

## THE NATURE OF CO- CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR THE ELEMENTARY LEVEL TEACHERS OF ASSAM

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### Abstract

*Curricular activities are an integral part of curriculum which provide educational activities to the students and thereby help in broadening their experiences. These activities enhance and enrich the regular curriculum during the normal school hours. Environmental Education is an educational programme which aims at making learners aware of interrelationship between human and nature. It also aims at inculcating in them rational attitudes, values, responsible behaviour and skills towards environmental issues. Co-curricular activities can play a very important role in achieving these. It is widely agreed that the purpose of Environmental Education is that students shall be trained not only to know the right things but also to behave in the right way. A close relationship between right knowledge and right action is sought for. Here the former is mostly taken care by the curricular activities and the later part is taken care mostly by the co-curricular activities. The curricular activities are mainly cognitive in nature and concentrate on to intellectual development of the students. However, the objective of education is not confined to intellectual development only but also on all round development of personality, i.e. besides intellectual growth, education shall also cater to emotional, physical, psychological and social development. The development in these areas may take place if curricular activities are supplemented with the co-curricular activities. It has been well recognized the importance of co-curricular activities by different commissions and committees in India. Considering the importance of these in educational programmes, it is necessary to know how far it has been successfully organized particularly at the Elementary Level. In this study an attempt was made present status of co-curricular activities in Assam.*



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The modern meaning of curriculum is very wide and comprehensive. It includes the totality of experiences of the child i.e. acquired inside and outside the school. However, the curriculum meant for them is not sufficient enough to fulfill the over-all development. To see this crisis, the formal education of the school houses many activities as a part of education for the all-round development of the child and their personality. As these activities are significantly joined with the curriculum, it is called co-curricular activities, which can help in the physical, mental, moral, social, emotional, aesthetic and spiritual development of an individual. The co-curricular activities are now an integral part of the educational system at

school. According to modern educationist, curricular and co curricular activities are not the different part of education, on the contrary, it is considered complementary to each other.

The Indian Education Commission of 1964-66 has stressed, “We conceive of the school curriculum as the totality of learning experiences that the school provides for the pupils through all the manifold activities in the school or outside that are carried on under its supervision”.

The New Education Policy (1986) lays special emphasis on the need of co-curricular activities. “Productive and creative activities help in the harmonious development of 4H’s: Head, Heart, Hand and Health. These activities provide for the expression of the child’s manifold talents. In fact, co-curricular activities are the most useful and integral part of curricular programme”.

The remarks of the Secondary Education Commission in respect of the co-curricular activities are worth noting. “This is not merely place of formal learning whose main concern is to communicate a certain prescribed quantum of knowledge but rather as a living and organic community which is primarily interested in training its pupils in what we have called the ‘gracious art of living’. Knowledge and learning are undoubtedly of value but they must be acquired as a by-product of interested activity because it is only then that they can become a vital part of student’s mind and personality and influence his behaviour. But the art of living is much more comprehensive concept than the acquisition of knowledge, however, intelligently planned. It includes training in the habit and graces of social life and the capacity for co-operative group work. It calls for patience, good temper, sincerity, fellow feeling and discipline. These activities can only be cultivated in the context of the social life and the many co-curricular activities must find a recognized place in any school”.

The NCF - 2005 has stressed “to learn more about the environment and health, including reproductive and sexual health, through activities and surveys. Scientific concepts are to be arrived at mainly from activities and experiments. Group activities, discussions with peers and teachers, surveys, organisation of data and their display through exhibitions, etc. in schools and the neighborhood should be important components of pedagogy”. The NCF - 2005 has also emphasized that “textbooks should incorporate activities, observation and experimentation, and encourage an active approach to science, connecting it with the world around the child, rather than information-based learning. Additionally, materials such as workbooks, co curricular and popular science books, and children's encyclopedia would enhance children's access to information and ideas that need not go into the textbook, loading  
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it further, but would enrich learning that takes place through project work. There is a dearth of such materials with rich visuals in regional languages”.

