

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION

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Abstract

In today's technological world when the whole world is moving towards development, there emerges a growing concern of the impact of human's activities on the natural environment. This concern gave rise to the concept of Sustainable Development. Sustainable Development signifies that development is necessary and sufficient condition for human survival in order to meet their needs and to enhance their quality of life but on the other hand, it is necessary that it must happen without depleting the capacity of the natural environment to meet present and future needs. In order to establish a balance between present and future needs, one has to emphasize on the importance of Sustainable Development at the global platform, one way out is the inclusion of Sustainable Development into the educational system. Education can act as a best way to push up the present and future generations to feel the importance and the necessity of Sustainable Development. Thus, in this paper the researcher will take into consideration how "Sustainable Development can be achieved through Education". To achieve this objective, the ideology of Education for Sustainable Development has been taken into consideration. Under this, the researcher has taken 213 respondents which are surveyed through the Google Form link. The responses have highlighted how much they are aware of the concept and importance of Sustainable Development especially in context to Education.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, Education, Education for Sustainable Development.

Introduction

The ever increasing human needs has always given a setback to the natural environment and the ignorance of it has paved the way for humans to pay huge costs for it. The Growth of this scenario has pushed human civilization to realise the depletion of natural resources and in order to counteract this condition, the concept of Sustainable Development has come into limelight which is termed as the modern concept of development. The idea of Sustainable Development came into existence in 1980 but the concept was first defined in 1987 by the Brudtland Commission (formally the World Commission on Environment and Development) as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". This concept has gained importance as it will protect the interest of future generations and give time to Earth's capacity to regenerate. Initially the concept of Sustainable Development was restricted only towards the protection of the natural environment but in 2002 it studied on the basis of three pillars i.e. economy, society and environment that include end of poverty, better standards of education and health, gender equality, promoting jobs etc. Thus, the concept of Sustainable Development will articulate the sustainable habits among the humans in order to become the change maker in the process of Sustainable Development.

Statement of the Problem

"Sustainable Development through Education"

Operational Definition of the Study

***Sustainable Development-** Brundtland Commission, 1987 - "Sustainable Development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

***Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** - Sustainable Development Education Panel Report, 1998 - "Education for Sustainable Development is about the learning needed to maintain and improve our quality of life and the quality of life of generations to come....Education for Sustainable Development enables people to develop the knowledge, values and skills to participate in decisions about the way we do things individually and collectively, both locally and globally, that will improve the quality of life now without damaging the planet for the future".

Research Objectives of the Study

- * To study the concept of Sustainable development.
- * To examine the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
- * To assess the awareness regarding Sustainable Development and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) among the target group.

As this research paper talks about attaining Sustainable Development through Education so the role of Education for Sustainable development needs to be emphasized.

What role does Education play in Sustainable Development?

In 2002 at the UN World Summit in Johannesburg, it emphasized that good quality education is the prerequisite for achieving a more sustainable world. Reorientation of the present educational system has paved a key to Sustainable Development. It was argued by all that education is critical for achieving environmental and ethical awareness, values and attitudes, skills and behaviour consistent with Sustainable Development and for effective public participation in decision making. Formal, informal and non-formal education is vital for altering human's attitudes so that they have the capacity to appraise and label out their sustainable development concern. Thus, unfolding the significance of Sustainable Development through Education has paved the way for the emergence of the concept entitled- "Education for Sustainable Development" (ESD).

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)

The concept- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) has provided a new vision to the educational system. It has come to be visualised as a process which initiates students to have a better understanding of the world they live in, address the complexities and inter-relatedness of the problems such as poverty, gender inequality, poor health care system, environmental degradation etc. that can act as a threat to our future life. This concept addresses up to reorient our entire education system, its policies and practices globally for empowering young and old ones to make rational decisions and act in appropriate, rational and relevant way in order to re-address the problems that endanger our common future. Education for sustainable development as defined by **UNESCO (2014)**- "Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. It means including key sustainable development issues into teaching and learning for example, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity, poverty reduction and sustainable consumption. It also requires participatory teaching and learning methods that motivate and empower learners to change their behaviour and take action for sustainable development. Education for Sustainable Development consequently promotes competencies like critical thinking, imagining future scenarios and making decisions in a collaborative way. Education for Sustainable Development requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practised today".

