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## **Newspaper in the Classroom to Sensitize Students towards Environment**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Newspapers are used for different purposes in our life. It can be used in one more effective way i.e. to make learning fun and interesting. It is very easy to bring newspaper in the classroom to fill joy and interest in the classroom teaching learning process. Newspapers can be used as a medium of inculcating higher order thinking skills. Science and environmental studies are the subjects which help us to understand our nature and physical phenomenon existed therein. As emphasized by Akcay, H. et al (2017) newspapers and magazines provide a means of extending science discussions and the results of instruction beyond the classroom. Newspapers provide opportunity to explore scientific knowledge learnt in the classroom. This article, will present five cases taken from the newspaper to discuss in the classroom to make learning interesting and meaningful and to develop a sense of belongingness for our environment. This article will be helpful for the teachers to use print media and newspaper as a teaching learning material to make learning meaningful and live.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Newspaper, environment, science, sensitivity, and awareness.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Newspapers cover a wide range of disciplines like sports, medicines, politics, social issues, environment, science and technology, business and economics and last but not the least it addresses an educational need of all the levels of the students. Now a days, it is not adequate to depend upon formal learning sources rather we need learning sources beyond textbook to address a wide range of learning demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century learners. We need a platform to update our knowledge and current information. Chowdhury & Halder (2016) consider newspaper as a storehouse of current information and treasure of knowledge related to personal as well as social and local and global issues. Nagasampige, M. & Nagasampige, K. (2016) studied the importance of ‘Newspaper in Education’ program by saying that it increase the performance of students in various areas like reading skills, thinking skills, vocabulary, and ultimately help the learners for better academic performance. It is very important to be good in reading skills first to get success in further cognitive operations and newspaper help us to upgrade reading skills (Camassola & Notars, 2017).

Newspapers are used for different purposes in our life. It can be used in one more effective way i.e. to make learning fun and interesting. It is very easy to bring newspaper in the classroom to fill joy and interest in the classroom teaching learning process. Newspapers can be used as a medium of inculcating higher order thinking skills. National Curriculum Framework (2005) highlighted the use of newspaper, books, magazines and other media

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report as a tool to make input rich communicational environment particularly in the language learning. It can be used in the other subjects also like science, technology, medicines and environment as print media provides a range of authentic information about advancement and issues in the particular fields.

Valva, L. (2009) opined that newspaper gives us opportunity to extend knowledge and they facilitate self-education. It is also an important tool for bringing students closer to education as learners enjoy learning when they see that learning has direct relation with their surroundings.

In the same line, Lai, C. & Wang, Y. (2016) also support the fact that newspaper puts so much enjoyment in the classroom by saying that it is worthy to explore the integration of newspaper in education as students are likely to acquire new knowledge from current news.

Use of newspaper in the teaching learning process has following advantages:

- It is the source of authentic information.
- It can be used to develop thinking skills and specifically critical thinking skill.
- It provides opportunity to connect textbook with real life setting.
- It can create interest of the learners in the learning by setting real examples.
- It can create a platform for developing transfer skill along with retention skill.
- It acts as a tool to connect with local community as well as global issues.
- It is a medium to update knowledge and aware with recent advancements.
- It provides a medium for critical reading.

Newspapers have their advantages in all the fields of education and for all the level of education. In this article, emphasis is given on science education and particularly news and articles on environment to develop sensitivity among students.

### **NEWSPAPER IN SCIENCE EDUCATION**

In the newspapers, articles and news that are focused on innovations and discoveries in the field of science education can bring in the classroom to make students aware. The news related to science are normally from advancement in the field of medicines, agriculture and other field of technology. One more very important aspect of science related news is focused on environment i.e. pollution, steps to curb pollution, extinct and endangered species, migrant species and about very rare species of birds also. Some newspapers have fixed the day and column for the science and environment related news and articles. So these articles can be brought into the classroom to expand knowledge, awareness and sensitivity towards these issues.

