

# Barriers to Environmental Education and Remedies in Pakistan

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## Abstract

*The study in hand investigates the determinants barriers of environmental education and remedies for alleviation of those barriers. This study briefly highlighted the importance of environmental education in Pakistan. Reason of barriers to environmental education is also discussed in paper. Major barriers are poverty, governmental posteriority, lack of social interaction and defective educational curriculum. Regulatory bodies, educational institutions, media and social interaction are main suggestions are discussed in this paper. Data is collected from 7 citizens from Islamabad the analysis. Sustainable growth is possible if people have awareness about environmental education. Through environmental education, environmental can control.*

**Key Words:** *Environmental education, sustainable growth, regulatory bodies, educational institutions and vocational education.*

## 1. Introduction

For the sustainable development it's imperative to understand the complexity of environmental education. The economic, social, and technological developments have significantly changed our lives. Particularly the repercussions of scientific, industrial, and technological developments in are more pronounced in the modern era as compared to the past (Kaushik & Anubha, 2010). According defined principles of sustainability, it depends on three main dimensions: social equality, economics efficiency and ecological compatibility. People's social, economics, sense of responsibilities and ecological perceptions has significant association with sustainable developmental growth. In the context of environmental safety sustainable development means industrialization and development but with controlled effect on the environment. Achieving environmental growth for the

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gratification of the present generations' prerequisites without jeopardizing future generation is the concept of sustainable environmental growth. Therefore, it's crucial to realize that environment is not just an aspect of life but it has prodigious impact on living body and future existence of living organisms depend on this. Maintenance of ecosystem, positive attitude toward societal responsibilities, effective and efficient utilization of the resources, environmental protection at individual level and corporate social responsibilities are crucial contents of environmental education.

## **2. Sustainable Development Needs integrated Thoughts and Action**

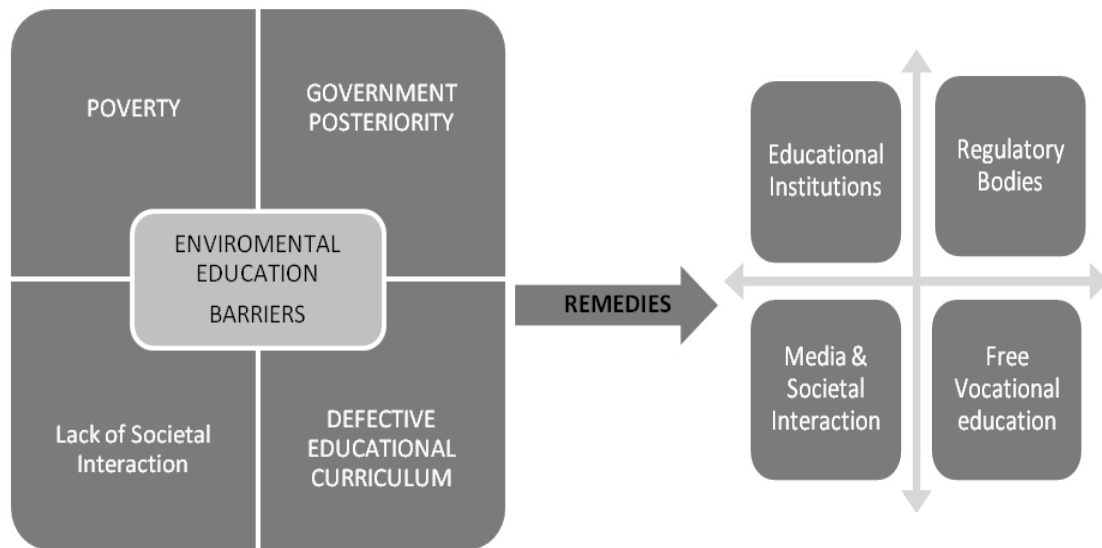
Environmental problems (i.e. environmental pollution and changing climate) jeopardize for living organism (i.e. damaging marine life, source of diseases and global warming). These problems are controllable in some extent through corporative action and environmental education / environmental awareness. Modern dimension of environment (Bary, 2007) is demanding to study the environment at the international level rather than restricting it to a national concern. Environmental education including (awareness about environmental problems, severity of those problem, repercussion and remedial action) not merely based on conveyance of knowledge about all them but a manner of erudition about the concept of it and realization of responsibilities on individual level. Sustainable development is on-going process that must be practiced by each individual of the society because it's hard to cope-up with this by one regulatory body. The catastrophes being faced by the human civilization are usually ascribed to the hazards of over industrialization, and technological advancements which are considered as the prime reasons for environmental pollution on a giant scale (Nedelkovski, 1999). So, this rapid destruction through environmental pollution demands extensive measures for reducing the menace. This can only be done through promoting environmental education.