The major thrust areas included in Education for Sustainable Development are-
Rooted in the curriculum in an interdisciplinary and holistic manner.

- * Share the values and principles that nurture Sustainable Development.
- * Foster critical thinking, problem solving ability and actions that enlarge the conviction in inscribing the challenges to sustainable development.
- * Apply a diversification in educational methods.

- * Authorize learners to take part in decision making in context to design and content of educational programmes.
- * Address local and global issues.
- * Having farsightedness i.e. looking to the future.
- * Take into consideration all three pillars of sustainable development i.e. environment, society and economy.
- * Involved all three forms of education- formal, informal and non-formal.

How Education works at different levels in attaining Sustainable Development?

As everyone knows the entire education system is categorised into three different levels that are-

- 1) **Primary Level** - This is the initial level where seeds of the sustainability habits can be sown in the children. The curriculum at this level includes subjects like environmental science, social science, moral science etc.
- 2) **Secondary Level** - This level offers more opportunities for the integration of education for sustainable development in the school system where in inclusion of subjects like geography, science, social, personal and health education can fulfil the objective.
- 3) **Higher Level** - Introduction of courses in sustainable development like masters of science in sustainable development at the Dublin Institute of Technology, New Doctoral Programme at University College Dublin, Waterford Institute of Technology Sustainability and Environmental Awareness for all (SEAA) , Tipperary Institute's Bachelor of Arts Programme in Rural Development etc. are some of the examples of amalgamation of the specific and full-fledged courses are introduced in the higher level education in order to enhance the specialisation in Sustainable Development.

Seeking Sustainable Development through Education

The role of the school system and their educators are predominantly felt by all in promoting sustainable development through education.

By Schools: Schools are firmly motivated to prepare their school plans in such a way that it helps in addressing all the possibilities that might arise in promoting sustainable development within its community. Schools are the focal point of sustainable development as it delivers high quality and relevant education which furnishes the young generation with the skills, aptitudes and attitudes required for sustainable development. Sustainability can be achieved by schools keeping in view the following contexts -

- (i) **Sustainability in the Curriculum** - The inclusion of all three pillars of sustainable development are to be inculcated in the curriculum i.e.

Environmental Sustainability	Economic Sustainability	Social Sustainability
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Natural resources management ● Ecological systems ● Food and farming ● Biodiversity ● Climatic change etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Population ● Alternative futures ● Corporate social responsibility ● Consumerism and trade ● Globalisation of economy ● International development etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cultural diversity ● Health and wellbeing ● Peace, security and conflict ● Citizenship, Government and democracy ● Human rights and needs etc.

- (ii) **Campus** - Construction of school buildings (internal, external) is in accordance with the curriculum to be delivered. Resources should be managed in order to do waste management, energy efficiency etc.
- (iii) **Community Links** - Schools will enhance its relation with the local community and to work in partnership with it in order to broaden up the vision of sustainable development in the students' families also.

By Educators: Urgent need felt by educators also that there requires a shift in the pedagogical approach from traditional towards active, participative and experiential learning methods that engage the learner and make a real difference to their understanding, thinking and ability to act. The educator can act in the following way:

- * Enhance knowledge that is more integrated and contextualized.
- * Encourage lifelong learning.
- * Maximum development of human potentialities by developing participatory and collaborative learning.
- * Develop willingness to explore new options among pupils.
- * Magnification of systematic thinking and analysis.
- * Innovative thinking for future scenarios.
- * Inspire new alliances between school and civil society for practising democratic principles.
- * Spread personal and communal awareness of global responsibility in achieving Sustainable Development.
- * Create realistic hope in which desirability and possibility of change are accompanied in favour of a sustainable future for all.

So, one can say that schools and especially the educators are considered as the agent of change which is very much required at global level to achieve Sustainable Development.

Initiatives taken by UNESCO and various countries in promoting Sustainable Development through Education

UNESCO - United Nation Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 -14) was adopted by the UN General Assembly with UNESCO designated as the lead agency in promoting education for sustainable development. It is the sole responsibility of UNESCO to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning.

