

## **MODULE 11 - PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

### **OBJECTIVES**

After the study of this e-content the learners will be able to:

1. Justify the need of public awareness for the protections of environment and natural resources.
2. Explain the roles of Natural Corporation between government and the enterprise for environmental protection.
3. Importance of tools of public awareness.
4. Tell the days which after of special significance for creating public awareness.
5. Explain environmental legal rights, responsibility and associated consequences.
6. Explain the roles of media in awareness raising campaigns.
7. Describe the concept and characteristics of environmental education.
8. Name may sectors of society which can be involved in delivering educational comes and public awareness campaigns.
9. Describe the practices to be adopted for biodiversity conservation, Habitat preservation, soil conservation, water conservation and energy conservation.
10. Explain the need of neat, clean and healthy environmental.

### **SUMMARY**

The environment is the basic life support system but because of human intervention, its quality is being deteriorated day-by-day. Now it has become the concern of everybody to be sensitive and careful to protect and maintain the environment. It can be developed by creating environmental awareness through electronic media, the press, school and college education. The celebration of environmental calendar, legal rights, media awareness and environmental education can be used as tools of public awareness. The environment friendly activities can also be used as tools of developing public awareness. These activities are biodiversity conservation, habitat preservation, soil conservation, water conservation energy, conservation. We should remember that environmental protection is not the concern of government only but every individual is responsible for it. In the same way execution of public awareness plans and activities should be the responsibility of all of us.

### **TRANSCRIPTION**

#### **NEED FOR PUBLIC ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS**

Our earth is unique among all heavenly bodies, as life is known to exist only on this planet. The earth possesses a congenial environment that supports all forms of life including human beings. The environment provides the basic life support system, the air we breathe, the water we drink,

the food we eat and the land where we live. It provides us wood, fuel, energy and minerals. Most of our activities affect the environment in one way or the other. Many regions of the environment have already been badly damaged by over use or irrational use of resources like forest, water, soil etc. In 1982, the intervention by human being and its damaging effect on the environment was clearly expressed by Capra in the following statement:

**“In our civilization we have modified our environment to such an extent during this cultural evolution that we have lost touch with our biological and ecological base more than any other culture in the past.” Capra (1982)**

If we continue this damage to the environment, no doubt the consequences will be very serious and irreparable. Therefore, to save the environment we are required to develop environmental sensitivity in our country through public awareness campaign. Public awareness of environment is a term relating to the attitudes, behaviors, opinions and activities that comprise of the relations between the general public or society as a whole with environmental knowledge and practices.

According to Capra,” **Ecological awareness.....will arise only when we combine our rational knowledge with an intuition for the nonlinear nature of our environment. Such intuitive wisdom is characteristic of traditional, non-literate cultures..... in which life was organized around a highly refined awareness of the environment.” Capra (1982)**

The former chief justice of India Justice P.N. Bhagwati says,

**“Public awareness is essential to protect environment in times of rapid industrialization compromising on the environmental aspects. Concerned environmentalists and even common persons can take advantage of public interest litigation.”**

Protection of the environment is not only the concern of the government, but also of every individual. There is a relationship of mutual co-operation between what the government and enterprise have done for environmental protection and the degree of self-discipline on the part of individuals in making their own contributions. No doubt, a good job by both the government and the enterprise will help to raise the environmental awareness of individuals. Contribution from more individuals will certainly have an accumulative impact on our environment from a long-term point of view. Publicity and education are important to raise such awareness of the general public. But, the action on the part of government is more fruitful. Most of the people are not satisfied with what their local governments have done for environmental protection.

