

## IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENT AND ANIMAL WELFARE IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

Sukanya Kadian<sup>1\*</sup>, Dr. Harikrishna A. Patel<sup>2</sup><sup>1\*</sup>Researcher scholar, Department of Education, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya, Gandhinagar<sup>2</sup>Researcher Guide Professor, Education, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya, Gandhinagar**\*Corresponding Author:** Sukanya Kadian

\*Researcher scholar, Department of Education, Kadi Sarva Vishwavidyalaya, Gandhinagar

**Abstract**

Environmental and animal welfare education are closely bound, bestowing an understanding of the sacred nature of life and a reverence for everything living, including animals. Environmental education fosters a culture of protecting the environment, adapting to the sustainable use of environmental resources, and realizing human being's effects on the environment. At the same time, education on the rights of animals brings an appreciation of our stewardship towards the many species populating our world. Therefore, schools should adopt two angles to develop informed, empathetic, and responsible citizens of the country. The researcher has thoroughly searched environmental and animal welfare education, and the information used in this insightful article was obtained from this research. There is a brief analysis of what the two types of education mean and what they entail, underlining their significance. These can include knowledge of ecosystems, the promotion of sustainable living, and valuing the human effects on the environment. Furthermore, it also discusses the concept of animal welfare education that should primarily aim at cultivating such proactive values as mercy and ethically moral attitude toward animals. Writing for this study, the author claims that integrating such components in education circulation is imperative in nurturing an environmentally conscious generation that positively contributes to humanity and the planet.

**Key words:** Environment, Animal, Welfare, Education, Environmental Education, Animal Welfare Education, The Importance of Environmental Education, The Importance of Animal Welfare Education.

**Introduction**

Animal well-being measures an animal's ability to adapt and perform within its residence environment. From the literature review, it can be derived that an animal is considered to have suitable welfare based on the physical health status, comfort, proper diet, safety, ability to perform behaviors normal for its species, and absence of negative affective states, including pain, fear, or physical or mental suffering. Proper animal health care and various means to prevent diseases; availability of veterinary services; type of housing and management practices; feeding systems; handling of animals; and slaughter methods, where applicable, all point to optimum care, while the term 'animal welfare' is used broadly concerning the state or condition of the animal, terms such as 'animal care' or 'husbandry' or 'humane treatment' are used in a contested sense addressing the means to animal welfare.

Promoting the welfare of animals is essential since millions of animals are subjected to pain and suffering by people who want to use them for their gains in areas such as circuses, vivisection, factory farming, fur trade, experiments, and pets. Every living creature deserves to experience a good quality of life and enjoy well-being across the five key domains: nutrition, environment, health, behavior, and mental state. Providing adequate animal welfare means ensuring all animals can thrive physically and psychologically, free from undue hardship, distress, or mistreatment, regardless of the context in which

humans keep or utilize them. Addressing this issue is an ethical imperative to prevent unnecessary animal suffering on a global scale.

Animal welfare encompasses three fundamental components: Health and Production, Natural behaviour, and Feelings. Animal welfare has a significant impact on the environment through various means. Livestock emits substantial quantities of methane through their regular digestive processes.

Fewer agricultural animals will necessarily translate to less methane and other greenhouse gas emissions, less water consumption, and less pollution. These and many other benefits all flow directly or indirectly from decreasing production on factory farms. Animal cruelty affects the environment, too. This increased production causes devastating environmental effects, such as climate change, water shortage, and loss of topsoil. Considering these effects, the law should play a much more significant role in reasoning the agribusinesses business and punishing animal cruelty.