Science and environmental studies are the subjects which help us to understand our nature and physical phenomenon existed therein. The goal of science education is to develop understanding of science and technology (Akçay, H. et al., 2017). One more fundamental goal of science education is to develop scientific literacy among learners. Akçay, H. et al. (2017) defined scientific literacy as the ability that enables students to not only use scientific principles and process in making personal decisions but also enables them to participate in discussion about scientific issues that affect society. Scientific literacy requires some specific skills like comprehension and understanding, creative thinking, critical thinking,

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collaboration and use of Information and technology. These skills are the foundation for the success in the future.

PISA conducted by OECD also focused on these skills to assess students' performance on specific subjects. We know that in the previous years India had not performed well and performance of our students was very poor and unsatisfactory. This result shows unsatisfactory outcome of our teaching learning process that need our concern. The present scenario reflects the difficulty in comprehending the text and applying critical thinking on it by the students. So we need a strategy through which we can prepare our students in the desired competencies. One of the way of doing this is the use of print media and specifically newspapers by the teachers in the existing teaching learning process. It is the way of connecting science content of textbook with the real life situations. As emphasized by Akcay, H. et al (2017) newspapers and magazines provide a means of extending science discussions and the results of instruction beyond the classroom. Newspapers provide opportunity to explore scientific knowledge learnt in the classroom. It is the technique that break the monotony of lecture method where students face difficulty in transferring the content in the lack of real context. Newspaper are considered to be important learning material as they focus on current affairs, address a wide range of audience, and provide students with a learning environment other than the classroom setting (Keslin&Aksakal, 2019). In this article, focus is given to the articles related to the environmental issues particularly.

## **NEWSPAPER AND ENVIRONMENT**

Programme for International students Assessment (PISA) conducted by OECD is focused on assessing students' competencies like creative thinking, critical thinking, comprehension and communication skills. By analyzing PISA sample papers it was realized that learning through newspaper enable students to apply the required skills in 21<sup>st</sup> century. When students learn from the textbook, it is somewhat dry and difficult to connect with real life. Students read in the textbook about types of pollution, causes of pollution and steps could be taken to curb the pollution but in real life they never bother about such steps therefore we need to sensitize our students towards sustainable development. This can be done with the help of print media and particularly through newspapers. In the newspaper, problems of local surrounding is presented in a very good manner by addressing to the audience unlike the text written in the textbook. When the reader read a report in the newspaper about environment it establishes a relationship between self and the environment through the report. After reading, reader feel a sense of connection with environment and they try to give their contribution to the protection of environment. So, the language which newspaper reports uses bring us close to the issue and thereby provide opportunity to explore the scientific phenomenon read in the classroom. In this article, there are some cases on environment that are taken from newspaper and how teachers can take it as example to apply this strategy into the classroom is presented.

### **Case-1**

In this report, a lion is on the road to prey the cow in front of the villagers. To develop sensitivity among students towards wild animals and to maintain balance in the ecosystem, teacher may ask following questions as the part of discussion to reflect upon:

- *What is the reason behind the presence of lion in the village?*
- *What villagers could do to protect themselves?*

- *If you were the part of that village what would you do to stop such incidence in the future?*
- *How would you relate it with food chain?*
- *What is the role of human being in creating this situation and overcome from this situation?*

Many such questions can be asked to the students to make them sensitize towards the issue. Questions should be framed in such a manner that by responding to the question students feel themselves as the part of the situation. By doing this they realize that they are the part of this environment and it is their responsibility to protect and conserve it. One more aspect to realize is the importance of each animal in the ecosystem. By using a number of reports related to presented example can help teachers to sensitize students towards environmental issues.

**Figure 1: Lion in the village**



Source: Lion king makes a killing (2020, September 28). *Times of India*. P.4

### Case-2

This report is related to the endangered species for example in this case *Orangutan* is taken as example whose population is regularly declining and they are near to extinction. They need our concern to protect themselves. It is highlighted in this case that the cause of their extinction is the destruction of natural habitat i.e. rainforest. So likewise textbook content on endangered species could be connected with similar examples to make learning interesting and to present more live examples in front of the students.

**Figure 2: Endangered species and destruction of natural habitat**



Source: Galdikas, B. (2020, September 26). Saving Orangutans will preserve humanity-women sustain life and they understand this. Times of India. P.7

Here also teacher can ask some challenging questions to reflect upon:

- Do you know some animals living in your areas under threat (in endangered list)?
- What would you do to protect those animals?
- Is it good to keep animals in the zoo?
- What are some activities by which natural habitat of animals get destroy?

