

## ROLE OF RIGHT TO EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

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### Abstract

The present paper is concerned with the vital role of right to education in educational equity in the country which leads to sustainable development. The author discussed the educational equity taking into consideration the NCF, 2005. Financial constraints, lack of qualified and hard working sincere teachers, proper infrastructure in institutions, providing equity and quality in education, motivating child labourers towards education are major challenges of implementing right to education in the education system. Education is an essential tool and way for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education, and training are keys to moving society toward sustainability. It is curious to note that while we have difficulty envisioning a sustainable world, we have no difficulty identifying what is unsustainable in our societies. We can rapidly create a laundry list of problems - inefficient use of energy, lack of water conservation, increased pollution, abuses of human rights, overuse of personal transportation, consumerism, etc. The author highlights the various principles of sustainable development along with the role of education in the sustainable development.

**Key Words:** Right to education, educational equity, sustainable development, National Curriculum Framework.

### Introduction:

The present society is considered a knowledge-based society. A knowledge based society has an inbuilt requirement for the production of human capital. Education-vehicle of knowledge can supply skilled manpower for generating development in a nation. Education develops the human being in the true sense of term, developing all potentialities and capabilities through which a nation can benefit socially, economically, culturally, educationally and so on. Therefore, education is considered the bedrock of all socio-economic developments of a country (Bordoloi, Ritimoni, 2012). Education in India falls under the control of both the Union Government and the states, with some responsibilities lying with the Union and the states having autonomy for others. The various Articles of the Indian Constitution provide for education as a fundamental right (Kumar, Sanjeev, 2012). India has made progress in terms of increasing primary education attendance rate and expanding literacy to approximately two thirds of the population (Education in India). India's improved education system is often cited as one of the main contributors to the economic rise of India (Press Trust of India, 2008). Much of the progress, especially in higher

