

Child Protectors of Environment (Eco Club) in context of guidance for schools in Bihar

Dr.KALAM NARREN

PGT (Music)

Utkramit Uchh Madhymik Vidyalaya, Bhairwa, Madhubani, Bihar

Abstract

The Education Department has started preparations to connect children with various activities from school level in Bihar regarding environmental protection, cleanliness and social coordination. Regarding this, the department has prepared a plan to form Eco clubs in all government schools before the start of the new session 2025-26. Eco clubs will be formed in the school for the all-round development of the children of the schools. The State Project Director of Bihar Education Project Council has directed the DEO and DPO to form Eco Club in all schools before the new session. Whose main function is to bring children closer to natural things, make them aware of plants and water conservation and motivate them for waste management. From the next session, 15 programs will be organized in 1 year in elementary schools. There will be 10 programs in primary schools. An expenditure of Rs 1000 has been fixed for each program by the Bihar Education Project. There will be 20-20 students in both the clubs. Which will also include 10 girl students.

Keywords : Eco Club, Environment and Climate Change, Healthy lifestyle, Greenery and Biodiversity, Energy conservation, Waste Management etc.

Introduction

Environment and biodiversity are important parts of our life. They not only provide us with clean air, clean water and food, but also protect us from natural calamities like floods, droughts and landslides. But, in today's time, climate change has become a serious challenge, which is affecting our entire ecosystem.

The main causes of climate change include pollution, indiscriminate cutting of forests, and excessive use of fossil fuels. These activities are increasing the level of greenhouse gases in the environment, which is causing global warming and climate change. This change is affecting all living beings, whether it is plants, wildlife or humans.

Environment and Climate Change

The impact of climate change on children is particularly worrying. Increasing radiation and pollution increases the risk of diabetes, LG, and other chronic diseases in children. In addition, irregular and unexpected changes in weather are affecting agricultural production, which is also affecting food security. These problems are having a negative impact on children's nutrition, their physical and mental development, and even their education.

In view of the challenges of changing environment and climate change, it is very important to make children aware of climate change and teach them ways to deal with it. It is important to include climate education in schools, motivate children to take care of the environment, and encourage them to adopt better and healthier lifestyles. Children should be made to understand how small efforts like saving water, reducing electricity consumption, and planting trees can bring about big changes. At the same time, children can play an important role as change agents in the community and the environment. They can inspire the community to take up eco-friendly activities, making them sensitive towards the environment and climate.

In this way, by making children sensitive towards environment and climate change, we can not only secure their present but also build a healthy and safe future.

In this regard, the Government of India launched "**Mission Lifestyle for Environment**" in 2022, which aims to address serious challenges like environmental protection and climate change, similarly, the Government of Bihar launched "**Water-Life-Greenery**" (जल, □□□□ और □□□□□□) mission in 2019 itself.

The basic objective of both these programmes is to strengthen our environment friendly behaviour and efforts so that water conservation, greenery can be increased and sustainable and judicious use of natural resources can be ensured. In this sequence, Eco Club is an important initiative to make school children aware about environmental conservation and to develop their capabilities.

Eco Club in school



Eco clubs are formed in schools to make children aware of the environment and to deal with the challenges of climate change. These clubs motivate children to participate in important activities like environmental protection, tree plantation, waste management, water conservation, energy conservation and cleanliness. Eco clubs not only make children aware of the importance of environmental protection but also give them an opportunity to connect with nature. In this way, children become responsible citizens and try to protect the environment around them.

Today, we are witnessing a time when climate change has had a profound impact not only on the environment but also on the lives of children. Excessive irrigating, erratic weather, floods, droughts and other natural calamities have become common, creating an imbalance in the environment and negatively impacting the health and development of children.

In view of these increasing problems, it has become imperative to make children aware of these and prepare them to face these challenges. Eco clubs make children aware of the importance of environmental conservation and protection of biodiversity, and give them experience in dealing with these issues through practical activities. These clubs develop environmental awareness and sensitivity in children, so that they not only understand their responsibility towards protecting the environment but also make their family and society aware of it. In this way, Eco Clubs motivate children to actively participate in building a healthy and safe future.

Formation of Eco Club

Under the Right to Education Act 2009, there already exists a Bill Parliament in Government Schools (Classes 1-8), which consists of a Prime Minister and a Deputy Prime Minister along with 6 Ministers and 6 Deputy Ministers.

The Eco Club will be a sub-committee of the Bill Parliament, consisting of a total of 20 members. The Minister for Water and Environment of the Bill Parliament will be the President of the Club, while the Deputy Minister for Water and Environment will function as the Secretary. The other 12 members of the Bill Parliament will be members of the Eco Club. In addition, under the leadership of the Principal, 6 more members will be elected, in which participation of differently abled children, backward castes, deprived and poor sections and girls will be ensured. In those schools which do not have Boy Parliament, the Principal or Nodal Teacher will form Boy Parliament and Eco Club as per the guidelines.

Participation of differently abled children, girls, children from deprived, poor sections and backward castes will be ensured in the club. Selection of club members will be done as follows under the guidance of a nodal teacher.