- * Formulation of Eco-UNESCO which is an environment education and youth organisation. It initiates the significance of global perspective in generating conception of education for sustainable development and to examine how actions are connected to the world at local, national and international levels. It is a youth led initiative in which young people are inspired, empower and engage in promoting sustainable development.

UAE - Environmental Education programs like Be'ati Watani and Eco-schools UAE (both implemented by EWS-WWF) have become quite popular among the students during 2005-2014. These are vital tools to provide environmentally responsible citizens.

Ireland – A research was conducted under the supervision of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, European Union (EU) along with Irish government policy frameworks, international case studies and an overview of existing good practices in Ireland. Questionnaire based survey was conducted in order to identify examples of good practice projects and programmes done in the area of Education for Sustainable development of Ireland. The target population comprised people involved in formal and non-formal education sectors, teacher' s unions, NGOs, business associations and others. The findings brought from the research has highlighted some practices initiated with the formal, non-formal and informal sectors like Eco-UNESCO's Young Environmental Awards Program, the Green Schools Program, Education and Training Awards Council, National Youth Development Education Programme and others.

Thus, these are few initiatives taken in different parts of the world to promote sustainable development and education is the bridge in achieving that.

Major challenges arise in stimulating Sustainable Development through Education

The major challenges can be:

- * How to categorise the parameters of sustainability in curricular to make it practical and implementable?

- * How to prioritise the parameters of sustainability for implementation purposes?
- * What kind of changes should be made in revamping and or restructuring the policies in higher education for sustainable development?
- * How to generate interest in the educational community to contribute actively towards sustainable development?
- * How to deal with the lack of awareness among humans regarding the importance of sustainable development for their survival?
- * How to empower universities, promote both public-private initiatives and encourage bold moves towards sustainable development?
- * How to channelize the UNESCO plans and activities related to education for sustainable development in the same way at the bottom of the hierarchy level?
- * How to integrate and strengthen the coordination and collaboration between different levels of education for sustainable development?
- * How to mitigate information and knowledge gaps between different parts of the world?

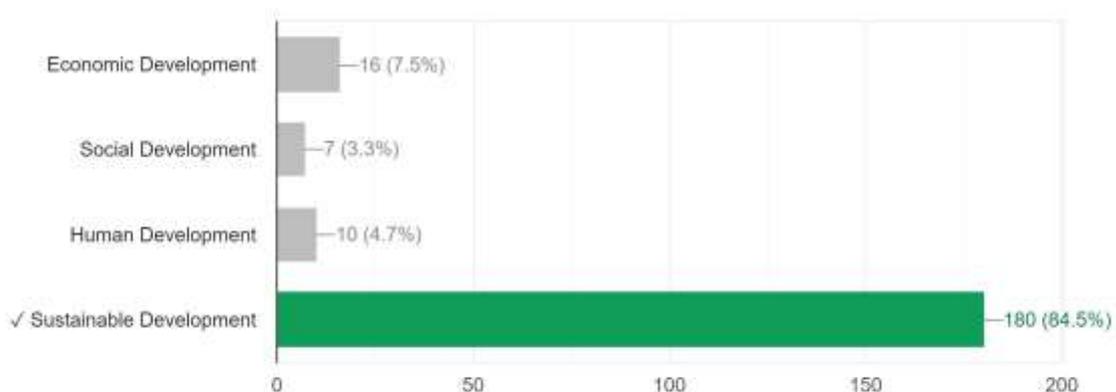
Design of the Study

- * Type of Study - Descriptive Study
- * Sampling - Random Sampling
- * Sample comprised 213 respondents from the states- Haryana and Delhi.
- * Tool - Data was collected through self - made questionnaire, i.e. Google form link. * Data Analysis Technique – Bar Diagrams

