

## ENVIRONMENT EDUCATION

**Introduction:** The Supreme Court issued notice to the country's key educational bodies – NCERT, for not implementing its directive to make environment a compulsory subject at all levels.

**In 1991:** The Supreme Court had directed every state to make the environmental studies at school and college levels compulsory and issue directions to the education boards and the universities in this regard. The court had made it mandatory for the states to include environmental studies in the school and college courses from the 1992-93 academic sessions.

The University Grants Commission (UGC) was also directed by the court to prescribe a course on environment at the graduation and post-graduation level and consider the feasibility of making this a compulsory subject in college education

**July, 2003:** Magsaysay Award winner environmentalist lawyer Mr. MC Mehta filed Public Interest Litigation (PIL) which highlighted the issue of non-compliance of the 1991 court order by the states in which a series of directions were given about maintaining the ecological balance and launching a sustainable campaign on protection of the environment.

This 12year-old directive was not implemented and so the apex court took a serious view of the indifference shown by various education bodies.

The Supreme Court issued notice to the country's key education bodies- National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), All-India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and State Governments. The notice was to seek information on whether the state had included environment studies in the school and college curriculum as directed by it, and if not then an explanation.

**Sept, 2003:** The Supreme Court then fined 10 states Rs.15, 000 each for failing to respond to its notice, which if not deposited in 4 weeks, will hold the Chief Secretary of each state responsible. West Bengal, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Bihar, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa and Jharkhand.

**Dec, 2003:** The Supreme Court directed all the states and educational agencies in the country to introduce environment as a compulsory subject in all classes in school up to higher secondary level from the academic year 2004-05.

The bench directed NCERT to frame a model syllabus for the schools with assistance of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), keeping in view the 1991 judgment; for the college level, UGC and AICTE were asked to coordinate and bring out a uniform environment syllabus for the course.

## **Other Initiatives in Environment Education**

The World Bank will also assist 18 states under its “greening of textbooks”, a 12 crore programme via which environment related information will be incorporated in the school curriculum. This exercise would not increase the burden on students, as it would modify the existing textbooks to help establish a link between the students and their immediate environment.

Besides, a Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) programme was also being implemented in selected schools to involve students in practical environment activities.

Thus, in an age of sustainable development, environment is a key issue, which must be taught to the students. Henceforth, environment is to be included as a compulsory subject in schools.

WWF-India as an ENVIS Centre/Node has been keeping a tab on the media activity on environment related issues and carries out analysis on different issues in media.

### **For further information contact:**

G. Areendran  
Head-ENVIS Centre/Node

Indira Gandhi Conservation Monitoring Centre  
World Wide Fund for Nature-India

172-B, Lodi Estate, New Delhi - 110 003

Telephone : +91-011-51504791/51504794

Fax : +91-011-51504779/4795

E-mail: [igcmc@wwfindia.net](mailto:igcmc@wwfindia.net)

Website : <http://www.wwfenvis.org> / [www.wwfindia.org](http://www.wwfindia.org)