## **3. Unit of Analysis**

The target population of this study is general public who are facing environmental problems. The sample size of the study is 7. Although the sample size is not big but it represents the theoretical sample which gives detailed information for the purpose of analysis. The techniques used to extract complete information from respondents are intensive interviews and prudent probing during interviews.

## **4. Data Gathering, Analysis and Conceptual Model**

The unstructured interview is designed on the basis of different dimensions related to environmental education. The detailed interview is taken from each respondent. After data collection and analysis a conceptual framework of study is generated through model presented in exhibit 1.



The above depicted theoretical model explains the remedies for education barriers on Pakistani community. It can be observed that major barriers of Poverty, Government posteriority (low priority), lack of societal interaction, and Defective educational curriculum mitigate through educational institution, media and societal interaction, regulatory bodies and free vocational education.

## 5. Barriers for Environmental Education

One of the significant barriers of environmental education in Pakistani context is literacy rate. People have no knowledge about magnitude of environmental pollution and its upshots. The main reason behind is the lack of education. They cannot read print media (i.e. newspaper, magazines and different articles about that). Therefore they are not considering it as their responsibility to clean up their environment. Exhibit 2 demonstrating that defective educational curriculum is utmost menacing barrier for environmental education/learning. Government posteriority is also has significantly adverse effect but according response rate defective educational system has prodigious impact. Since the time of independence, Pakistan is experiencing a discrete political evolution every ten years. Each political change over is accompanied with a new educational policy which proves to be the reproduction of government's ideology rather than purpose (Althusser 1972).

Five respondents out of seven stressed that defective educational system and Government posteriority are very critical barriers of environmental education. According results lack of Societal interaction and poverty are also crucial barriers but with less magnitude as compare to education and governmental policies. Growth needs are meant for individual's development and progression in life. Unless the basic or lower order needs are fulfilled, strive

for accomplishment of the higher order needs cannot be activated (Wehrich & Koontz, 2000). Poverty causes frustration among people therefore they move with accompanied mind to earn bread for their families. Therefore, their main focus is to earn money rather than to save environment. Maslow (1948) in his hierarchy of needs explains the deficiency, and growth needs. The basic or lower order needs are referred to as the deficiency needs; while the higher order needs are termed as growth needs. The deficiency needs are paramount for human survival. Maslow's hierarchy of need theory supports this argument because according that theory individual will not move toward next step if his / her preceding need is unattained. Environmental education comes under the umbrella of second step (safety needs). Safety needs result from an individual's intent to be secured from all harms including physical and emotional spoil (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969). Poverty is therefore, considered to be the pivotal cause of bad citizenship practices. It is also believed to be one of the major obstacles limiting the Environmental education. Pakistan is a developing country therefore earning power of majority population is not satisfactory for their household prerequisites. Therefore, they are ignoring their safety needs including environmental education. It is also a conspicuous reason for lower literacy rate in Pakistan. Lack of societal interaction is creating a communicational gap among people. This gap is creating a hurdle in exchange of healthy ideas among them. Therefore it's also a barrier for leaning about many aspects of life including environment.