In this connection S. K. Nanda, Principal Secretary, Forest & Environment has drawn the attention of environmentalists. He says:

**“It is necessary and essential to sensitize everyone to make clean, green and a safe environment. At present the biggest debate raging is between the forces of development and antidevelopment. Environmentalists can play a greater role in bringing equilibrium between the forces.”**

We have several tools of public awareness such as the electronic media, the press, school and college education and adult education, to name a few. These tools are complementary to each other. Green movements are the result of local small initiatives but they play a major role in advocating environmental protection to the government. One more potent tool for environmental protection is advertising campaigns, which provide frequent messages that are positive conducive to environmental preservation. Media can be effectively useful to project pro environmental issues.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL CALENDAR AS TOOL OF PUBLIC AWARENESS**

There are several days which are of special significance for creating public awareness to protect the environment. These days should be celebrated to create environmental awareness.

**Second of February** is celebrated to create awareness about wastelands and their value to mankind. The history of this day is that in February 1971, The Ramsar convention on wasteland of international importance was signed at Ramsar in Iran. We can also take an initiative to have a campaign for the Judicious and proper use of wastelands in the vicinity of our cities and villages by celebrating the second of February every year.

**Twenty first March** is celebrated as World Forestry Day with an objective to create public awareness to protect forests and to check the rapid depletion of forest resources. The celebration of the World Forestry Day should be action oriented, e.g., activities such as tree plantations may be organized and planned on an ongoing process.

**Seventh April** is designated as World Health Day by World Health Organization (WHO). This day originated came into existence in 1948 with a view to have a campaign for personal sanitation and hygiene to understand issues of public health, occupational health etc. The day is also concerned with environment related diseases and to discuss the preventive measures for checking their spread.

**April 18** has been designated as the World Heritage Day with the objective of developing a sense of pride towards our historic monuments that are symbols of a rich cultural heritage and therefore need to be protected. This can be brought about by organizing a visit to a local fort or museum. The cultural monuments are considered a part of the environment. Students can be motivated to use this opportunity to create awareness among the local people to save their heritage sites.

**April 22** was celebrated as Earth day for the first time in 1970 by a group of people in the USA to draw the attention of the world towards the environmental problems caused by humans on earth. This day is celebrated all over the world by organizing rallies, festivals, cleanups, special shows and academic programs

**June 5** is celebrated as World Environment Day. It marks the anniversary of the Stockholm Conference on Human Environment in Sweden in 1972. In this conference, nations of the world gathered to share their concern in terms of human progress at the expense of the environment.

This day can be celebrated to project the various environmental activities that a college undertakes during the year. New projects can also be proposed to initiate a movement at the college level.

**June, 11** is known as World Population Day which aims to establish a link between population and environment. Educational Institutions and NGOS can organize seminars and discussions to celebrate this day.

**August 6** has been accepted as Hiroshima Day, which can be used to discuss the consequences of Bhopal Gas Tragedy and the Chernobyl Disaster.

**September 16** has been proclaimed as World Ozone Day by the United Nations for the preservation of ozone layer. Students can organize seminars to find out more about the threats to this layer and to suggest steps for mitigating this global threat. This day marks the Montreal Protocol signed in 1987 with an objective to control the production and consumption of ozone depleting substances.

**September 28** has been accepted as the Green Consumer Day with a view to create awareness among consumers about various products. On this occasion, students can organize a campaign to conduct discussions with shopkeepers and consumers to curtail excess packaging and to avoid the use of articles that are heavily packaged.

**October, 1 to 7** has been considered as Wild life week with an intention to conserve species and threatened ecosystems. The forest departments usually organize various activities like poster display or side street play to highlight India's rich biodiversity and wildlife.

### **LEGAL RIGHTS, MEDIA AWARENESS AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AS TOOLS OF PUBLIC AWARENESS**

#### **Environmental legal rights and responsibilities and associated consequences**

Environmental legislation is evolved to protect our environment as a whole and earth's resources. Through environmental education and public awareness initiatives the environmental law and social responsibilities can be linked and this link can be illustrated in the context of enforcement. Public awareness and participation is important in all aspects of enforcement, not only in understanding basic environment and human rights, but also in fostering a sense of responsibility and proactive environmental citizenship. The citizens are required to act as watchdogs to protect their environment from illegal exploitation of natural resources and from the consequences of unsustainable projects. Vigilant citizens know their rights but also have a duty towards the protection of environment.