### **Environment Education**

Other scholars worldwide have supported this, showing that education is today's most outstanding change agent. This segment highlights the importance of environmental education in helping enhance the state of our world. Before turning to EE, let us find out what EE as a concept means In this context. Environmental education is the process of conveying to an individual knowledge of the environment and the effect of human activities on such an environment. Specifically, it seeks to cultivate an enlightened citizenry that will make appropriate decisions regarding the environment to lead to environmental responsibility. Such education provides an understanding of, respect for, and a commitment toward natural surroundings and the stewardship of the world. Ecological systems, resource management, and the value of increasing the populations of various species can be understood through education, and such knowledge empowers individuals with the necessary tools that will enable them to uphold the balance of the ecology of the earth. In this way, it is possible to teach individuals to improve awareness of existing environmental issues to protect the earth and its inhabitants from further climate deterioration, pollution, the destruction of natural habitats, and other adverse factors. Civil society, for instance, can act by protecting the environment and encouraging people to become involved in advocacy for environmentally friendly policies. Finally, environmental education is all about sharing information and proposing an action to preserve our area and ensure that the generations will have the same chance to enjoy its blessed gift.

Hence, there is a need for people, especially those in the field of education, to recognize the importance of environmental education. As mentioned above, we need to understand that we directly influence the environment around us, and it is imperative to make people aware that harming the environment puts our future and that of our children at risk. Awareness about the environment thus makes us realize our role as global citizens and can bring about positive societal changes. It will help me step up the utilisation of my resources without compromising my environment.

Environmental education enables people to study the environment, find solutions, and pursue change to improve the environment. In this way, people develop knowledge about environmental problems and get the competencies to make pertinent and ethical decisions.

### **Significance of Environmental Education**

#### **Academic Accomplishments**

School-going children ought to apply the knowledge learned in class to address environmental challenges through the incorporation of environmental education in their school curriculum. They are taught how to reason and solve issues within their area of specialty within the environmental field. This approach enables students to come to their own conclusions and to come up with solutions to environmental problems by combining ideas from different fields. For instance, a science class may

discuss or research the effects of air pollution and its causes, and a business class may discuss the pros and cons of advancing the use of green energy. Students who work in teams across subject disciplines can gain insights into the various issues surrounding the environment and devise great plans to counter the impact of these problems.

In addition, Environmental Education creates awareness and a sense of responsibility and empowers students and learners. They accept themselves as agents of change and not mere spectators of environmental concerns. Whether through a school's local initiatives and awareness, advocacy challenges, or students' lifestyles, the concept is promoted that students should put their knowledge into practice and make a change for the better.

### **Health Benefits**

Environmental education can add value to a student in the following ways: Students can leave behind the classroom environment and go to a natural setting, magnitude and assess environmental challenges, and engage in physical exercises for their benefit. This approach offers a prosperous cure for many health complications, including short-sightedness, obesity, and, in some situations, diffused attention. Thus, students receive even several point benefits from the side of the evaluation of the natural environment, as well as gain more physical and mental health benefits when participating in an outdoor activity. Being outdoors makes them outside and hence maximizes natural light, which can reduce instances of short-sightedness and other eye-related issues. However, exercises such as hiking, gardening, or outdoor sports that one has to undertake daily help to foster physical exercise and, hence, a fight against obesity.

However, environmental education also helps students participate in learning processes to solve environmental problems, promoting a sense of purpose and mastery. What beneficial consequences can such an engagement have: men will experience decreased stress and anxiety and an increased sense of belonging to the world around them. In that way, students feel it is essential to protect the environment by themselves, making them responsible and self-sufficient human beings.

### **• Future Proof Planning**

However, ensuring that children today are informed about conserving the environment cannot be overemphasized. How can we keep the earth sustainable for future generations if such crucial measures are not taken? Education within this domain prepares individuals for everyday problem-solving since it cultivates the ability to devise creative solutions for various issues. By embracing environmental education, students can develop a proactive approach, preparing for future challenges. Equipped with this information, they can determine measures to avoid environmental harm for the benefit of future generations. It is not only about education; it is more about preparing the younger generation as responsible citizens, as the people who are accountable for creating a sustainable world.