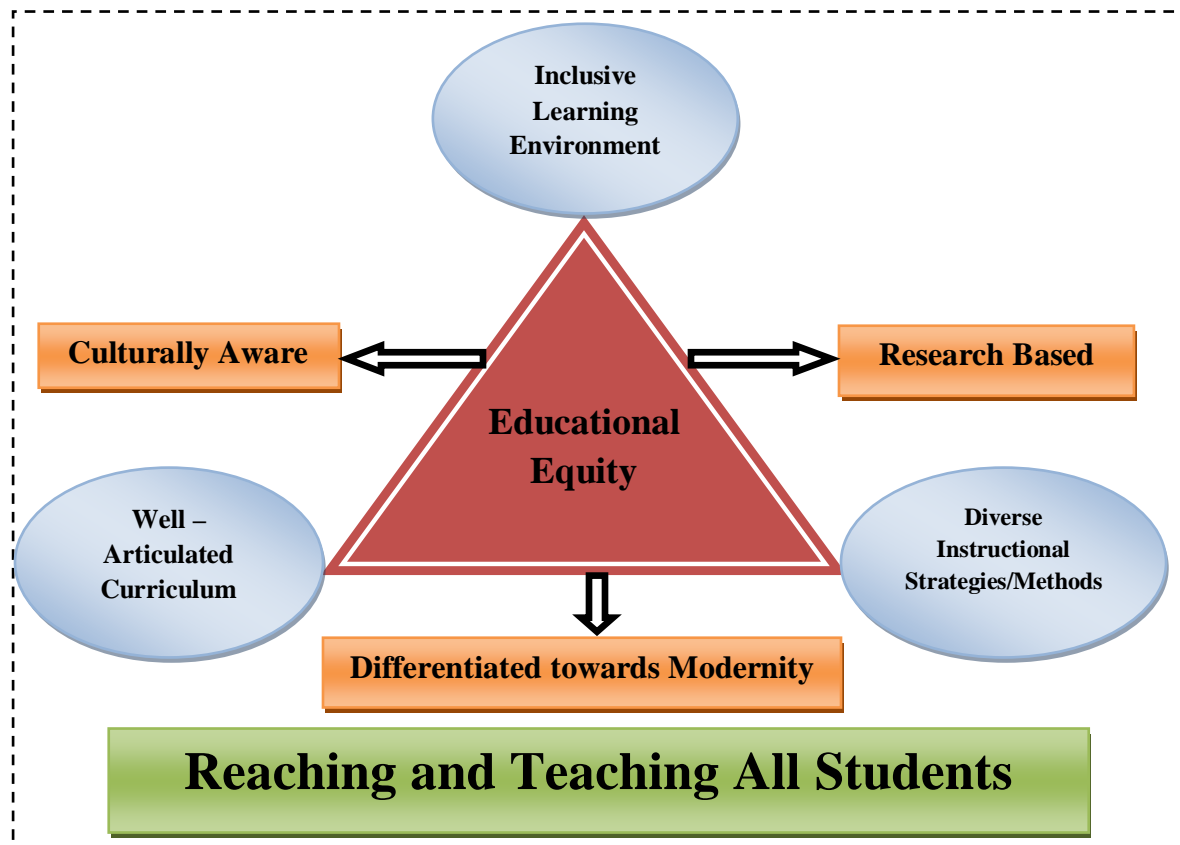


education and scientific research, has been credited to various public institutions. Abdul Kalam, Dr. A. P. J. (2011) underlined this by saying, “The root cause of poverty lies in illiteracy, unemployment and lack of basic healthcare and there is a need to sharply increase public spending in these areas”. In short, President of India wishes that India should move towards equity. To attain equity India needs to offer quality education for all. In absence of equity in quality of education, the nation will increasingly resort various types of reservations as second option, and still be far away from fair play of opportunities. Therefore, a primary and explicitly stated objective of education policy of a welfare state must be to ensure equality of opportunities by way of securing that all citizens have access to the resources necessary.

**Equity makes education fair and justifiable:** According to France, Anatole, “The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets and steal bread.” Equity and Efficiency are the two cornerstones of any educational policy. Equity makes education fair (or lack of it makes it unfair). Thus, it is very important to disentangle the effect of pupils’ background from the effect of school quality. It requires that per pupil funding needs to be larger for disadvantaged pupils. If every child could make appropriate academic growth each year, equity could be achieved and can reflect into equality of simple group averages (like say a group of illiterate persons or that of Degree Holders) across various demographic subgroups (say caste, religion, region or gender groups). The aim of equity should be to make provisions for all children to complete the equivalent upper secondary school education and that all be given the opportunity to pursue higher studies if they so desire. The universalism in terms of accessibility to quality education, financial and other helps to the needy to facilitate individual accomplishment (Burte, Prakash, 2008).

It is suggested with the help of Figure 1 (Educational Equity diagram) that we should promote and support education that is transformative, empowering and view education as a human right. We should place educational equity at the triangular centre of our efforts. Inclusive learning environment should be placed at the top and well – articulated curriculum and diverse instructional strategies/methods make the base of the triangle. In this way reaching and teaching all students will lead to educational equity (Kumar, Sanjeev 2014). The culturally aware curriculum and research based methods and strategies make teaching so effective which is to be applicable at grass root level in schools. The modern and hitech technologies can make the educational process more interesting and easy for the target group to fulfill the goals of RTE.





**Fig. 1: Educational Equity diagram.**

### **National Curriculum Framework, 2005 on Equity:**

National Curriculum Framework (NCF), 2005 (NCERT, 2005) is a document that bases itself, before anything else, on the constitutional vision of India as a secular, egalitarian and pluralistic society founded on the values of social justice and equality. There lies its strength and conviction. The aims of education are identified within this broad framework.

In chapter IV (Page 83-84) under the title "PARTICIPATION OF ALL CHILDREN", National Curriculum Framework reiterates its stand in the following words, "Children cannot wake up one fine morning when they are 18 and know how to participate in, preserve and enhance a democracy. ... The participation of children is a means to a much larger end, that of preserving and adding a new vibrancy to our culture of egalitarianism, democracy, secularism and equality. These values can be best realized through an integrated and well-designed curriculum that enables children's participation. The existing environment of unhealthy competition in schools promotes values that are the antithesis of the values enshrined in our Constitution." NCF talks of equity at least on two occasions.