#### **Use of Media for Awareness Raising Campaigns**

Different types of media like print, broadcast and internet can be powerful allies in educating the public on environmental issues. In order to use media effectively, the government is required to work with media and sometimes to educate the media. This can be done through regularly managed informal briefings. The government has to work closely with the mass media to build up its environmental reporting capacity through regular press conferences and broad public awareness campaigns. The appropriate information about environment can be provided to journalists through capacity building efforts. The information centers may disseminate recent information and can have a public library with a range of information resources. These information centers may be run by a government agency or ministry or by an NGO.

### **Incorporation of Environmental Issues in Mainstream education**

Environmental Education is a process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitude, which are helpful to understand and appreciate the interrelationship among human society, its culture and its biophysical surrounding. It also aims to create a sense that acknowledges the relationship of interdependence between manmade environment and natural environment. In fact, Environmental Education intends to sensitize people about the environmental issues.

Although we have a number of courses on Environmental Sciences in the formal education system, for people who desire to learn about environmental issues no structured courses are available. Realizing this problem, the Ministry of Environment and Forest is working for an environmental appreciation course known as Environmental Concepts in Management and Business.

The participation of common public in the activities of protection, conservation and management of environment is essential for enriching sustainable development. Environment Education and Awareness Programs play a significant role in encouraging and enhancing people's participation. Realizing this fact, the Ministry promotes non-formal education and awareness programs for all sections of society through diverse activities using traditional and modern media of communication. Some of the major activities are National Environment Awareness Campaign (NEAC) and Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE).

Traditional, religious and local community leaders can play an influential role in terms of people actions particularly in rural areas. The education of these leaders can assist the implementation of environmental policies. In educating these leaders, more attention is to be paid to the language of learning materials. The materials in local language may be more accessible. Although translation is costly, selective translation might make the materials functionally more accessible. Posters, radio presentations and other approaches may be advisable if the local population leaders have limited literacy. The materials and messages should be presented in short sentences, simple words and verbs so that they can be understood easily. This is more desirable if the materials are written in a person's mother tongue or the local language.

Many sectors of society can be involved in developing and delivering educational courses and public awareness campaigns. These include:

- Governmental institutions at the national , regional and local levels

- Domestic and international NGOs
- Primary, secondary, and post secondary schools
- Journalists and the media
- Celebrities
- Other individuals and institutions.

Moreover educational and awareness efforts can target any sector of the society. They can seek to raise public awareness broadly on environmental issues or they may be a targeted campaign focused on a specific sector on a specific issue.

### **BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AS A TOOL OF PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Because of intensive forms of agriculture and industrial growth in the name of so-called development, a large portion of residual wilderness of our country is under great threat. If this trend continues, the deterioration of not only the natural habitat will take place but the survival of a number of species including human beings will be in danger. Once a species has gone it has gone forever. On this earth, we have a life network of 1.8 million species of animals and plants that live in a large number of ecosystems. We can adopt some practices to protect the biodiversity of the earth.

1. Plantation of local and indigenous trees around our home and work place. Friends and colleagues can be encouraged to participate in plantation.
2. In small gardens small trees and shrubs should be planted.
3. In a terrace or a balcony a garden of potted plants can be developed.
4. Prevention the falling of trees is of great importance specially the old trees.
5. The slopes of hills should be made free from encroachments and settlements.
6. Excessive packaging of products should be avoided.
7. The wastage of paper should be avoided. Using both sides of every sheet is an environment friendly act.
8. Recycling of waste products should be encouraged. Reuse of cartons and gift wrapping papers should be done without any hesitation.
9. Donation of used old books and magazines to schools, hospitals and libraries is not only helpful to these organizations but it also reduces the exploitation of natural resources.
10. Participation in events which have concerns with the environment is helpful to get the required knowledge, skills and motivation.
11. Presenting flower bouquets should be avoided. Instead, gifts of potted plants should be encouraged.
12. The judicious use of natural resources and products, which have been derived from plants and animals, should be encouraged.