Lunenburg (2010) co-curricular activities are an essential and vital part of education in America. They have become well integrated into daily life of the school. Social activities, athletics, and all the many leisure activities have become a part of the values and virtues not only of American education, but of democratic life. The co-curricular activities program allows for a well-rounded, balanced and expansion of the curriculum by reinforcing learning, supplementing the required and elective curriculum, integrating knowledge, and carrying out the objectives of democratic life.

Lamanauskas (2010)The co curricular activities of natural science education in primary school are an influential field of pupils’ training that is extremely useful to fostering affective value-based relations with nature, to cherishing love for nature and respect for life. In general, the majority of children of this age realize the importance and significance of activities related to nature and this is the main point of the co curricular activities of natural science education training. Also, there are a variety of ways to create co- curricular activities in science education area at a primary school. In every moment teachers should be ready to implement co-curricular activities in real school life.

### **IMPORTANCE OF CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:**

- 1.These activities are designed to meet the needs of the students and cover a broad / wide range of their abilities and talents.
- 2.Such activities stimulate the interests in the students and provide equal opportunities to all the students to practice.
- 3.These activities enhance the learning experience of the students and help in recognizing and developing their inner skills such as leadership qualities, creative or innovative skills etc.
- 4.Co-curricular activities give the students a chance to think out of their box and get creative ideas of their own with the help of a guide / facilitator.
- 5.These activities help the students in developing richer learning experiences by giving them a chance to think in new ways to solve a problem or answer a question.
- 6.Students need to take time outs to do more than just studying. co-curricular activities give them a chance to relax, refresh and mingle easily with others.
- 7.In short, these activities prepare the students practically for their future.

8.The normal curriculum teaches and educates the student about academic theories while co-curricular activities help the student to apply what he / she has learned to practice in their practical life.

9.These activities help in developing the grasping power of the students and provide an opportunity to the students to work in teams and thus develop team spirit in them.

**RESEARCH RELATED WITH CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:** Ferguson (2008), Kalita *et.al.*(2009), Bhattacharjee and Sarmah (2010), Fauser (2011), Jones (2011), Sultana (2012), Bhuyan. S. (2004) etc. are some of the important studies related with co-curricular activities in Environmental Education.

**METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS STUDY:** Descriptive Survey Method was used in conducting this study.

**POPULATION:** The population of the study comprised all the Elementary School teachers who teach Environmental Education in Elementary Schools in four districts (Jorhat, Kamrup, Lakhimpur and Cachar) of Assam. Total number of Elementary Schools in Jorhat, Lakhimpur, Kamrup and Cachar districts are- 476, 744, 460 and 574 respectively. The number of teachers who teaches Environmental Education are- 2270, 4856, 3445 and 2777 for these four districts. Thus, in this study the population consisted of 13348 assistant teachers of Elementary Schools who deal with Environmental Education. The population of experts in Environmental Education was 425 number of teacher educators who were working in DIETs, CTEs in these four districts of Assam considered as the expert's populations.

**SAMPLE:** To make the sample is a representative one, fifty assistant teachers from each districts was selected purposively. Thus total 200 teachers constituted teachers sample. Besides, 20 experts were selected purposively. Thus, total 200 assistant teachers constituted teacher's sample. Similarly 20 experts were selected purposively.

**SELECTION OF THE SCHOOLS :** A sample of 100 schools were selected from four districts Viz. Cachar, Lakhimpur, Kamrup and Jorhat District of Assam by using purposive sampling technique. The researcher had selected twenty five schools from each district purposively. In selection of the schools care was taken to select schools from different educational blocks of each district to make it representative, after discussion with a number of experts in the field and educational administrators.

**SELECTION OF TEACHERS:** The study involves a total sample of 200 teachers of Elementary Level teaching Environmental Education in class V, VI and VII in the year 2016-17 by purposive sampling technique. The investigator had gone to the selected schools to

collect data and due permission was sought from the District Elementary Education Officer (DEEO), and Deputy Inspector of the respective districts. Then, proper rapport was made with the teacher so that the selected teachers answer the tools without any hesitation. In selection of the teachers, the researcher gave importance in two aspects- [i] Experience in dealing Environmental Education and [ii] Experience of training on Environmental Education.

