

Challenges in the Implementation of Environment Education in Higher Education in India

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Abstract: Rapid industrialisation and a subsequent increase in global population in the last 200 years has resulted in considerable degradation of the global environment. As a result, the world is now battling with imminent threats of environmental pollution, climate change, large-scale biodiversity loss and natural resource crisis. The status of our environment has worsened since 2013, when the carbon dioxide concentration in the Earth's atmosphere crossed the 400 ppm mark, for the first time in recorded history. There is thus a need for all citizens to become aware of the ongoing environmental crisis and also contribute by behaving in an environmentally responsible manner. It is no wonder then that the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India directed the University Grants Commission to introduce an Environmental Studies course in all universities and affiliated colleges in 1999.

This paper explores the seventeen year period between 1999 and the present day and attempts to carry out a status-check of the implementation of Environmental Education in Higher Education in India. Preliminary investigation revealed that while several institutes of higher education did implement environment education, it often lacked the 'letter and spirit' as directed by the Hon'ble Court. The paper also investigates the challenges being faced in the adequate implementation of environment education in higher education through a 5W and 1H approach. Each of the What, Why, Where, When, Why and How of environment education is critically analysed from a sustainable development perspective. The paper concludes with providing suitable suggestions for resolving some of the identified challenges.

Keywords: environment education, higher education, environmental studies.