### **• Managing Teams**

Another aspect of educating children about the environment is cooperation; children are taught new approaches to completing projects to address real-life issues. Consequently, the following small attempt will play a huge role in eradicating this environmental issue. The problem of using plastic materials has been a developing ecological concern in recent decades. This allows one to acquire leadership skills to urge employees to avoid wastage and encourage applying non-eco-friendly products to enhance environmentalism.

**• Environmental Activists Production**

When environmental education is incorporated into the students' lives, they become dedicated advocates of environmental conservation and evolve into dedicated followers of ecological practices. These students promote environmentally responsible behavior and actively dissuade others from participating in ecologically detrimental activities. They do this by creating platforms that promote the importance and necessity of environmental education in all areas of society.

Incorporating environmental education in schools will enable schools to produce responsible citizens with correct knowledge of the relation between people's actions and the state of the environment. These students stand up as advocates of the environment and lead efforts at schools and all other spheres of life.

These environmentalists dedicate themselves to raising awareness and rallying people for change by educating people, conducting sessions, and undertaking initiatives. They utilise cyberspace, host campaigns, and contact political leadership to promote sustainable undertakings and measures.

**• Advantages for Schools**

Promoting acquaintances with and practices in environmental education serves the given institution's interests by offering learners beneficial training and greater awareness of the environment. If schools insist on making the environment, as a subject taught in classrooms, mandatory for all the students, they can quickly begin to change everyone's focus toward solving real-world issues related to the environment. Educators can implement several projects to enhance children's general knowledge of the environment. Such measures should entail actions that can help protect the environment, such as planting trees meant to help with afforestation, given the continued deforestation. When participating in practical events that include both the young ones and adults, they realize that they are empowered to participate in commendable activities that seek to support the protection of the environment. Overall, by incorporating the environment as an integral part of learning and offering practice with real problems, schools are responsible for producing environmentally responsible, capable of solving the challenges our world faces today, citizens.

**• Engaging In Outdoor Pursuits**

Integrating environmental education also presents many advantages to children's wellness, as a study showed that exposure to green areas within the school territory influences health rates. Research also indicates that frequently using playgrounds with the accompaniment of even small quantities of natural greenery can lessen the frequency of sickness; children also become physically active and display more energy. As children spend most of their time indoors playing or using gadgets such as sporting video games or iPhones, it is paramount to embrace outdoor activity, especially for the benefit of the mind. Guardians do this by ensuring their children join them in physical exercises outside the home. Due to children's tendency to mimic actions observed in parents, one must be a role model. It is only our parents' responsibility to enable us to reduce our time indoors while developing a love for nature and the outdoors and developing healthy bodies early in life.

**• Promoting Innovative Pedagogical Approaches**

Environmental education is the daily concern of students and teachers, and it addresses accountable change and practical actions concerned with energy and the environment. This practical approach will allow them to come across and further comprehend new ways that could make the foundation of

conservation easier to understand. Thus, by engaging in activities and exploring the areas, the learners will develop additional knowledge and skills to promote sustainable practices successfully.

### • Cost Reduction

It is also equally important for students to contribute toward keeping their schools clean by learning how to protect the environment, as this is the most appropriate time to inculcate good habits in the places we rightly call our schools and homes. This intended participation would be very much in the best interest of the schools since it has been realized that there will be less expenditure incurred in the maintenance of the environment, which in turn will mean that the annual expenditure will be correspondingly low. Thus, by overseeing the things around them, students bear responsibility for particular spaces and can promote changes that would exude a sense of responsibility for the environment at the core.

### • The Components of Environmental Education

The components of environmental education are:

#### Awareness and Sensitivity

Fragile connection with the environment should not be overlooked in the overwhelmingly fast-paced society of today. Being aware of environmental concerns and having a personal appreciation and concern regarding the same matters is very crucial for the overall health of the earth in the long run. Being aware means grasping the consequences of our actions on the world surrounding us, such as knowing the effects of using a plastic bottle, taking a car ride, or eating certain types of food. Being sensitive, though, is different, where one develops an intimate association with the planet and the people. This connection creates a sense of world ownership and motivates all to pursue sustainability and justice. Several issues elicit concern: global warming, environmental degradation, endangered species, and resource scarcity. Given these challenges, we need to tame our carbon footprints, support using renewable energy sources, and practice sustainability. By being aware of environmental issues, learning about them, and coming out to support measures to protect the environment, we can all use our efforts to bring about positive change. Above all, the message is clear that every action matters, and encouraging tolerance and acceptance makes a better future for society possible. Nature is vital for our existence and should be protected, preserved, and nurtured to the best of our abilities.