Data Analysis

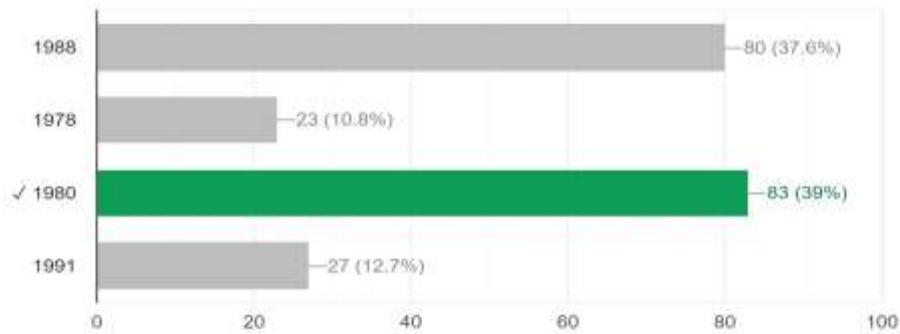
1. Which one is termed as Modern Concept of Development ?

180 / 213 correct responses



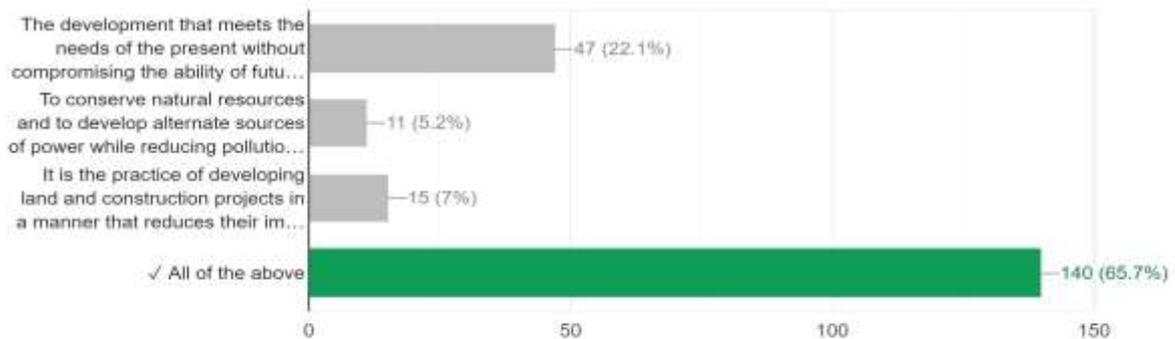
2. In which year the idea of "Sustainable Development" came into existence ?

83 / 213 correct responses



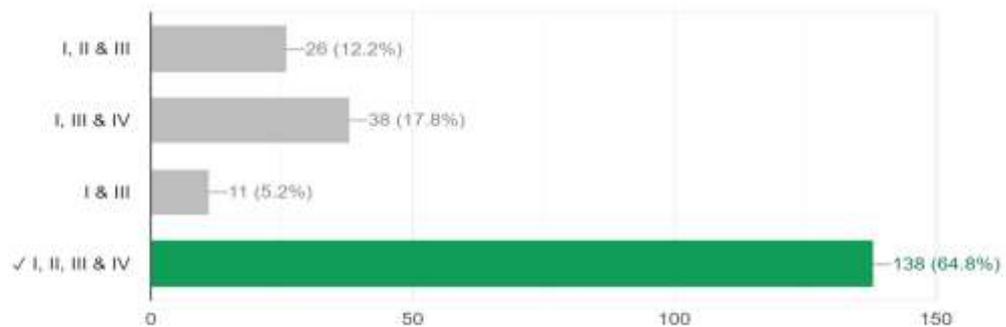
3. Sustainable Development is.....

140 / 213 correct responses



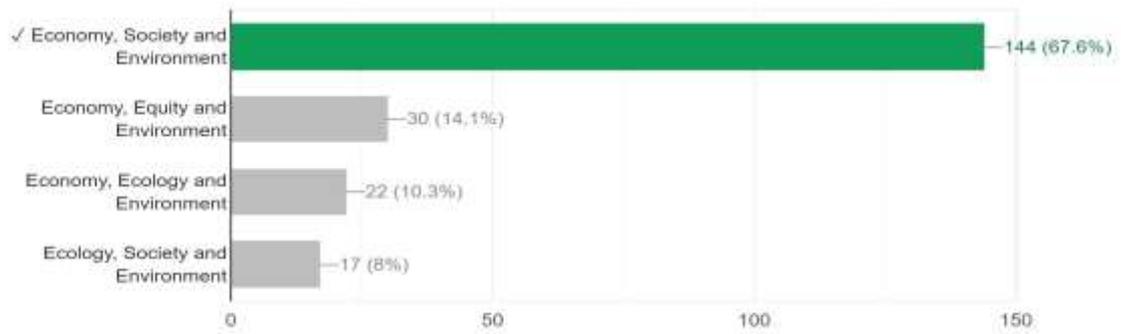
4. The Primary Goals of Sustainability are - I. The end of poverty and hunger II. Better standards of education and healthcare particularly as it pertains to growth while promoting jobs and stronger economies

