

Environmental Studies as a subject in school curriculum

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National Curriculum Framework (School Education) 2023 has strongly recommended the inclusion of environmental education as an inter-disciplinary area of study in the school education. Accordingly, Environmental Education has been an integral component of school education, which is evident from the existing curriculum for school education. Concepts and concerns related to environment have been infused appropriately in different subject disciplines at all stages of school education.

Topics related to Environmental Education in the existing science textbooks for classes VI to XII are provided in the following table:

Sl. No.	Class & Subject	Name of Chapter
1	Curiosity Textbook of Science, Grade 6	Diversity in the living world, Nature's Treasures
2	VII Science	Forests: Our Lifeline
3	VII Science	Wastewater Story
4	VIII Science	Coal and Petroleum
5	VIII Science	Conservation of Plants and Animals
6	X Science	Our Environment
7	XII Biology	Organisms and Populations
8	XII Biology	Ecosystem
9	XII Biology	Biodiversity and Conservation

NCERT has also prepared supplementary materials for students and teachers related to environmental education. Some of the resource materials are provided below:

Sl. No.	Title of Resource Material
1	Project Books in Environmental Education for Classes VI to X (Hindi, English and Urdu version)
2	Water: Every Drop Counts (Activity book for Primary, Upper Primary and Secondary Stages) (Hindi and English)
3	Teachers' Handbook in Environmental Education for the Higher Secondary Stage

The Department of Education in Science and Mathematics (DESM), NCERT organizes National Science Exhibition every year wherein the theme or sub-theme invariably includes environment component. This event provides opportunity to students to provide solutions for environmental problems—present and future in the form of exhibits/ models such as on waste management, conservation of resources, green technologies, etc. The DESM also organizes the Rashtriya Avishkar Saptah every year during which students in middle and secondary stages in different parts of the country participate in the event and perform experiments/ activities on

the theme assigned for the year such as testing of water quality, soil quality, conservation of water, tree plantation etc. Such experiments/ activities promote learning-by-doing and at the same time develop environmental awareness amongst students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes the critical importance of integrating environmental awareness and sustainability principles into school curricula. The Policy aims to sensitize students to environmental / climate change concerns and inculcate among students the values, attitudes, behaviour and skills essential to address environmental challenges, thus preparing them to contribute to a sustainable future.

In alignment with this vision, Eco Clubs serve as a critical platform within schools, providing students with the opportunity to develop practical skills and knowledge for the responsible use of natural resources. Through participation in activities such as optimizing water usage, minimizing waste generation, recycling, and conducting plantation drives, students learn sustainable practices that they can implement both within and beyond the school environment. Eco Clubs empower students to act as environmental ambassadors, extending their impact to their families and communities by promoting sound environmental behaviour, such as reducing single-use plastics, conserving water, and participating in eco-friendly initiatives. Through these engagements, students gain a profound understanding of the shared responsibility to preserve and protect our planet, thereby advancing NEP 2020's objective of nurturing environmentally conscious citizens for a sustainable India. The activities of Eco Clubs have been integrated with Mission LiFE, leading to their renaming as "**Eco Clubs for Mission LiFE.**" All the activities of Eco Clubs have been aligned with the seven themes of Mission LiFE (Save Energy, Save Water, Say No to Single Use Plastic, Adopt Sustainable Food Systems, Reduce Waste, Adopt Healthy Lifestyles and Reduce E-waste).

The information was given by the Minister of State for Education, Shri Jayant Chaudhary in a written reply in the Rajya Sabha today.

MV/AK

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