#### Knowledge and Understanding

Education is an empowerment tool in the case of environmental conservation. The knowledge of ecosystems' structure and practices, the nature of various problems, and the dependency of the impacts on human activities is essential. However, it is good to note that knowledge alone is not enough. What we need is complemented by awareness that, more than ever, it is important to care for the environment. It creates a feeling of responsibility, comprehension of other people, and purpose to do something to preserve the balance on our planet.

It makes one wonder whether or not these environmental problems have ceased to be seen as issues that deserve to be solved and fought against since people cannot see the danger the earth is exposed to. I know it is enlightening the path while realizing the path makes me walk it. To- get- er they are an indispensable basis for protecting the environment.

**Attitudes**

Attitudes are critical in determining our behavior and response to matters related to the environment and actions to be taken to overcome environmental issues. Maintaining and developing the proper attitudes required for enhancing genuine and self-sustained valuations towards the environment is critical. A positive environmental attitude entails, amongst other things, an appropriate appreciation of the environment and acknowledgment that it is inextricably linked to our daily lives. This attitude is framed with a feeling of reverence or awe, appreciation of the web and chains of life on the earth. When people develop such reverence for nature, they will create a feeling towards nature and feel some obligation towards its protection. However, a key factor is being on the lookout for problem-solving and acting reactively instead of being defensive. A lack of cultural optimism can be partly seen in outdated and pessimistic approaches toward environmental issues, which a preoccupation must replace with finding ways to solve them. It is a proactive approach that places the roles of ownership and agency in the hands of individuals, communities, and organisations rather than relegating them to spectators. Long-term planning and awareness of future generations are also important. Environmental concerns are some of the complex challenges that affect people's lives in the present and come with effects that continue to be witnessed in future generations. It is a moral imperative to have an attitude that considers our actions' relatively long-term implications and to act sustainably. It is equally essential that all stakeholders adopt a problem-solving attitude and collaborate. Environmental issues are diverse and do not respect national frontiers, cultures, and industries. This way, people can be more open to cooperation and embrace the intellect and force of other stakeholders, which will help generate more significant results in practice.

**Skills**

Many environmental conflicts require overcoming; thus, people must develop various competencies to resolve them. Systems thinking provides a way of looking at the environment, which takes cognizance of the interaction facets of the elements within the environment. Reasoning, problem-solving, and scientific thinking are associated with applying processes and long- and short-procedure planning, which help in systematically evaluating and problem-solving. Some of the other tracking abilities are Environmental monitoring and assessment. A trio of communication, cooperation, and coordination facilitates an emergent team and the accomplishment of various projects. Socio-political skills involve policy formulation, and advocacy skills involve formulating policies for regulation and ensuring sustainability. First and foremost, the roles and responsibilities must be flexible and engage in lifelong learning due to the continuously changing nature of the field. Thus, by refining and developing these various skills, one can better understand manifold aspects of environmental issues and their solutions and create a more sustainability-oriented future.

**Participation**

Engagement is essential in solving environmental issues by contributing efforts, time, capital, and resources from people, groups, organizations, and countries. Since everyone is an individual, it is possible to change for the better by practicing sustainability, for instance, by cutting down on waste or energy consumption. Donations made to local organizations to clean up the city and plant trees can instill a sense of ownership. The second stakeholder group comprises businesses that create demand for sustainably produced products, minimize their negative impact on the environment, and contribute funds and resources to environmental initiatives. This collective approach ensures that solutions are comprehensive and that their outcomes make a difference towards realizing a more sustainable society.