Environmental problems are rapidly accelerating and endangering human civilization (Bonnett, 2007). The catastrophes of global warming, Ozone layer perforation, increase in solid waste, nuclear pollution, depletion of green land, deterioration of natural resources, and botanical and animal extinction are the major environmental issues of the day. Similarly population growth has also resulted in uncurious depletion of natural resources. The situation is further dented by the non-consideration of global community towards environmental problems (Smyth, 2004). Word frequency quires (in form of diagram and text) are presented in exhibit 4 and 5.

## **6. Remedies**

The United Nations organized a conference at Stocholm in 1972, deliberating upon the environmental issues of the world for the first time. Subsequent days have observed environmental education has become one of the foremost world agenda (Young, 2009). In order to solve the problems concerning environment, promotion and manifestation of environmental education is the way forward (Pooley & O'Connor, 2000; Stevenson, 2007). It however, demands to educate the societies. Environmental concerns signify, the sensitivity towards environmental constraints increases, this sensitivity results into highlighting the significance of environmental education (Alim, 2006; Dunlap & Liere, 1978). The education about environment is targeted towards not only enhancement of the educational knowledge of the population but also aims at transforming the positive awareness into behavior. Exhibit 3 is describing major remedies for barriers environmental education. According results regulatory

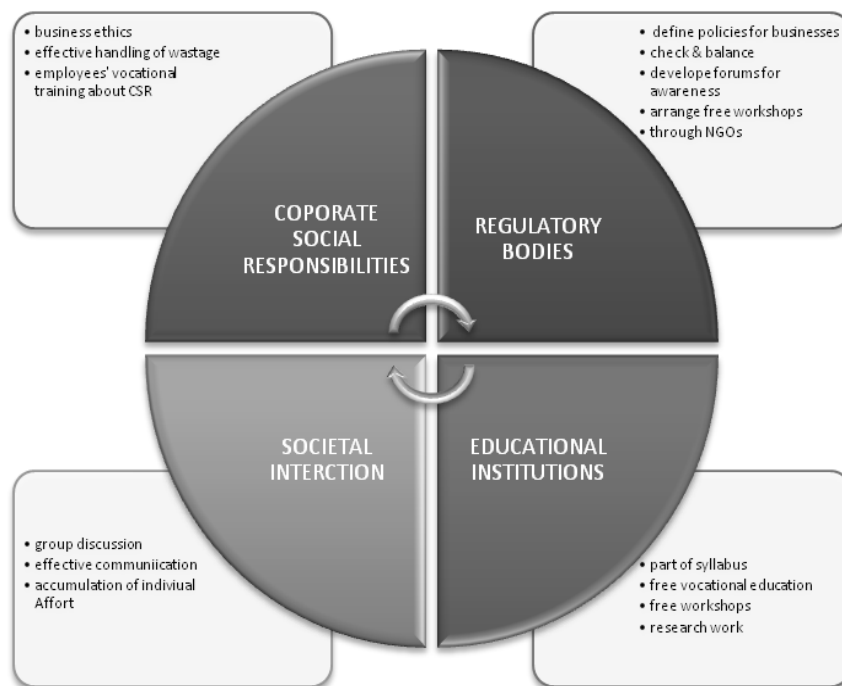
bodies have significant importance in this regard. All respondents suggest that regulatory bodies must take strategic decisions for mitigation of these barriers and for enhancement of education about environment and climate. Second crucial remedy suggested by the respondents is role of educational institutions. Further they highlighted free vocational education and societal interaction. According to results media is not very supportive in this regard because people perceive it as source of entertainment rather than learning. Some of them perceived it as wastage of time.