By asking such questions and involving students in meaningful discussion where each student get chance to share their ideas are good to sensitize them towards environment.

### **Case-3**

This case is about an endangered species of bird; *greater adjutant stork or Hargilawho* is in endangered list. Around 75% population of this bird found in Assam. We know that environmental studies covers not only plants, animals and pollution but also human being and our culture. In India, many species of plants and animals are the symbols of our culture and tradition and thereby we protect these species unknowingly. Likewise, steps towards saving this species from extinction is also taken where Hargila's images are taken to decorate things and display a symbol of cultural pride. Here two pictures are displayed one showing pair of birds on the tree and other photo shows step towards protecting them from extinction.

**Figure 3: The endangered bird: Hargila**

Source: Barman, P. D. (2020, September 26). My grandmother first showed me a hargila-today, women protect it. *Times of India*. P.7

**Figure 4: Step of a conservationists**



Source: Barman, P. D. (2020, September 26). My grandmother first showed me a hargila-today, women protect it. *Times of India*. P.7

Here to engage students in this activity teacher can ask question like:

- *What would you do something creatively to conserve and make people aware about endangered species? Like you have seen in the above example.*

#### Case-4

This report is related to the use of technology and other interventions to protect the animals and develop awareness towards them. Here, a report from newspaper is displayed by which people are trying to protect the wild animals specifically endangered species. By introducing such articles in the classroom and encouraging students to engage creatively is also an effective way to sensitize students towards endangered species. In this report, it is reflected that lions are radio collared first for research and tracking but after some time its negative effect is seen on lions and it leads to the deaths of many lions. It was assumed that death of lions are because of use of specific technology but we need to help our students to think critically while reading a text. Teacher may also ask for other creative ways to protect animals. Here multiple dimensions need to be considered before arising at the conclusion. So this type of article may help teachers to develop higher order thinking skills among students.

Here, teachers can ask some questions to engage with the issue:

- *What would you do to protect endangered species from extinction?*
- *What creative step could be taken for their security?*
- *Imagine you are a wild life conservative, what would you do to make people aware about problems facing by animals now a days?*
- *Do you think that steps taken to protect them may also harm them? Can you give some more examples of it?*

A many more situations could be given to the students to think upon.

#### Figure 5: Use of radio collars to track lions and research



Source: 20 Asiatic lions in gir freed of radio collars (2020, September 21). Times of India. P.4

#### Case-5

This report is used to make students aware about pollution. Students read in the textbook about industrial effects on quality of water and they understand that industries is one of the cause of water pollution. But textbook is not enough to connect with the local problems. A newspaper highlight the local as well as global issues. It is very important to make children aware about local problems because we need to take action at locally to curb pollution at global level. This report is helpful to connect textbook with live example where five year data of bacteriological contamination of water. This water is not for drinking purpose and therefore need our concern. Students can be connected with this by asking following questions:

- *Are you also facing problem of polluted water in your area?*
- *What are the main causes of this pollution in your area?*
- *Visit a near health center and find out how many cases of diseases from polluted water are registered in normal season and at the time of monsoon.*
- *Visit the near corporation office and ask them how they process water before supplying at homes.*
- *Make a chart of diseases caused by polluted water.*

**Figure 6: Bacteriological contamination of water**



Source: 18% water samples fail potability test (2020, September 26). Times of India. P.4



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## CONCLUSION

Newspapers are the source of current information and a way to update knowledge. It is a tool to connect classroom learning with our surrounding. It provides a way to explore classroom content in the real life setting. It can be used in a wide range of disciplines and for all the levels of learners. It presents environmental issues very wonderfully and bring live examples. So, it can be used a tool to sensitize students towards environment. In this articles some examples are presented related to the environment like animals, endangered animals, natural habitat and pollution. Similarly, newspaper can be used for a wide range of topics where students get opportunity to discuss the issue with peer group and with teacher also. Thereby, enhancing their critical thinking, creative thinking, and team work and communication skill in the learning.

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