**TOOL USED IN THE STUDY:** A questionnaire was prepared by the investigator to know the present status of co curricular activities which consisted five questions. The areas included in the questionnaire were-

- (i) Observations of National and International Days related to Environmental Education.
- (ii) Organisation of the co-curricular activities on environmental education in schools.
- (iii) Guideline, training and evaluation of co curricular activities on environmental education..
- (iv) Problems in organization of co curricular activities on environmental education.
- (v) Suggestion regarding smooth implementations of the co curricular activities on environmental education.

Realizing the importance of co curricular activities, the researcher made an attempt to know the present status of the co-curricular activities on environmental education in Assam. Analyses of the questionnaire on co-curricular activities following findings were observed.

**Table No.2 Co Curricular Activities on Environmental Education Conducted by Schools**

Sl. No.	Name of co-curricular activities	Number of schools conducted co-curricular activities	% of schools conducted co-curricular activities
1	Essay competition	15	7.5%
2	Art competition	22	11%
3	Quiz	19	9.5%
4	Debate competition	32	16%
5	Group discussion	6	3%
6	Value clarification	2	1%
7	Role play	9	4.5%
8	Case Study	0	0%

Above table reflected a very poor status of co-curricular activities on Environmental Education in Assam. Table indicated 7.5% schools conducted essay competition, 11% schools conducted art competition, 9.5% schools conducted quiz competition, 16% schools conducted debate competition, 3% schools conducted group discussion, 1% schools conducted value clarification, 4.5% schools conducted role play and no school conducted case study.

**Table No.3 Observance of National and International Days related to Environmental Education**

Sl. No.	Name of co-curricular activities	Number of schools conducted co-curricular activities	% of schools conducted co-curricular activities
1	World Wet Land Day 2 <sup>nd</sup> February	0	0%
2	World Forestry Day 21 <sup>st</sup> February	0	0%
3	National Science Day 28 <sup>th</sup> February	3	1.5%
4	World Water Day 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	0	0%
5	World Health Day 7 <sup>th</sup> April	0	0%
6	World Heritage Day 18 <sup>th</sup> April	0	0%
7	Earth Day 22 <sup>nd</sup> April	5	2.5%
8	Anti Tobacco Day 31 <sup>st</sup> May	6	3%
9	World Environment Day 5 <sup>th</sup> June	23	11.5%
10	World Population Day 11 <sup>th</sup> July	1	0.5%
11	World Habitat Day 3 <sup>rd</sup> October	0	0%
12	World Wildlife Week 1 <sup>st</sup> – 7 <sup>th</sup> October	0	0%
13	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction 13 <sup>th</sup> October	0	0%
14	Bhopal Tragedy Day 2 <sup>nd</sup> December	0	0%

No school conducted World Wet Land Day, 1.5% schools conducted National Science Day, 2.5% schools conducted Earth Day, 3% schools conducted Anti Tobacco Day, 11.5% schools conducted World Environment Day, 0.5% schools conducted World Population Day, no school conducted World Forestry Day, World Water Day, World Health

Day, World Heritage Day, World Habitat Day, World Wildlife Week, International Day for National Disaster Reduction and Bhopal Tragedy Day.

It had been observed that very less number of co-curricular activities was organized in very few schools. Presently the subject, Environmental Education, is very theoretical in nature which gives importance on giving information only. To realize its objectives importance must be given on practical activities. Therefore sufficient number of co-curricular activities needs to be organized in the schools.

### **VIEWS OF TEACHERS REGERDING CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION:**

73% teachers viewed that co-curricular activities were not properly organized in the elementary schools, 92% teachers responded that they were not getting proper training to conduct the co-curricular activities, 80% teachers responded that proper weightage was not given in school routine as well as in the curriculum to organize the co-curricular activities, 70% teachers responded that they were getting no co-operation from the Head of the Schools and fellow teachers.80% of the teachers commented that the physical infrastructure of the school were not conducive for carrying out co-curricular activities .Most of the schools accommodated all their classes in one hall type class room. 86% of the schools of the sample did not have play ground of their own which was a major problem for conducting co curricular activities like plantation and gardening.

