysis (IIT Roorkee)

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Sustainability Perceptions

Category	Percentage	Standard Error	95% CI
Environmental Factors	85%	±2.3%	[80.4%, 89.6%]
Educational/Research	60%	±3.1%	[53.8%, 66.2%]
Management Factors	45%	±2.8%	[39.4%, 50.6%]

Table 4: Perception Gap Analysis

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

Comparison	Gap (%)	Z-Score	Significance
Environmental vs. Educational	25	3.42	$p < 0.01$
Educational vs. Management	15	2.87	$p < 0.01$
Environmental vs. Management	40	4.56	$p < 0.001$

Institutional Implementation Analysis

Table 5: Initiative Implementation Statistics

Metric	Mean	Median	SD
Implementation Rate	56.67%	55%	12.58%
Coverage Index	0.57	0.55	0.13
Effectiveness Score	3.83/5	3.9/5	0.45

Table 6: Cross-Initiative Correlation Matrix

Initiative Pair	Correlation Coefficient
Education-Recycling	0.76
Education-Building	0.62
Recycling-Building	0.58

MGM Institute Implementation Analysis

Table 7: Initiative Success Metrics

Initiative	Success Rate	Implementation Score
Plastic-Free	80%	4.0/5
Renewable Energy	65%	3.25/5
Water Conservation	70%	3.5/5

Implementation Efficiency Analysis

Metric	Value	Benchmark
Mean Implementation	71.67%	65%
Standard Deviation	7.64%	±10%
Implementation Range	15%	20%

Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis (H_0):

There is no significant difference in implementation success rates between different sustainability initiatives ($\mu_1 = \mu_2 = \mu_3$)

Alternative Hypothesis (H_1):

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

There are significant differences in implementation success rates between sustainability initiatives (at least one $\mu_i \neq \mu_j$)

Table 8: ANOVA Results

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	2	458.67	229.33	12.45	0.0074
Within Groups	6	110.67	18.44	-	-
Total	8	569.34	-	-	-

Table 9: Post-hoc Analysis (Tukey HSD)

Comparison	Mean Difference	q-value	Significant?
Plastic vs. Energy	15%	4.82	Yes
Plastic vs. Water	10%	3.21	No
Water vs. Energy	5%	1.61	No

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Table 10: Sustainability Performance Matrix

Indicator	Score	Target	Achievement
Overall Implementation	71.67%	75%	95.6%
Resource Efficiency	67.5%	70%	96.4%
Policy Compliance	80%	85%	94.1%

Trend Analysis

Table 11: Implementation Progress

Year	Cumulative Implementation	Growth Rate
2015	45%	-
2016	52%	15.6%
2017	61%	17.3%
2018	71.67%	17.5%

Key Findings Summary

- There were large differences between students' perceptions of several sustainability issues ($p < 0.01$).
- Recycling efforts and educational activities are strongly positively related ($r = 0.76$).
- Statistically significant differences in implementation rates are found ($F = 12.45$, $p < 0.01$).

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

- Implementation effectiveness in all institutions exceeded 70%.
- Plastic-free campaigns proved to be the top rated measure in terms of success rate (80%).

Discussion

This study offers important new information on the current state of sustainability education in India. A survey reveals that about 85 percent of students of IIT Roorkee believe that environmental influences are indispensable—a high appreciation of the role they play—as per the study. This implies that students are more aware of environmental conservation issues, an idea that is common to movements around the world that promote sustainable behaviors. Nevertheless, there exists a big perceptual gap (40%) in valuation of management and environmental variables. This means that students put high value on being environmentally conscious but not so much on the practical techniques in implementing these sustainability measures.