Regulatory bodies must endorse collective willingness of the society to move in this direction. They must develop policies and manage activities for environmental education. Government should allocate an amount for the activities and promotion of environmental education. They can apply the theory of B.F. Skinner: positive reinforcement will motivate people to learn about environment. They must make some strategies for alleviation of poverty. Regulatory bodies can make some forums for environmental education; can arrange free workshops on environmental learning. They can also promote environment through NGOs. Government must support integrated approaches and actions of environmental learning and the use of environmental-friendly products and services. Although acquisition of education is regardless of the age and gender, however, educational activities across the globe revolve around the youth. In 2010, the United Nations general assembly stressed upon encouraging youth for social and environmental considerations (UN, 2010). This can be effectively done by engaging youth through educational institutions. Educational institutions must introduce environmental education as a part of syllabus. Many universities in Pakistan have introduced it as a discipline but at school level they have no participation. In university selected people are joining this learning but it will be effective when everyone will realize that responsibility. It is possible if educational institutions inculcate it as a course at school level. Education undoubtedly enhances human knowledge for good practices. In higher education, the advantages of experiential learning can be clearly observed (Kolb, 1984), and also in education related to social and environmental considerations (Jucker, 2002). It is also established that learning through practicing results into long lasting educational experience (Ellis and Weekes, 2010). (Robinson, 2009) highlights the importance of school education to bring awareness amongst the young people by arguing that the young generation excels through their genuine curiosity and enthusiasm to explore the world. Imparting education related to environmental considerations may surely produce caring and responsible citizens.

Interaction with the fellow members of society can prove to be the major contributor for acquisition of environmental education. This community learning can enhance awareness in the population if the more informed individuals share their knowledge with the rest of community members. However, such kind of social practice is not observed in Pakistani society. Parents and family grooming is also important for realization of responsibilities. In Pakistani perspective, the remedial measures aiming to promote environmental education can be

initiated through incorporating the relevant content in curriculum of educational institutions. Furthermore, regulatory bodies also need to get more active so as to effectively formulate policies and strategies for enhancement of the environmental knowledge.

Similarly, media can also play a vital role for promotion of the environmental education as the viewership of electronic media is highly significant in case of Pakistan. Society as a whole is also responsible to promote awareness and education about environmental concerns. In day to day communal interaction, knowledgeable individuals can share the knowledge with those not aware of it. Finally, government must promote and offer free vocational education aimed to encourage education relating environmental problems. Role of businesses, regulatory bodies, society and educational institutions are presented in figure 2 in summarized form.



Remedies for barriers of environmental education

Regulatory bodies define policies for businesses, develop forum and arrange free workshops for the awareness. Educational institutions must introduce it as core course at school level. Societal interaction remove communicational gap and promote healthy ideas. Business must on CSR and inculcate these responsibilities to their employees through vocational trainings. Promoting a sense of responsibility through environmental education and motivating people are major benefits.

## 7. Conclusion

Industrialization is important for development/growth of economy but it has some adverse effects as well. Environmental pollution (i.e. noise, water, air and solid bodies) is most hazardous repercussion of it. So there is a need to control this effect on environment otherwise survival of living organism will be hard. It can be control through when people will have sufficient knowledge about environment. In Pakistan there many barriers, some major of them discussed in study of hand. Remedies for mitigation of these barriers are also discussed in detail.

In Pakistan people are less motivated to learn about environment. Major reason of lack of motivation is the poverty rate, literacy rate and communicational gap. For the solution of all these barriers government can play a vital role. Government must announce environmental education as a part of syllabus, make some effective strategies for poverty alleviation and define policies for CSR. Educational institution must focus on free vocational education. Industries must bother their employees to join these free vocational educations. Businesses also focus on the ethical issues related to environment and society. Communicational gap can reduce through societal interaction.