In Chapter III (Page 49-50) under the title "OUTLOOK", National Curriculum Framework brings to surface three issues with reference to the complex scenario of science education in

India. Though the context is that of science education, most of the arguments are valid (in varying degrees of applicability) to other disciplines as well.

1. Science education is still far from achieving the goal of equity enshrined in our Constitution. (*One fails to understand whether it is talking of equity in education or in other fields.*)

2. Science education in India, even at its best, develops competence but does not encourage inventiveness and creativity. (*This is a comment on the quality of science education. In reality, this is valid for other disciplines as well.*)

3. The overpowering examination system is basic to most, if not all, the fundamental problems of science (*and that of other disciplines*) education in India.

The National Curriculum Framework recommends (to whom? states?) using textbooks (TBs) as one of the primary instruments for equity. The question is can the TBs (even granting the plurality of TBS) are capable performing the ascribed role by NCF? This is not going to change the situation for better. However, it is a step forward.

In Chapter IV (Page 81-82) under the title “NURTURING AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT” National Curriculum Framework says, “As public spaces, schools must be marked by the values of quality, social justice and respect for diversity, as well as of the dignity and rights of children. These values must be consciously made part of the perspective of the school and form the foundation of school practice. An enabling learning environment is one where children feel secure, where there is absence of fear, and which is governed by relationships of quality and equity. Often this does not require any special effort on the part of the teacher, except to practice equality and not discriminate among children. Teachers should also nurture their classroom spaces as places where children can ask questions freely, engaging in a dialogue with the teacher as well as their peers, during an ongoing lesson.”

### **Right to Education Act and Education System in India:**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act or Right to Education Act (RTE), which was passed by the Indian parliament on 04<sup>th</sup> August 2009, describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education for children between 6 and 14 years old in India (Ministry of Law and Justice, 2010) under Article 21a of the Indian Constitution. India became one of 135 countries to make education a fundamental right of every child when the act came into force on 01<sup>st</sup> April, 2010 (Dhar, Arti, 2010). The right to education is a universal entitlement to education, a right that is recognized as a human right. According to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights the right to education includes the right to free, compulsory primary education for all (UN General Assembly, Article 13.2-a), an obligation to develop secondary education accessible to all, in particular by the progressive introduction of free secondary education (UN General Assembly, Article 13.2-b), as well as an obligation to develop equitable access to higher education, ideally by the progressive introduction of free higher education (UN General Assembly, Article 13.2-c). The right to education also includes a responsibility to provide basic education for individuals who have not completed primary education. In addition to these access to education provisions, the right to education encompasses the obligation to rule out discrimination at all levels of the educational system, to set minimum



standards and to improve quality of education (UNESCO, 2007). The right to education is law in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Articles 200 and 14 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (UN General Assembly, Article 26, 13 and 14).

The Act makes education a fundamental right of every child between the ages of 6 and 14 and specifies minimum norms in elementary schools. It requires all private schools to reserve 25% of seats to children from poor families (to be reimbursed by the state as part of the public-private partnership plan, PPP). It also prohibits all unrecognized schools from practice, and makes provisions for no donation or capitation fees and no interview of the child or parent for admission (Sripati, V. and Thiruvengadam, A. K., 2004). The Act also provides that no child shall be held back, expelled, or required to pass a board examination until the completion of elementary education. There is also a provision for special training of school drop-outs to bring them up to par with students of the same age. The RTE act requires surveys that will monitor all neighbourhoods, identify children requiring education, and set up facilities for providing it. The World Bank education specialist for India, Sam Carlson, has observed:

The RTE Act is the first legislation in the world that puts the responsibility of ensuring enrollment, attendance and completion of the elementary education on the Government. It is the parents' responsibility to send the children to schools in India, U.S. and other countries ([prayatna.typepad.com](http://prayatna.typepad.com)).