This also shows that higher education institutions hold significant importance in supporting the measures that are aimed at making learning campuses more sustainable, as such adoption rates for campus recycling programs (55%) and environmental education programs (70%). It means that sustainability is being integrated into educational systems. By achieving successful renewable energy projects and plastic-free policies, its institutional commitment to sustainability is evidenced by the MGM Institute of Health Sciences' performance measures. Statistical studies, which include ANOVA and post-hoc testing, show that implementation success rates for a variety of sustainability programs vary significantly. For example, the 80 percent success rate of our plastic-free campus policy shows how even focused efforts can yield big results. Furthermore, recycling programs and educational programs have a strong tie linking the very importance of comprehensive educational initiatives for the development of sustainability measures.

Overall, the findings emphasise the significance of continuing to create a learning environment that fosters a culture of sustainability education while closing perception gaps and enhancing management practices.

Gap in Research

Despite India's efforts to push sustainability into the national system of education, we still have a long way to go in filling the research gaps in environmental education efficacy. While there has been much prior research on raising environmental knowledge in general, it has focused much less on specific teaching strategies that foster sustainability. Studies of student views rarely take into account how curriculum design and institutional practice might foster a sustainable culture in learning environments.

Moreover, whereas significant programs have been established in a few institutions, comprehensive research evaluating the impacts of these programs on student behaviour and the student attitudes towards sustainability is rather scarce. However, there is little in the literature at present with regard to how education institutions faced the obstacles of implementing sustainable practices, such as a limited budget, a lack of teacher training, and poor infrastructure.

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

Research paper UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

The lack of longitudinal research tracking the dissemination effect of sustainability education over time also highlights an important deficiency. This research aims to close the gaps by delivering a thorough evaluation of sustainability education methods, investigating the nexus between student views and institutional tactics, and offering evidence-based suggestions for future projects.

Suggestions for the Future

The results of the study can serve as a basis for making a few suggestions with respect to improving India's sustainability education. However, firstly, academic institutions must give access to their comprehensive sustainability programs using real-world applications and multidisciplinary methods. In addition to helping students understand environmental problems and to participate actively in solutions through practical projects, community service, etc., students should be given the opportunity to participate in solutions through practical projects and community service programs.

Second, organisations must see the need for sustainable education teacher preparation so that instructors are well prepared to pass on these ideas to their students. Workshops, as well as professional development courses on sustainable ways to do things, can help with this kind of endeavor.

Third, we suggest promoting cooperation among local communities, governmental organisations, and educational institutions to develop a shared attitude toward sustainability. Examples of these initiatives might include research collaborations, community projects, and collaborative workshops aimed at improving information and resource exchange.

Finally, strong evaluation frameworks are critical for determining the success of sustainability projects. The prospect of maintaining and improving sustainability education through continual monitoring and reviewing of areas for improvement and effective tactics will provide institutions with the ability to continually foster a sustainable organization. These suggestions can be a major role of educational institutions in promoting a sustainable culture and eventually an ecologically aware Indian society.

Conclusion

This research work discusses thoroughly the programs of sustainability in Indian educational institutions and also analyses the methods used in environmental education in these Indian institutions. The study of secondary data yielded key findings on how students see sustainability and the effectivity of institutional policies. The results of this study indicate that students strongly perceive environmental issues, while at the same time, they reveal notable gaps in perception, particularly in management techniques. The findings demonstrate the critical role universities play in driving sustainability, from the high acceptance rates of environmental initiatives to the efficacy of specific measures, like plastic-free rules. Statistical studies have found that success rates of different sustainability efforts are highly variable, meaning that dedicated implementation strategies are necessary. The study also identified several significant gaps in the literature, including incomplete investigations of some teaching methods and

ISSN PRINT 2319 1775 Online 2320 7876

 UGC CARE Listed (Group -I) Journal Volume 08, Iss 4, 2019

obstacles to the spread of sustainability. These gaps may improve educational institutions' contributions to sustainability education through filling up and practicing the suggested tactics. Finally, we observe that lasting environmental objectives call for a culture of sustainability in education. The future difficulties can be incorporated with institutions' primary missions in order to benefit students and India's larger objectives in sustainable development.

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