138 / 213 correct responses



5. Sustainable Development can be studied in terms of three pillars -

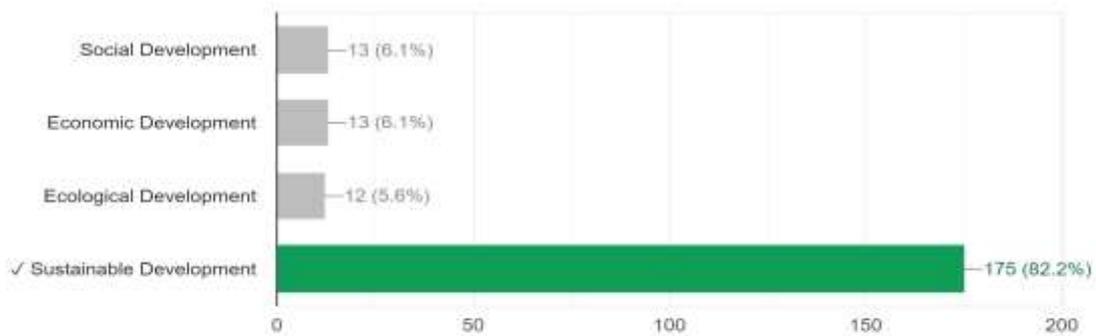
144 / 213 correct responses



6. Social, Economical and Ecological Equity is required as the necessary pre-requisite for achieving -

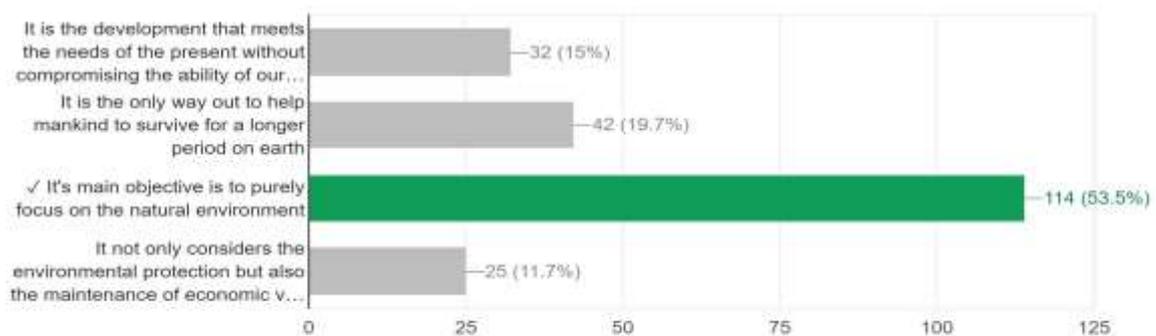
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175 / 213 correct responses



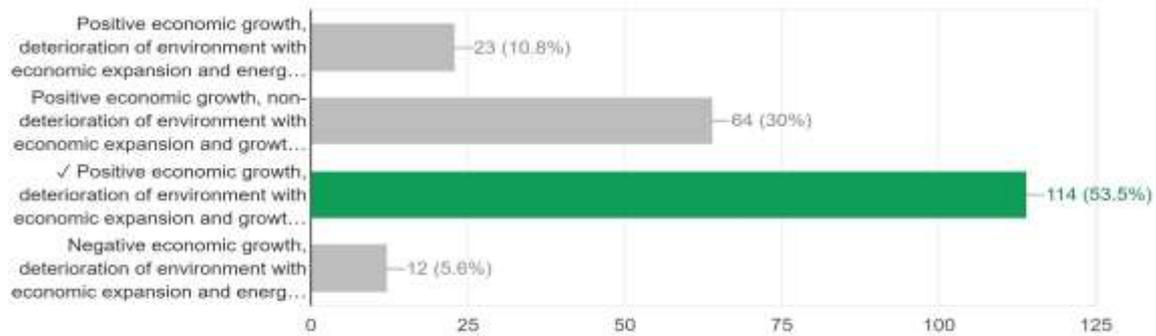
7. Which of the following statement is false in context to Sustainable Development ?