Types of school	Member of Eco Club (Total 20 members)
Primary / Middle School (Class I to VIII / VI to VIII)	14 children of Bal Sansad (Chairman, Water and Environment Minister, Secretary, Deputy Minister of Water and Environment) + 6 children will be selected by the Principal/ Nodal Teacher in a inclusive methods.
Secondary School (Class IX to X)	Selection of 20 children will be done by the Principal/ Nodal Teacher in a inclusive methods.
Secondary School (Class XI to XII)	In secondary and higher secondary schools, 6 children from class 9-12 will be selected, out of which one will be the president and one will be the secretary. Apart from this, 14 children of the Bill Parliament will be members of the Eco Club.

Implementation of Eco Club

The Principal/Headmaster will be the head of the Eco Club and his/her role will be to assist, guide and provide facilities for the programs. The Principal will have the overall responsibility of organizing the activities of the Eco Club in the school.

- A teacher of the school will be appointed as the nodal regular worker for the Eco Club (preferably a teacher with a subject in Environmental Science) who will coordinate the activities of the club.
- As the school already has 'Safety Work' as an integral part of the flagship school safety programme, it would be more appropriate as well as effective to combine the Eco Club with 'Safe Work' by doing activities related to environment and climate change.
- The President of the Club will provide leadership in organizing the club activities and the Secretary will prepare the budget for the expenditure incurred on the event in consultation with the Nodal Teacher.
- The students will be actively involved in organizing the club activities and the club members will be encouraged to perform well in the annual calendar. Every student will be given timely opportunities.
- An annual calendar will be prepared by the Eco Club in which topics will be discussed on predetermined topics in different months of the year. The programme will be organised at school and community level.
- These activities will be mainly based on six themes which have been selected as per Mission LiFE programme. Also, it will be ensured that special days like World Water Day, World Environment Day etc. related to Mission LIFE themes are also organised.
- In each month two rooms will be earmarked for collection of suggested activities under Eco Club.
- For implementation of any activity, the Principal, Nodal Teacher and the members of the club will meet after the school bell and make a plan.

Eco Club's Annual Calendar

Month - January/July		
Topic - Adopt a healthy lifestyle		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem: Diseases are increasing due to unhealthy eating habits and lifestyle.</p> <p>Need: To improve physical and mental health by adopting a healthy lifestyle.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing yoga and exercise sessions. 2. Nutrition awareness programmes (balanced diet, healthy habits). 3. Giving awareness about cleanliness and nutritious food during lunch. 4. "One day walk" exercise (asking all students to take one walk a day). 5. Mental health awareness sessions (yoga and study). 6. Discussion on drinking water and hygiene as per the plan of safe environment. 7. Discussion on clean campus and clean toilets. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizing health check-up camps in the villages. 2. Organizing awareness rallies on cleanliness and health. 3. Teaching families the ways of drinking clean water and eating clean food. 4. Organizing yoga and meditation sessions with the help of trained persons. 5. Explaining to the community about the use of toilets and their maintenance.

Month - February/August Topic - Greenery and Biodiversity		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem: Cutting of trees and reduction in forest area is disturbing the environmental balance, which is increasing climate change and pollution.</p> <p>Need: Maintaining environmental balance and controlling climate change through tree plantation.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Plantation of trees in the school premises. 2. Preparation of nutritional supplements and medicinal supplements. 3. "One Tree, One Student" scheme (Each student adopts a tree). 4. Painting and essay activities based on biodiversity. 5. Care of trees and monitoring of their growth. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planting trees in the open fields of the village. 2. Making collective efforts for plantation and encouraging the village businesses to plant and preserve trees on special occasions. 3. Awareness campaign will be launched to conserve vegetation and biodiversity.

Month - March/September Topic - Water conservation		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem: Lack of water and wastage of water is creating a water crisis, which is affecting millions of people.</p> <p>Need: To prevent wastage of water through water conservation and ensure water availability for future.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making and installing a water conservation model on the topic. 2. Essay writing and painting competition on water saving measures. 3. Teaching water saving habits to students (keeping the tap closed, correct use of water). 4. Giving information about 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish water harvesting structures in the community. 2. To maintain and conserve ponds, wells and streams. 3. To give information and create awareness among people to save

	<p>water testing and doing small experiments.</p> <p>5. Organizing a theatrical show on “Cost of a Drop”.</p> <p>6. Special Day: World Water Day (22nd January) - This day is celebrated to spread awareness on the importance of water conservation and ensuring availability of clean water. Its aim is to ensure sustainable use of water resources and to keep them safe for the future.</p>	<p>water in daily life.</p> <p>4. To motivate people not to throw garbage in ponds and streams.</p>
--	--	---

<p align="center">Month - April/October Topic - Energy conservation</p>		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem: Excessive energy consumption and reliance on conventional sources is depleting resources and harming the environment.</p> <p>Need :Enhancing environmental protection and conservation of resources by conserving energy and using alternative sources.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching of waste segregation (Dry and Wet) process. 2. Plastic free school environment. 3. Recycling workshop for old materials. 4. Active environment for keeping school premises clean. 5. Showing and discussing educational videos on waste management. 6. Special Day: International Biodiversity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raising awareness on proper disposal and recycling of waste in the village. 2. Organizing active events and involving selected people. 3. Teaching and implementing the process of making things from wet waste.