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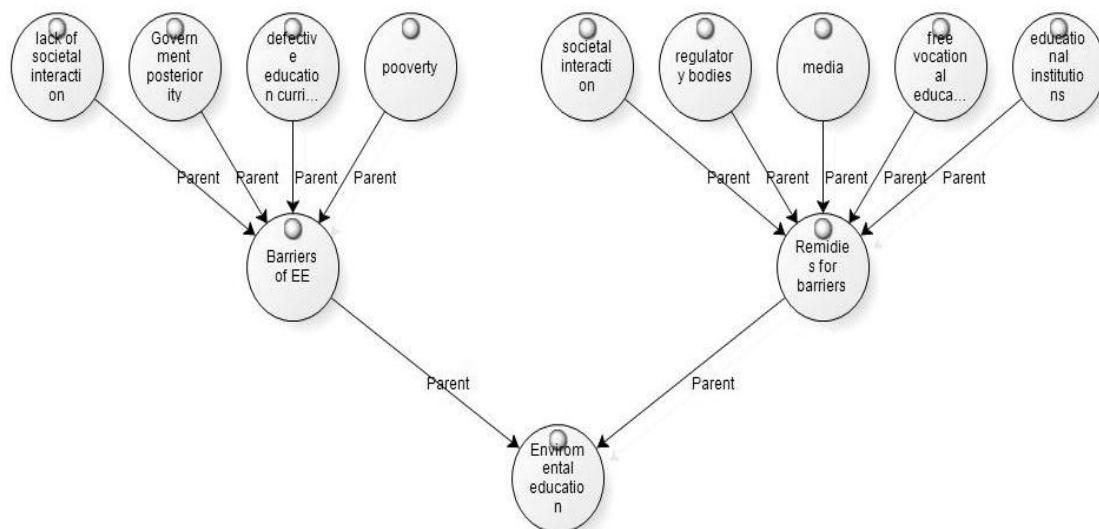
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## Annexure

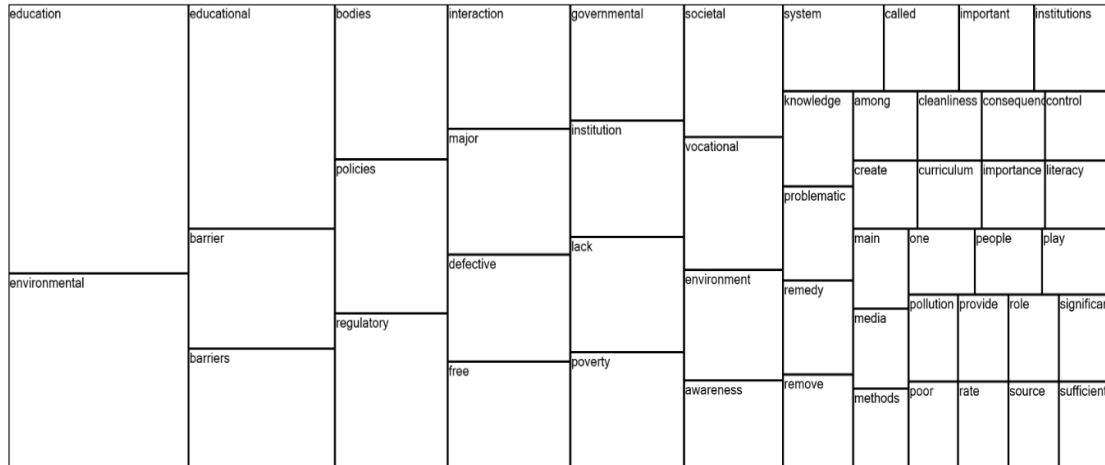
**Exhibit 1:** Theoretical model







**Exhibit 4:** Word Frequency Diagram



**Exhibit 5:** Word Frequency Text

among awareness barrier barriers bodies called cleanliness  
 consequences control create curriculum defective  
**education**  
 educational environment  
**environmental** free governmental  
 importance important institution institutions interaction knowledge  
 lack literacy main major media methods one people play policies pollution poor  
 poverty problematic provide rate regulatory remedy remove role significant  
 societal source sufficient system vocational