## Animal Welfare Education in Schools

Even though this is not entirely true, it is easy to think about a world where there would be no animals at all. We have become accustomed to keeping and having pets in our homes because they make us feel complete. In our daily lives, animals are around us in many aspects, such as petting our beloved dogs or cats, watching the tigers or deer at the zoo, or even working for farmers to care for them. So, we are responsible for caring for animals and protecting their rights. We must teach kids about being kind to animals from a young age. Children naturally love and feel tenderness towards animals. Using this inborn fondness for furry friends to develop care and compassion from childhood is a great approach. Not only will it help treat animals better, but it'll also make kids more emotionally healthy overall. Around the world, animal education programs should be taught to children in school so that they can respect animals and protect their 5 freedoms. Freedom from hunger, discomfort, and pain, the ability to express normal behavior, and freedom from fear and distress.

Teaching about kindness to animals helps kids learn important things like understanding animals, caring for them properly, and respecting their needs. Children are taught to be safe around pets, look after animals, and adopt from shelters to form positive bonds with animals. Animal welfare lessons are not just for school kids, in any case. It is crucial for adults working with animals on farms, in government, in colleges, etc., to also receive this education. Learning to prioritize animal wellbeing from a young age and throughout different careers builds a society that values animal welfare.

Schools should start a "Kindness Club" to teach kids about being safe around animals, taking good care of them, and treating them nicely. The main goal is to help children be more compassionate and caring towards all animals. Everyone needs to understand the special bond between humans and animals. By inspiring the next generation of kids, we can stop animal cruelty from happening and have less need to rescue and help injured animals in the future.

## Importance of Animal Welfare Education

Teaching about animal welfare helps kids develop compassion, fairness, and respect for all living beings. These lessons highlight cases of animal suffering and focus on giving animals a happy, healthy life. They teach people their duties not just towards pets but all creatures. From training wolves long ago to cuddling modern lap dogs, companion animals have become essential family members. Our bond with them grows stronger as we better understand animals' intelligence and emotions. Our society now clearly values the human-animal connection. Humane education nurtures this bond while instilling care for all life.

## Conclusion

Animal welfare education often lacks proper planning and impact assessment, resulting in an undervalued area with little evaluation of its effectiveness in changing human behavior towards animals. This research paper delves into the concept, meaning, and significance of integrating environmental and animal welfare topics into educational curricula. By exploring how well-structured educational interventions can foster empathy, understanding, and responsible behavior toward animals, the author highlights the transformative potential of such education. The paper argues for a more strategic approach to animal welfare education, emphasizing the need for measurable outcomes to ensure these programs effectively promote ethical and sustainable interactions between humans and animals.

## References

1. Broom, D. M. (2005). Animal Welfare Education: Development and Prospects. *Journal of Veterinary Medical Education*, 32(4), 438-441. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/jvme.32.4.438>
2. Crutzen, P. J., Aselmann, I. & Seiler, W. (1986). Methane production by domestic animals, wild

- ruminants, other herbivorous fauna and humans. New York: Springer Publishing Co.
3. Diaz, R. J., Rosenberg (2008). Spreading dead zones and consequences for marine ecosystems. *Science*, 321, 926-929.
  4. Grulzaski, B. (1983). The Case Against Raising and Killing Animal for Foods. *Ethics and Animals*, 251-265. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-5623-6\\_17](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4612-5623-6_17)
  5. Keeling, L. J., Rushen, J. & Duncan, I. J. H. (2017). Understanding of Animal Welfare. *Animal Welfare*. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1079/9781845936594.001310>
  6. Steinfeld, H., Gerber, P., Wassenaar, T., Castel, V. & Rosales, M. (2006). *Livestock's Long Shadow: Environmental Issues and Options*. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome.
  7. Webster, A. J. F. (2001). Farm Animal Welfare: The Five Freedoms and the Free Market. *Veterinary Journal*, 161(3), 229-237.