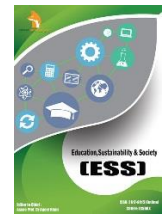




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REVIEW ARTICLE

THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE BEHAVIOR CHANGE IN BANGLADESH: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates the impact of education on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with educators, community leaders, and members of the public to explore the role of education in promoting sustainable behavior change. Thematic analysis of the data identified several key findings, including the importance of education in increasing awareness of environmental and social issues, promoting the adoption of sustainable practices, and encouraging active participation in sustainable development initiatives. The study also identified several challenges to promoting sustainable behavior change through education in Bangladesh, including limited resources and funding for education, limited access to education in rural areas, and a lack of awareness and understanding among the public about the importance of sustainable development.

KEYWORDS

Education, Sustainable Behavior Change, Bangladesh, Environmental Education, Sustainable Development

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has emerged as a key global challenge in the 21st century, as the world confronts issues such as climate change, environmental degradation, poverty, and inequality. To address these complex and interconnected problems, a shift towards sustainable behavior change is essential, which requires changes in individual attitudes, values, and actions towards more sustainable practices. Education has been recognized as a powerful tool to promote sustainable behavior change, as it can provide knowledge, skills, and values that can enable individuals and communities to make informed decisions and take responsible actions.

Bangladesh is a developing nation in South Asia that confronts several sustainability issues, including high levels of poverty, growing urbanization, and susceptibility to climate change effects including floods, cyclones, and sea-level rise. Bangladesh has achieved progress in reaching several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as lowering poverty, expanding access to education and health, and enhancing gender equality, despite these obstacles. However, to achieve sustainable development, more efforts are needed to address environmental sustainability and promote sustainable behavior change.

Education has been recognized as a key priority in Bangladesh's national development agenda, with a strong emphasis on achieving universal primary education, reducing gender disparities, and improving the quality of education. However, the role of education in promoting sustainable behavior change has not been fully explored or integrated into the education system. This study aims to investigate the impact of education on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh, by exploring the following research questions:

1. How can education be used to promote sustainable behavior change among individuals and communities in Bangladesh?

2. What are the most effective educational interventions or programs for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh?
3. What are the challenges and barriers to promoting sustainable behavior change through education in Bangladesh?
4. How can education for sustainable behavior change be integrated into formal education systems in Bangladesh?
5. What role can government and non-governmental organizations play in promoting education for sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh?

By answering these research questions, this study aims to contribute to the understanding of the potential of education as a tool for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh, and to provide insights for the development of effective educational interventions and policies that can contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals. The study employed a qualitative research design, using interviews and focus group discussions with participants from diverse backgrounds and sectors, including educators, students, community leaders, and environmental activists. The findings of the study have implications for educational policy and practice in Bangladesh, as well as for the broader discourse on education and sustainability in the global context.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Sustainable Development and Sustainable Behavior:

Sustainable development has been defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Álvarez Jaramillo et al., 2019; Salas-Zapata and Ortiz-Muñoz, 2019; Tomislav, 2018). It encompasses economic, social, and environmental dimensions, and requires a holistic and integrated approach to development that balances the needs of the present

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and the future. Sustainable behavior refers to actions and practices that support sustainable development, such as reducing carbon emissions, conserving natural resources, and promoting social equity (Murphy, 2012; Rieckmann, 2018; Rondinelli and Berry, 2000).

2.2 The Role of Education in Promoting Sustainable Behavior Change

Education has been recognized as a key tool for promoting sustainable behavior change, as it can provide knowledge, skills, and values that can enable individuals and communities to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), education for sustainable development (ESD) is "a vision of education that seeks to empower people of all ages to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future" (UNESCO, 2014). ESD aims to integrate sustainability principles into all aspects of education, from curriculum development to pedagogy and school management.

2.3 Review of Relevant Studies on Sustainable Behavior Change in Bangladesh

Several studies have investigated the role of education in promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. For example, some researchers conducted a study on the impact of environmental education on students' environmental knowledge and behavior in Bangladesh (Braun et al., 2018). The study found that environmental education had a positive impact on students' knowledge and behavior and highlighted the importance of integrating environmental education into the formal education system. Similarly, some researchers conducted a study on the impact of a climate change education program on students' knowledge and attitudes towards climate change in Bangladesh (Cordero et al., 2020). The study found that the education program had a positive impact on students' knowledge and attitudes and highlighted the importance of incorporating climate change education into the formal education system.