114 / 213 correct responses



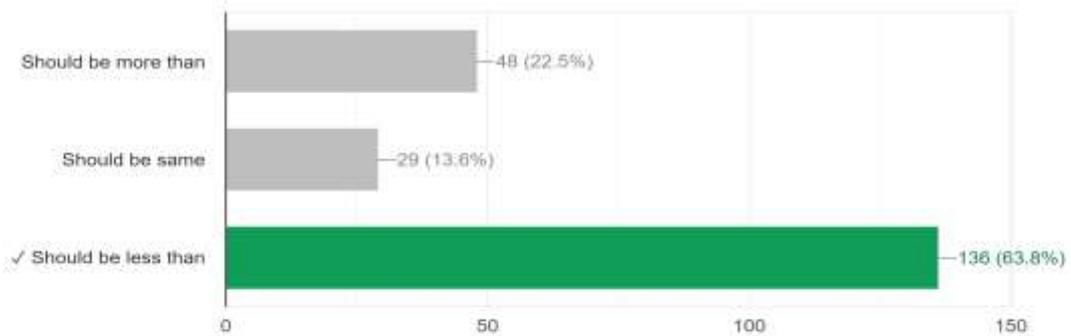
8. Which one ensures Sustainable Development ?

114 / 213 correct responses



9. To achieve Sustainable Development, Environmental degradation rate Environmental recovery rate

136 / 213 correct responses



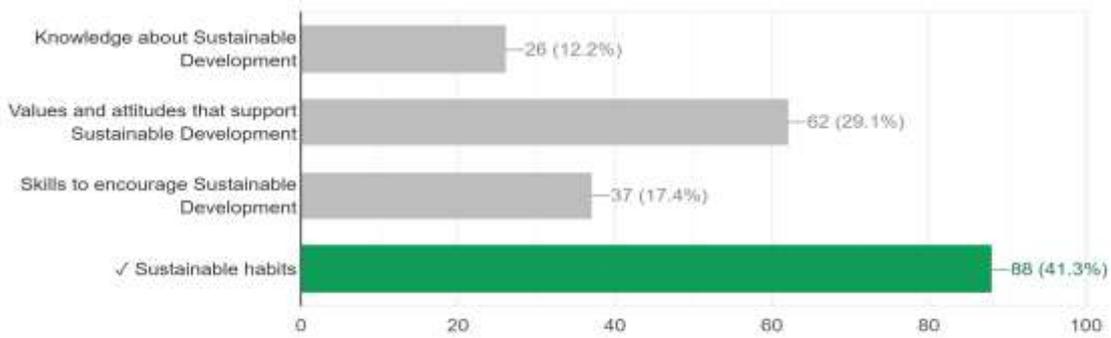
10. The maximum number of persons that can be supported by a given environment is termed as.....

116 / 213 correct responses



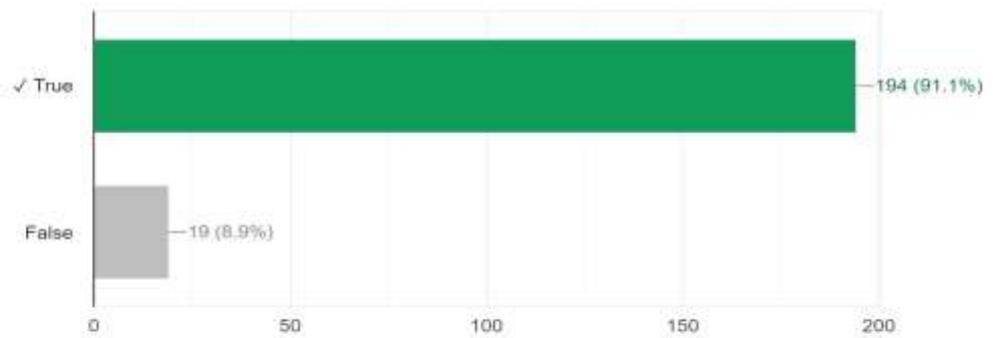
11. What qualities one should have to be a change maker in the process of Sustainable Development ?