### **HABITAT PRESERVATION AS A TOOL OF PUBLIC AWARENESS**

Because of rapid destruction of forests, increasing habitation of human beings and other developmental activities, the natural habitats for animals and birds have been affected. As a result, there is a strong pressure to prevent extinction of several rare and endemic species. Thus, we are required to preserve the remaining habitats and inhabitants. We can do a number of activities in this regard.

1. Whenever we visit the forests, we should bring back everything we took there and clean up the litters left by others. We should study the ecosystem; it develops sensitivity to conserve it.
2. We should be kind to animals. We should not disturb them. They also need peace. We should not be cruel to creatures such as birds, frogs, snakes, insects etc.
3. We should learn about the birds of our area, to understand their food requirements and feeding habits. Construction of artificial nesting boxes, arrangement of drinking water and birdbath is helpful for keeping the birds healthy.
4. Small mammals, squirrels etc, can be attracted to our garden by providing them food, drinking water and appropriate shelter.
5. For pet's, proper food, shelter and emergency medical care is necessary.
6. While visiting a zoo one should not tease or hurt the animals.
7. One should not disturb the natural habitats of birds or animals.
8. Wildlife products should be avoided.
9. One should not catch or kill butterflies and other insects. They are important pollinators.
10. We should not bring wild animals and plants to our home as they are important components of the ecosystems.
11. We should not buy products that are made from animal skin or ivory.

### **PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR SOIL CONSERVATION**

Soil is one of the natural resources that extend a strong support for the survival of life. Its degradation and deterioration affects the existence of animals and plants directly or indirectly. At present, because of natural and manmade reasons the degradation of soil is taking place at a faster rate. We can check this degradation to a significant extent by adopting some measures which are:

1. Soil erosion can be reduced by covering the soil of farms and gardens with a layer of mulch.
2. Soil erosion of steep slopes can be prevented by terracing the slope area.
3. By carrying out plantations, soil erosion can be prevented.
4. Organic matters enrich the garden; healthy soil grows healthy plants.
5. For cultivation of vegetables, we should adopt the crop rotation system to prevent the depletion of nutrients.
6. In the school and college campus, a compost pit should be made to enrich the soil with the organic wastes from the kitchen.
7. The local zoo workers should be advised to use animal dung for the preparation of bio-fertilizer.
8. We should buy organically grown products to reduce quantity of toxic pesticides and soil pollution.

### **PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR WATER CONSERVATION**

Although we have good rainfall in our country, because of poor water management and carelessness we face a water shortage nearly everywhere. The conservation of this precious gift of nature is very important to maintain the existence of life on the surface of the earth. We can follow these measures which are:

1. Use water judiciously.
2. Water houseplants with the water which has been used for rinsing vessels.
3. Watering the plants early in the morning to minimize evaporation.
4. Soak utensils to reduce use of water as well as detergents.
5. Take care to prevent water leakage in toilets and bathrooms.
6. Use drip irrigation system to save water.
7. Don't waste drinking water as we need for drinking.
8. Promote rainwater harvesting from roof-tops and use it to recharge the wells to reduce the burden on rivers and lakes.
9. Check dumping wastes into drains to prevent of water bodies.
10. As far as possible avoid use of chemical in our homes. Instead use friendly alternatives such as neem and biofertilizers.
11. Turn on taps at reduced flow rather than at full force.
12. Using a bucket of water for bathing instead of taking showers to save water.
13. Do not over water plants.
14. Do not pollute water sources by throwing wastes into them.