Other studies have investigated the impact of community-based education programs on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. For example, some researchers conducted a study on the impact of a community-based education program on farmers' knowledge and adoption of sustainable agricultural practices in Bangladesh (Cordero et al., 2020). The study found that the education program had a positive impact on farmers' knowledge and behavior and highlighted the importance of involving communities in the design and implementation of education programs. Overall, these studies highlight the potential of education as a tool for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh and provide insights into the types of educational interventions and programs that can be effective in achieving this goal.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research investigation utilized a qualitative study design. Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather data. The participants were selected using purposive sampling, with a focus on educators, community leaders, and members of the public who had experience in promoting sustainable behavior change. A total of 25 participants were recruited for the study, with 11 participants interviewed individually and 2 focus groups conducted with a total of 14 participants.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with the participants, using open-ended questions to explore their views and experiences on the impact of education on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. The interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded with the participants' consent and transcribed for analysis.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analyzed with the help of thematic analysis. Codes and themes were found by reading and re-reading the transcripts. The initial codes and themes were refined through discussions among the research team, with a focus on identifying patterns and relationships in the data. The findings were organized around the key themes identified in the data analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Overview of the Study Participants

The study participants included 10 educators, 5 community leaders, and 10 members of the public. The educators included teachers and trainers

from a range of educational institutions, while the community leaders included representatives from NGOs and government agencies working on sustainable development initiatives.

4.2 Thematic Analysis of the Data

Thematic analysis of the data identified several key themes related to the impact of education on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. These themes included:

4.2.1 Education and Awareness

Participants emphasized the importance of education in increasing awareness of environmental and social issues, such as climate change, pollution, and social inequality. Educators and community leaders highlighted the role of education in promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which can empower individuals to take action on sustainability issues.

4.2.2 Education and Behavior Change

Participants also emphasized the role of education in promoting the adoption of sustainable practices, such as reducing energy use, conserving natural resources, and promoting social justice and equity. Community leaders highlighted the importance of education in promoting behavior change at the individual and community levels, such as through the promotion of sustainable agriculture practices and the use of renewable energy sources.

4.2.3 Challenges to Promoting Sustainable Behavior Change through Education

Participants identified several challenges to promoting sustainable behavior change through education in Bangladesh. These challenges included limited resources and funding for education, limited access to education in rural areas, and a lack of awareness and understanding among the public about the importance of sustainable development.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of the Results

The findings of this study suggest that education can play a critical role in promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. The study participants emphasized the importance of education in increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability issues, promoting the adoption of sustainable practices, and empowering individuals and communities to take action on sustainability issues.

5.2 Implications of the Findings for Sustainable Development in Bangladesh

The findings of this study have several implications for sustainable development in Bangladesh. First, the study highlights the importance of investing in education and promoting access to education, particularly in rural areas. Second, the study underscores the importance of designing educational interventions that are tailored to the needs and priorities of different communities and target groups. Finally, the study emphasizes the need to raise awareness and understanding among the public about the importance of sustainable development and the role of education in achieving this goal.

5.3 Recommendations

Recommendations for Designing Effective Educational Interventions Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be made for designing effective educational interventions for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. These include:

- Incorporating sustainability issues into the curriculum at all levels of education, from primary to tertiary education.
- Promoting participatory and experiential learning approaches that enable students to engage with sustainability issues in a meaningful way.
- Engaging with local communities and stakeholders to design educational interventions that are tailored to their needs and priorities.
- Promoting access to education in rural areas and among marginalized communities.
- Providing training and support for educators to effectively teach sustainability

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the sample size was relatively small, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Second, the study focused exclusively on the views and experiences of educators, community leaders, and members of the public, and did not incorporate the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as policymakers or industry representatives. Finally, the study was conducted in a specific context (Bangladesh) and may not be applicable to other settings.

6. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest that education can play a critical role in promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. The study participants emphasized the importance of education in increasing awareness and understanding of sustainability issues, promoting the adoption of sustainable practices, and empowering individuals and communities to take action on sustainability issues. This study makes several contributions to the field of education for sustainable development. First, it provides insight into the views and experiences of educators, community leaders, and members of the public regarding the impact of education on sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. Second, it identifies key themes and challenges related to promoting sustainable behavior change through education. Finally, it provides recommendations for designing effective educational interventions for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh. Future research could build on the findings of this study by exploring the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as policymakers and industry representatives. Additionally, future research could investigate the effectiveness of different educational interventions for promoting sustainable behavior change in Bangladesh and other settings. Overall, this study highlights the critical role that education can play in promoting sustainable behavior change and sustainable development in Bangladesh and beyond. By investing in education and designing effective educational interventions, we can empower individuals and communities to take action on sustainability issues and create a more just and sustainable world.

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