88 / 213 correct responses



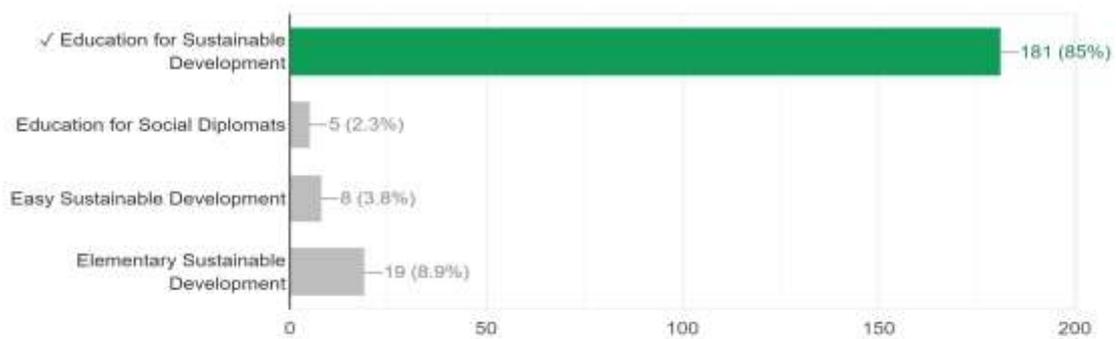
12. Sustainable Development is synonyms with the conservation of the environment.

194 / 213 correct responses



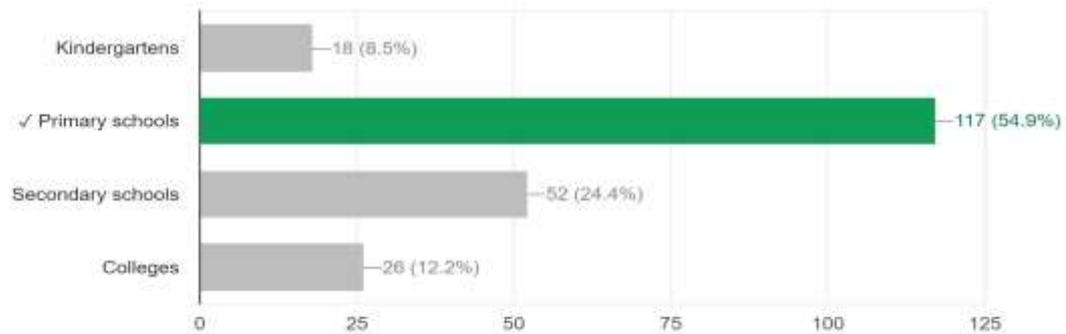
13. Full form of ESD is

181 / 213 correct responses



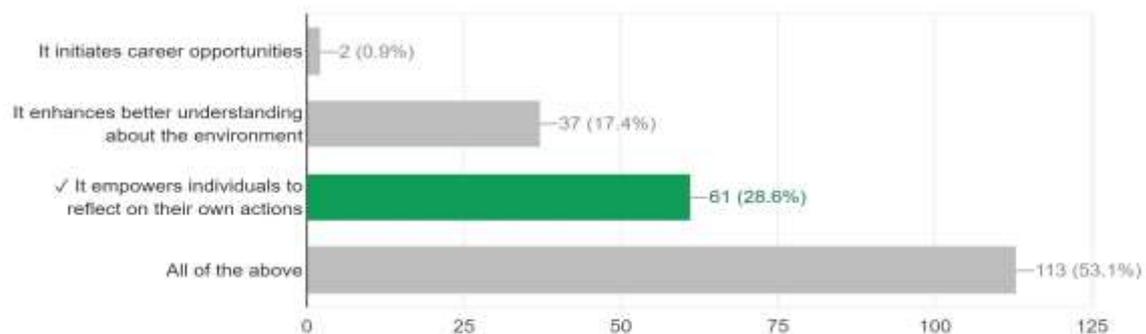
14. Whose responsibility is to encourage Education for Sustainable Development ?