79% teachers viewed that for smooth implementation of the co-curriculum activities, specific guidelines should be provided in the curriculum and provision should be made in the school routine.

86% teachers viewed that teachers' hand book school be provided to the teachers for conducting these activities.

69% of the teachers realizes on need of teacher training for conducting co-curricular activities on Environmental Education.

72% teachers responded that Head of the Schools should be oriented properly regarding importance of organizing these activities and their role in organization of these activities.

During the time of interview the teachers mentioned following problems which causes problems in conducting co curricular activities on Environmental Education -

Lack of Budget

Inadequate number of teachers

- Lack of skilled and trained teachers
- Teaching over load
- Over crowded class
- Unavailability of trained personnel
- Lack of professional support
- Inadequate supervision and monitoring
- Lack of co-ordination among teachers
- Lack of enthusiasm in teachers.

**TEACHERS' SUGGESTIONS WERE –**

1. Co-curricular activities on Environmental Education should be made compulsory,
  2. Schools should prepare annual and monthly plan for Co-curricular activities on Environmental Education,
  3. Provision of teacher for this particular area should be made in each school,
  4. A specific teacher training policy and programme should be developed,
  5. Teacher should be assigned and trained on the basis of their interest, age, and abilities,
  6. The content of the teacher training package should be so selected and arranged that they should meet the need of conducting co-curricular activities on Environmental Education,.
  7. Mobile training should be organized by the coordination of expert teachers available in the DIET of respective districts,
  8. The teacher handbook should be developed adequately and should be made available in all the schools in the required number,
  9. Use of local materials and play field should be encouraged,
  10. A strong monitoring, evaluation, and feedback mechanism should be established in the district and in the school. A column should be kept in school progress report for the evaluation of co curricular activities on Environmental Education, and
  11. Activities should be limited and classified according to the need, age, developmental characteristics of the students.
2. From the table No. 16 &17 it is very clear that poor status of co-curricular activities on Environmental Education in the elementary schools of Assam. It was found that only 7.5% schools conduct essay competition, 11% schools conduct art competition, 9.5% schools conduct quiz competition, 16% schools conduct debate competition, 3%

schools conduct group discussion, 1% school conducts value clarification, 4.5% schools conduct role play and no school conduct case study.

3. No schools conduct World Wet Land Day, 1.5% schools conduct National Science Day, 2.5% schools conduct Earth Day, 3% schools conduct Anti Tobacco Day, 11.5% schools conduct World Environment Day, 0.5% schools conduct World Population Day. No school conducts World Forestry Day, World Water Day, World Health Day, World Heritage Day, World Habitat Day, World Wildlife Week, and International Day for National Disaster Reduction and Bhopal Tragedy Day.
4. It was found that very less number of schools organize co-curricular activities. Another important finding is that very less number of co curricular activities organized in the schools. Presently the subject, Environmental Education is very theoretical in nature which gives importance on giving information only. To realize its objectives importance must be given on practical activities. Therefore, sufficient number of co curricular activities need to be organized in the schools.

**CONCLUSION:** From the table No. 1 &2, it is very clear that poor status of co-curricular activities on Environmental Education in the elementary schools of Assam. It was found that only 7.5% schools conduct essay competition, 11% schools conduct art competition, 9.5% schools conduct quiz competition, 16% schools conduct debate competition, 3% schools conduct group discussion, 1% school conducts value clarification, 4.5% schools conduct role play and no school conduct case study.

- No schools conduct World Wet Land Day, 1.5% schools conduct National Science Day, 2.5% schools conduct Earth Day, 3% schools conduct Anti Tobacco Day, 11.5% schools conduct World Environment Day, 0.5% schools conduct World Population Day. No school conducts World Forestry Day, World Water Day, World Health Day, World Heritage Day, World Habitat Day, World Wildlife Week, and International Day for National Disaster Reduction and Bhopal Tragedy Day.
- It was found that very less number of schools organize co-curricular activities. Another important finding is that very less number of co curricular activities organized in the schools. Presently the subject, Environmental Education is very theoretical in nature which gives importance on giving information only. To realize its objectives importance must be given on practical activities. Therefore, sufficient number of co curricular activities need to be organized in the schools.

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