

Coastal Environmental Education through Role Integration by Professionals Towards Sustainable Development

Balchand A. N.

Centre for Integrated Management of Coastal Zones,
Cochin University of Science and Technology, Cochin, India

Environmental professionals are considered as those who serve to promote, protect and preserve our valued natural (coastal) resources. The society demands a commitment from such professionals to equitably settle resources sharing mechanisms, ensure sustainability of coastal ecosystem and solve related problems. At times, awareness level of individuals attract praise or criticism, due to level of education, knowledge acquired or may be due to the lack of exposure. In present times, given the state of ongoing governance in most (developing) countries, resource utilization and conservation of the wealth in the coastal zones takes a low priority and calls for a radical shift in approach to issues based on sound coastal zone management practices. In this context, the society often turns towards professionals to address complex social behavioral patterns and conflicting environmental interests. Hence these people have to intervene directly at all levels of coastal activities. The ultimate goal is to crystallize and establish a healthy tradition through mutual help and provide services to build the concept of coastal solidarity. The (role) integration of environmental professionals through educational links in attaining sustainable coastal area development has to originate from human resource development (HRD). Roles define functions and entities as to how and where, to what extent, one should contribute in intermediate to large mass scale enterprises and more so, emphatically delineates the role dynamics. In coastal social systems, individuals, especially professionals have a certain obligation towards the system. By this virtue, a role (more as an educationalist) becomes mandatory; this is in response to the expectations of a significant number of members of the system. On a level ground, structure (social) members meet the goals of an individual's (professional's) personality and needs. Active participation in dialogue, arriving at decisions and promotion of beneficial schemes are initial steps; in specific cases, the actual transformation is witnessed. More than an advisory role, the professionals are now needed to be a part and parcel of a social system, as envisaged herein and emphasized within HRD. Further, by offering a platform where education of know how is imparted to social members, the professionals guide them to practice the right approach in sustainable coastal development. Practical classes, specific field projects and local committee actions help in integrating roles. Currently, as a case example, the people's movement in State of Kerala, India is attempting successfully such a HRD practice at micro level coastal zone management. With integrated roles, professional help at reach, trained locals are attempting resource allocation, distributive exercises, diversifying use and re-use such that salient features of the natural environment are well understood and managed through channels of education.