The Right to Education of persons with disabilities until 18 years of age is laid down under a separate legislation- the Persons with Disabilities Act (PWD). A number of other provisions regarding improvement of school infrastructure, teacher-student ratio and faculty are made in the Act. The Act provides for a special organization, the National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights, an autonomous body set up in 2007, to monitor the implementation of the act (Satya, 2011), together with Commissions to be set up by the states. A committee set up to study the funds requirement and funding initially estimated that Rs 171,000 crores or 1.71 trillion (US\$ 38.2 billion) across five years was required to implement the Act, and in April 2010 the central government agreed to sharing the funding for implementing the law in the ratio of 65 to 35 between the centre and the states, and a ratio of 90 to 10 for the north-eastern states (PTI, 2010). However, in mid of the year 2010, this figure was upgraded to Rs. 231,000 crores, and the center agreed to raise its share to 68% (IST, ET Bureau, 2010). A critical development in 2011 has been the decision taken in principle to extend the right to education till Class X (age 16) (PIB, 2010) and into the pre-school age range (Economic Times, 2010). The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) committee is in the process of looking into the implications of making these changes.

### **Challenges of Right to Education towards Educational Equity and Sustainable Development:**

There are challenges of Right to Education (RTE) in educational institutions and educational administration towards educational equity and sustainable development in the country. Some of the challenges noticed by the researcher are discussed as under:



**Financial Challenges of the Right to Education Act:** The Right to Education Act is already plagued with various financial hurdles and challenges. The fiscal burden is to be shared between the center and the states in the ratio of 55: 45 and 90: 10 for the North-Eastern States. This project is going to involve funds to the tune of Rs. 15,000 crores. Many states have already voiced their inability to mobilize funds and entered into a dispute with the center. Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and many states have expressed that they would not be able to implement the Act in the absence of funds from the center. Orissa in fact wants the same status enjoyed by the North Eastern states with respect to the Act. The success as far as the financial issues are concerned largely depends upon the **center-state cooperation**. The ambitious project is already falling short of around Rs.7.000 crores in the very first year itself. Since the Act involves improving the infrastructure of schools, training teachers, creating more facilities besides the manifold increase in intake, huge finances would be involved and it is difficult to envisage how the economics of it, all will be worked out.

**Challenge to Find Qualified Teachers:** The dearth of good and qualified teachers is going to be one of the most crucial challenges faced in implementing the act. In the absence of competent teachers who are considered the pillars of education, it would be next to impossible for the Act to realistically achieve its goals. It is a fact that at any given point, about 25% teachers are on leave in India and a majority of them are unable to do full justice to their professions due to a myriad of reasons. As it is evident from the Act that school drop outs and others would be brought back into the education stream again, it would entail hiring almost double the number of teachers. It would be a challenge to find quality teachers without any performance based salaries or any incentives. The salary mechanism will need some serious revisions and the disparities removed before any influx of efficient teachers can take place. It is going to be a challenge to bridge the gap even by introducing teacher's training programs. According to a teacher of a reputed school in Delhi, there are hundreds of students in one class and there is a huge gap between the training imparted to teachers and what they practice on ground. Our Human Resource Development Minister himself has acknowledged that there is a shortage of about five lakh teachers. In the face of this, how will it fulfill its promise of providing quality education and equity to all? It is going to be a huge challenge.

**Challenge to Provide Infrastructure:** In a survey on 'Elementary Education in India', conducted by the National University of Educational Planning and Administration (NUEPA), it has been found that almost half of the recognized elementary schools in the country do not have separate toilet for girls. This goes out to prove and depict the sorry state that our schools are in. It is going to be a challenge to provide the requisite infrastructure that the Act expects.