117 / 213 correct responses



15. Education is relevant for Sustainable Development, why?

61 / 213 correct responses



Findings of the Study

- * 84.5% of the respondents are aware that Sustainable Development is signified as the Modern Concept of Development.
- * Only 39% of the respondents know the year of the existence of Sustainable development.
- * Only 65.7% of the respondents are acquainted with the concept of Sustainable development.
- * 64.8% are familiar with the primary goals of sustainability.
- * 67.6% respondents are informed of the three pillars of sustainable development.
- * 82.2% respondents know that social, economic and ecological equity is required as the prerequisite for achieving Sustainable development.
- * 53.5% of people are well informed that sustainable development is not purely focused on the natural environment.
- * Only 53.5% are conscious that positive economic growth, deterioration of environment with economic expansion and growth will ensure Sustainable development.
- * 63.8% respondents realized that the environmental degradation rate should be less than the environmental recovery rate.
- * Only 54.5% are aware about the concept of carrying capacity.
- * Mere 41.3% thought that one should have sustainable habits to be a change maker in the process of sustainable development.
- * 91.1% realise that Sustainable development is synonymous with the conservation of the environment.
- * 85% respondents are clued up about the full form of ESD.

- * Mere 54.9% of the respondents have the belief that primary schools have the responsibility to encourage Education for Sustainable Development.
- * Very few i.e. 28.6% respondents have the opinion that education is relevant for sustainable development as it empowers individuals to reflect on their own actions.

Delimitations of the Study

- * Only 213 respondents were taken for the survey.
- * Sample consisted of respondents from Haryana and Delhi states only.
- * Respondents include only the educated ones.
- * Only Google form questionnaire was used as the tool for data collection. Other tool like interview was not taken into consideration.

Suggestions

- * Implementation of the plans and activities formulated by UNESCO will be strengthened.
- * One should have political will also to achieve a target of sustainable future.
- * Requirement of responsible, accountable leadership and expertise is required for the change in the educational system.
- * Mere inclusion of subjects connected to sustainable development will not do the purpose, one has to educate the pupils about the significance of that subject in attaining sustainable development.
- * Restructuring the existing educational system at all levels to address sustainable development.
- * Spreading awareness among the masses at global level.
- * Developing necessary skills among all the sectors of society to perform their work in a sustainable manner.
- * The effectiveness of Education for Sustainable Development must be monitored or measured at regular intervals in order to know the degree to which it changes the attitudes and behaviours of people individually and also in carrying out their collective responsibilities and duties as citizens.
- * Lastly, as this is the global problem so it requires global action. So, it is best addressed through Universal Education International Cooperation.

Thus, these are some suggestions one can use to achieve the dream of sustainable development at global level.

Conclusion

One can conclude that in today's world, education given either by family or by school acts as a change maker to develop the necessary skills, attitudes and behaviour modification in attaining sustainable development. Presently no individual, no family and no school functions in isolation. Schools have to integrate student's classroom learning to their daily life so that they will be in a better position to initiate in changing behaviour and adopting sustainable habits. The school learning should be extended in their family practices also i.e. one should not stop there. The families can also practise things like- wise use of water, optimum use of electricity in the house and their offices, adopt public transport etc. Thus, our homes and societies are the ideal platform to exercise, experience and cherish what they learn in the classroom setting for achieving sustainable development. So, education for sustainable development can help in changing our future. One should need continuous support from all the stakeholders of education i.e. policymakers, school authorities, teachers, parents and community as a whole. A deep compassion of these stakeholders will serve the very purpose of alleviating the environmental crisis we are facing today and to appreciate what our planet offers us and use its resources efficiently and responsibly. So, we have to contribute every bit of ourselves to make this planet a better place to live.

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