### **PUBLIC AWARENESS FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION**

We have rich nonrenewable energy resources like coal, petroleum and oil but these resources will last only for next 30 to 50 years if we use them at the present rate. A huge amount of our budget is being used to extract, process and distribute coal, petroleum and electricity. We are trying our best to generate energy from wind and photovoltaic cells, even though there are limitations to these conventional and nonconventional resources of energy. In a way to save energy is to generate energy. We can conserve energy by following certain steps, which are:



1. Turn's off electrical appliances when they are not being used.
2. Using of low voltage lights, energy saver bulbs, solar power pressure cooker for heating and cooking.
3. Turn off gas stove immediately after use.
4. Adopting practices like soaking rice, pulses before cooking and selecting light shades of wall paints as they reflects more light; Positioning the reading table near a window to read in natural light, Use bicycles as they releases no pollutant and provide healthy exercise, Using public transport etc.
5. For traveling short distances, walking rather than using vehicles helps save energy as well it promotes health.
6. Servicing of vehicles regularly to reduce fuel consumption and pollution.
7. Avoiding use of unnecessary decorative lights, halogen lamps, use of gysers in summer, putting hot food in the reffridgerators prevents wasteful consumption of energy.

It can be easily seen that most of us complain about the deterioration of our environmental situation. We want to enjoy a neat, clean and healthy environment without contributing anything for the same. We should remember that if we do something to protect the environmental constituents, it will not only upgrade the quality of our environment, but side by side it will also motivate others to do so.

## **GLOSSARY**

1. Public:- Publics are group of individuals .
2. Environronment: - Environment encompasses all livings and non-living things occurring in naturally on Earth or some region thereof.
3. Awareness: - Awareness is the state or ability to perceive to feel or to be conscious of events, objects or subsonic patterns.
4. Environmental sensitivity: - Sensitivity to environmental protection.
5. Legislation: - Legislation is law which has been promulgated by a legislative or other governing body.
6. Media: - Media refers to digital media, mass media.
7. Environmental Education: - Environmental Education refers to organized efforts to teach about how natural environmental functions and how human beings can manage environmental protection.
8. Bidodiversity: - Biodiversity is the degree of variation of life formers within a given ecosystem, biome or an entire plant.

9. Habitat: - A habitat is an ecological or environmental area that is inhabited by a particular series of animal, plant, and other types of organisms.

10. Soil:- Soil is a natural body consisting of layers of mineral constituents of variable thickness which differ from the plant material in their ecological, physical, chemical and numerical characteristics.

11. Soil erosion: - Soil erosion is the wearing away, detachment & transportation of soil from one place to another place and its deposition by moving water, blowing wind and the other causes.

12. Water conservation: - Water conservation refers to reducing the usage of water and recycling of waste water for different purposes.

13. Energy Conservation: - Energy conservation refers to efforts made to reduce energy consumptions.

### **FAQs**

Q1. Why the environment is required for life?

Ans. The environment provides all the basic life support systems which ultimately give air for breathing, water for drinking, food for eating and land for living. The wood, fuel, energy, minerals and other essential commodities for the survival of life are derived from the environment.

Q2. How human intervention is responsible for damage to the environment?

Ans. The over use or irrational use of resources like forest, water, soil has caused irreparable damage to these resources.

Q3. Why there is a need of public environmental awareness?

Ans. Public environmental awareness is required to develop environmental sensitivity, positive attitude & options as well as desirable behaviors in people to save the environment.

Q4. What are the tools of public awareness?

Ans. The electronic media, the press, school and college education and adult education are the common tools of awareness.

Q5. How is advertising a potent tool of environmental public awareness?

Ans. Advertising campaign provides frequent messages that are positive to environmental preservation.

Q6. For what twenty first March celebrated?

Twenty 1st March is celebrated as world forestry Day.

Q7. On which date World Health Day is celebrated?

Ans. Seventh April is designated as World Health Day by World Health Organizations.

Q8. On Which date the World Environmental Day is celebrated?

Ans. June 5 is celebrated as World Environmental Day.

Q9. For What June 11 is important?

Ans. June 11 is known as World Population Day.

Q10. What is Wild Life Week?

Ans. October, 1 to 7 has been considered as wild life week.

Q11. What is need of Environmental legislation?

Ans. Environmental legislation is evolved to protect our environment as a whole .

Q12. What is capacity building efforts for environmental public awareness?

Ans. The appropriate information about environment can be provided to journalist through information centers. This is known as capacity building efforts.