The Act demands that the building of all the schools should be weather proof. According to the Act there should be one teacher for every 30 students. The survey has come up with dismal details in this regard. There are 5.79 million teachers teaching in the elementary schools currently and each school has an average of 4.5 teachers. The Act suggests barrier free entries for all the schools whereas presently, only about 40% of the schools have ramps. Basic facilities like access to drinking water is also lacking in many schools. The Act stipulates a play ground for every school. Looking at the current scenario it looks like it is going to be extremely challenging



to provide the necessary infrastructure and that too with an increased intake of teachers and students.

The other major infrastructure challenge will be to establish a balance between Centre and State. Several regulatory measures can only be taken after individual inputs from state governments. There are no clear demarcations between the responsibilities of the center and state and it would be a challenge to work out the details.

**Challenge to Provide Equality and Quality in Education:** Human Resource Development Minister has paved the way for huge challenges ahead by promising quality education to all. It has already been seen that it will be difficult to do so in the absence of good teachers. The Act says that no student would be dropped from school or not passed till the age of 14. With the mix of such students in class, it would be very difficult for the teachers to ensure quality. Substantial efforts would be required to maintain and impart quality education. Teachers and the supporting staff of schools are finding it tough to remain impartial and treat all the students on an equal footing without any biases. Besides this, they are also be responsible for encouraging harmony amongst the varying strata of students.

**Challenge to Enforce 25% Quota for Weaker Sections:** It remains to be seen whether this clause to reserve 25% of seats for weaker sections by Private unaided schools will turn out to be a boon or a bane. On one hand the Act aims at removing this bipolarity in education and on the other it is feared that interfering in the functioning of private schools will have an adverse effect on the quality of education. These institutes claim to have brought some semblance of order to the education system in our country.

It is going to be a challenge for the government to work out modalities which can strike a balance between a six year old child who has just entered school and a child who has been to a school since the age of 3. It will be a cultural and social shock for him. Since it will be mandatory not to fail any child till standard 8<sup>th</sup>, the classes would be full and ensuring quality education in the light of this is a huge challenge. The biggest challenge in this is going to be the definition of weaker sections. This is where malpractices can creep in. A monitoring mechanism will also have to be set up to ensure its fair implementation.

What will happen when a child belonging to the quota category wants to change school in higher classes? Logistics need to be worked out for a smooth transition there also. Will this help in eradicating the socioeconomic divide? It is tough task to bring together children from varying economic and social backgrounds on the same platform. It would indeed be challenging for the teachers to maintain equity, equilibrium and create an environment for them to blend together.

**Challenge to Bring Child Laborers to Schools:** Now that right to education has become a fundamental right of each and every child, it should also be applicable to those thousands of students who are being used as child laborers and have been denied education till now. There are more than 12 million children in India who are engaged in child labour and these are just official figures. Unless and until a special provision is made in the Act, it would be challenging to bring back these children to school. These are some of the problems that have littered the path but our H.R.D. Minister is quite confident of overcoming these challenges and propels India towards even greater heights. This Act has put India in the same league as U.S.A. and 130 other Nations



as far as the Right to Education is concerned. Nothing can change overnight but there is a ray of hope. A hope, if all these hurdles and shortcomings are overcome and the loopholes removed, then, this will become the road leading towards an **Educated India, a Proud India.** ([indiastudychannel.com](http://indiastudychannel.com))

### **Education for Sustainable Development:**

Sustainability education (ES), Education for Sustainability (EfS), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) are interchangeable terms describing the practice of teaching for sustainability. Education for Sustainable Development is the term most used internationally and by the United Nations (McKeown, R., 2002). Agenda 21 was the first international document that identified education as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development and highlighted areas of action for education not in India but all over the world.

Various approaches to Education for Sustainable Development encourage people to understand the complexities of, and synergies between, the issues threatening planetary sustainability and understand and assess their own values and those of the society in which they live in the context of sustainability. Education for Sustainable Development seeks to engage people in negotiating a sustainable future, making decisions and acting on them. While it is generally agreed on that sustainability education must be customized for individual learners (Huckle, J. and Sterling, S. R., 2006), according to Tilbury and Wortman (2004), the following skills are essential to Education for Sustainable Development:

- Envisioning – being able to imagine a better future. The premise is that if we know where we want to go, we will be better able to work out how to get there.
- Critical thinking and reflection – learning to question our current belief systems and to recognize the assumptions underlying our knowledge, perspective and opinions. Critical thinking skills help people learn to examine economic, environmental, social and cultural structures in the context of sustainable development.
- Systemic thinking – acknowledging complexities and looking for links and synergies when trying to find solutions to problems.
- Building partnerships – promoting dialogue and negotiation, learning to work together.
- Participation in decision-making – empowering people.