	<p>Day (22 May) - This day is celebrated to understand the importance of conservation of biodiversity of the earth. Its aim is to inspire people to save biodiversity and maintain natural balance.</p>	
--	---	--

Month - May/November		
Topic - Waste Management		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem : Unorganized management of waste is causing environmental pollution and health problems.</p> <p>Need: Adopting proper methods of waste management should promote environmental protection and recycling.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching of waste segregation (dry and wet) process. 2. Plastic free school environment. 3. Recycling of old materials. 4. Active environment for keeping school premises clean. 5. Showing and discussing educational videos on waste management. 6. Special Day: International Biological Diversity Day (22 May) - This day is celebrated to understand the importance of conservation of biodiversity of the earth. Its aim is to inspire people to save biodiversity and maintain natural balance. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Raising awareness on proper disposal and recycling of waste in the village. 2. Organizing active events and involving selected people. 3. Teaching and implementing the process of making things from wet waste.

Month - June /December		
Topic - Avoid single use plastic		
Topic - Introduction	Suggested Activities at School Level	Community level suggested health issues
<p>Problem: Single use plastic is causing a huge increase in pollution, which is harmful for the environment and animals. Need : Protecting the environment by reducing the use of plastic and adopting new alternatives.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teaching students to use alternative products instead of single-use plastic. 2. Celebrating “Plastic Free Day” and creating awareness among students. 3. Making plastic and craft from plastic waste (recycling). 4. Making and distributing cloth bags. 5. Essay writing and poster competition using plastic. 6. Special Day: World Environment Day (5 June) - This day is celebrated to promote environmental conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Its purpose is to highlight environmental problems and find solutions through collective action. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To run a campaign to stop the use of single-use plastic in villages. 2. To motivate people to use alternative products (jute bags, cloth bags). 3. To spread awareness on the harms and recycling of plastic waste.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, we can say that under Eco Club, Eco Club has been established in every school with the objective of making children aware and sensitive towards the environment around them, biodiversity, climate, local ecology, nutrition, health, hygiene and to provide them the ability to work on environmental activities and projects. For this, to implement green school and school garden/kitchen garden for environmental protection in schools reorganizing the Eco Club and also to instill in children the importance of environmental protection, making the environment clean, tree plantation and collection etc. is undoubtedly a commendable step. Its main objective is to reduce carbon emissions at the school level and make students sensitive towards the climate. Eco clubs in schools will empower students to participate and take up meaningful environmental activities and projects. It is a platform through which students can influence their parents and neighbourhood communities, motivating them to promote good behaviour towards the environment. It will empower students to explore environmental concepts and actions beyond the boundaries of the curriculum or syllabus.

Reference

- Eco Club, Paryavaran ke Bal Sanrakshak Vidyalayo ke liye Margdarshika, Bihar Education Project (2024-25)
- Krishnamoorthy, B. (2008). Environmental management –Text and Cases, PHI learning Pvt. Ltd. India. 55-56.
- Kumar, S. (2009). Environmental Protection. Hari Singh Gour University. Madhya Pradesh. 128-130.
- Roberts, Nina S. (2009). Impacts of the National Green Corps Programme (Eco-Clubs) on students in India and their participation in environmental education activities. Environ. Edu. Res, 15: 443–464
- Kelly A. (2010). Student Participation in the College Classroom: An Extended Multidisciplinary Literature Review. Commun. Edu., 59: 188-213.

- Sarabhai, K.V., Raghunathan, M. and Jain, S. (2002). Environmental Education – Some Experiences from India. Institute Of Global Environmental Strategies. Japan. 08: 1-6. Singh, R. (2013).
- Environmental Conservation and Indian Consciousness. Tarun Bharat Sangh. Alwar. 1-4. State Council for Educational Research and Training (SCERT) (2012).
- Eco-Clubs Manual-For Eco-Clubs in-Charges. SCERT:Delhi. 1-7 pp.
- United National Educational, scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO) (1997). Educating for a sustainable future: Transdisciplinary vision for concerted Action. International Conference on Environment and Society: Education and Public Awareness for Sustainability. Thessaloniki, 66-68.

Webliography

- <https://apnigovt.com/youth-eco-club-2024-25-directions-budget-and-uses/>
- <https://sites.google.com/view/govt-hss-tawera/%E0%A4%97%E0%A4%A4%E0%A4%B5%E0%A4%A7%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%AF%E0%A4%A5-%E0%A4%8F%E0%A4%A1-%E0%A4%88%E0%A4%95-%E0%A4%95%E0%A4%B2%E0%A4%AC>
- <https://edudepart.com/youth-and-eco-club/>
- <https://samagra.education.gov.in/youth.html>
- <https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/eco-green-clubs-schools>
- https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eco-Schools#/media/File%3AThe_Green_Flag.gif
- https://www.researchgate.net/publication/280961865_Environment_education_throughEco-Club_activities_in_schools_Relevance_in_planning_modern_India