Education is an essential tool for achieving sustainability. People around the world recognize that current economic development trends are not sustainable and that public awareness, education, and training are keys to moving society toward sustainability. Beyond that, there is little agreement. People argue about the meaning of sustainable development and whether or not it is attainable. They have different visions of what sustainable societies will look like and how they will function. It is curious to note that while we have difficulty envisioning a sustainable world, we have no difficulty identifying what is unsustainable in our societies. We can rapidly create a laundry list of problems - inefficient use of energy, lack of water conservation, increased pollution, abuses of human rights, overuse of personal transportation, consumerism, etc. But we should not chide ourselves because we lack a clear definition of sustainability. Indeed, many truly great concepts of the human world - among them democracy and justice - are hard to define and have multiple expressions in cultures around the world.





In the *Toolkit*, we use three terms synonymously and interchangeably: education for sustainable development (ESD), education for sustainability (Efs), and sustainability education (SE). We use ESD most often, because it is the terminology used frequently at the international level and within UN documents. Locally or nationally, the ESD effort may be named or described in many ways because of language and cultural differences. As with all work related to sustainable development, the name and the content must be locally relevant and culturally appropriate.

An important distinction is the difference between education *about* sustainable development and education *for* sustainable development. The first is an awareness lesson or theoretical discussion. The second is the use of education as a tool to achieve sustainability. In our opinion, more than a theoretical discussion is needed at this critical juncture in time. While some people argue that ‘for’ indicates indoctrination, we think ‘for’ indicates a purpose. All education serves a purpose or society would not invest in it. Driver education, for example, seeks to make our roads safer for travelers. Fire-safety education seeks to prevent fires and tragic loss of lives and property. ESD promises to make the world more livable for this and future generations. Of course, a few will abuse or distort ESD and turn it into indoctrination. This would be antithetical to the nature of ESD, which, in fact, calls for giving people knowledge and skills for lifelong learning to help them find new solutions to their environmental, economic, and social issues.

**Sustainable Development:** Sustainable development is a difficult concept to define; it is also continually evolving, which makes it doubly difficult to define. One of the original descriptions of sustainable development is credited to the Brundtland Commission: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987, p. 43). Sustainable development is generally thought to have three components: environment, society, and economy. The well-being of these three areas is intertwined, not separate. If you consider the three to be overlapping circles of the same size, the area of overlap in the center is human well-being. As the environment, society, and economy become more aligned, the area of overlap increases, and so does human well-being ([esdtoolkit.org](http://esdtoolkit.org)). For example, a healthy, prosperous society relies on a healthy environment to provide food and resources, safe drinking water, and clean air for its citizens. The sustainability paradigm rejects the contention that casualties in the environmental and social realms are inevitable and acceptable consequences of economic development.

Sustainable development is often divided to (1) ecological, (2) economical, (3) social, and (4) cultural sustainability. The different elements of sustainable development are in a close interaction, having an effect on each other. The ecological sustainability means that the ecosystem, the global system as a whole (climate etc.) and all local ecosystems, are protected. For instance, as long as there are species disappearing cause by human behavior and reckless usage of non-renewable natural resources, there isn’t sustainable development in the ecological sense.

In economical sustainable development the growth should be stable and balanced. We should not be in depth and consume only according to the sustainability of the ecological system. For



instance, it is reasonable to ask is the climate change is a result of unsustainable economical development?

Social sustainability would mean that all people of the world would have basic living conditions: health, well-being, education, dignity and freedom to do sustainable choices. If you follow any world news you know that we are far from this.

Reaching cultural sustainability we are not doing much better than with the social sustainability. Cultural sustainable development would mean that we protect the cultural diversity of the world. All cultures should have a right to persist and develop. With the fact, that humankind is loosing language every two week we are far from a cultural sustainability.

**Principles of Sustainable Development:** Many governments and individuals have pondered what sustainable development means beyond a simple one-sentence definition. The *Rio Declaration on Environment and Development* fleshes out the definition by listing 18 principles of sustainability.

- People are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.
- Development today must not undermine the development and environmental needs of present and future generations.
- Nations have the sovereign right to exploit their own resources, but without causing environmental damage beyond their boundaries and borders.
- Nations shall develop international laws to provide compensation for damage that activities under their control cause to areas beyond their borders.
- Nations shall use the precautionary approach to protect the environment. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, scientific uncertainty shall not be used to postpone cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
- In order to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process, and cannot be considered in isolation from it. Eradicating poverty and reducing disparities in living standards in different parts of the world are essential to achieve sustainable development and meet the needs of the majority of people.
- Nations shall cooperate to conserve, protect and restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystem. The developed countries acknowledge the responsibility that they bear in the international pursuit of sustainable development in view of the pressures their societies place on the global environment and of the technologies and financial resources they command.
- Nations should reduce and eliminate unsustainable patterns of production and consumption, and promote appropriate demographic policies.
- Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens. Nations shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making environmental information widely available.
- Nations shall enact effective environmental laws, and develop national law regarding liability for the victims of pollution and other environmental damage. Where they have authority, nations shall assess the environmental impact of proposed activities that are likely to have a significant adverse impact.



- Nations should cooperate to promote an open international economic system that will lead to economic growth and sustainable development in all countries. Environmental policies should not be used as an unjustifiable means of restricting international trade.
- The polluter should, in principle, bear the cost of pollution.
- Nations shall warn one another of natural disasters or activities that may have harmful trans boundary impacts.
- Sustainable development requires better scientific understanding of the problems. Nations should share knowledge and innovative technologies to achieve the goal of sustainability.
- The full participation of women is essential to achieve sustainable development. The creativity, ideals and courage of youth and the knowledge of indigenous people are needed too. Nations should recognize and support the identity, culture and interests of indigenous people.
- Warfare is inherently destructive of sustainable development, and Nations shall respect international laws protecting the environment in times of armed conflict, and shall cooperate in their further establishment.
- Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible.

### **Role of Education in Sustainable Development:**

Educational system (schools, colleges and universities) should primarily contribute to social and cultural sustainability, and from that angle which provide skills and knowledge to solve the problems of ecological and economical challenges. Understanding human behavior, social structures, culture and cultural differences is critical when we aim to reach sustainable development. Having solid knowledge on science, technology and economics is needed, too, but it is not enough.

Educational system should guarantee, that all the people of the world will have critical thinking skills and a set of basic skills and knowledge that will empower them to choose sustainable lifestyle. Education should provide people with ability to balance with the different aspects of sustainable development.

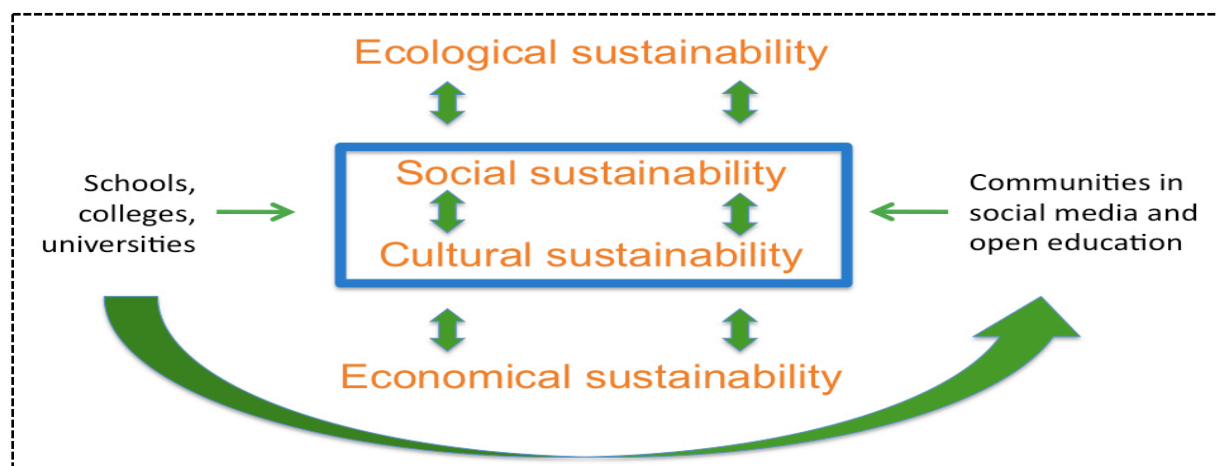
Paradoxically the real problem lays in the point when people move from absolute poverty to have more material resources. In absolute poverty people often have ecologically and culturally sustainable life. The unbalance is in the social and economical sustainability; unstable economical situation, no health, no well-being, no education, no dignity, nor freedom of choice.

When people get more material resources they also get more social good. Same time their effects on ecological and cultural sustainability often gets unbalanced. Suddenly the things that use to be good from the sustainable development point of view becomes problems: people start to have a greater impact on issues related to ecological and cultural sustainability: They start to consume more, ask for cheaper products, produce more waste and same time loose connection to their original cultural heritage.

To provide people with skills and knowledge that will help people to keep the balance in sustainable development is a task of the educational system. People should be “educated” enough to recognize how the achievements in social and economical development will effect on ecological and cultural development ([flosse.bloggning.fi](http://flosse.bloggning.fi)). Thus, the author considers



sustainability to be a paradigm for thinking about a future in which environmental, societal, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of development and improved quality of life as showed in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Education for Sustainable Development**

Education for Sustainable Development allows every human being to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to shape a sustainable future. Education for Sustainable Development 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 practiced today. UNESCO is the lead agency for the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) ([unesco.org](http://unesco.org)).

The 'Rio Principles' give us parameters for envisioning locally relevant and culturally appropriate sustainable development for our own nations, regions, and communities. These principles help us to grasp the abstract concept of sustainable development and begin to implement it.

### **Conclusion:**

Improving equity in student outcomes remains a critical challenge for every country in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Even those countries with the lowest levels of inequity must still be concerned with gaps in outcomes that are not related to students' motivation and capacity, while in other countries the inequities are so large as to pose a fundamental challenge to ongoing security and prosperity (Levin, Ben, 2012). There is a growing recognition that the issues of excellence and educational equity are inextricably linked. A school that is able to respond to the needs of all of its students is also a school that is best able

to promote excellence. Schools must take into account the diversity of society in India in order to enhance students' achievement as per directions of right to education. The intent of an inclusive curriculum is to ensure that all students – regardless of gender, racial and ethno cultural background, social class, sexual orientation, or ability – develop confidence and are motivated to succeed. Such a curriculum equips all students with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to live and work in an increasingly diverse society. In addition, it encourages them to appreciate diversity and to challenge discriminatory attitudes and behaviour. Mink, Pasty rightly says that the problem with our education system is not that parents do not have a choice, but, the problem is that inequities continue to exist. There is strong need to enforce the implementation of all the paradigms of right to education to ensure the sustainable development in India. But expansion by itself will not serve the purpose of dream India. Quantity without quality has no significance. Therefore, it is also necessary to achieve excellence in education that can generate quality professionals and executives. The main problem that persists in today's milieu is degrading education system in India. On the one hand, children are not getting facilities of education in rural areas while on the other, the affluent section of the population is sending their children to private schools where money reciprocates passing marks and no attention is paid towards properly grooming the student. Thus, excellence can only be achieved by improving the education system on a regular basis as well as maintaining a uniform pattern of equality. This will certainly help in reaching the set goals.

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