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**TITLE: GREEN SCHOOL - A SERVICE LEARNING INSTRUMENT TO ENHANCE SCHOOL SOCIETY RELATION**

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**ABSTRACT**

A Green school is energy efficient, higher performing school that can be environmentally beneficial. Importance of Green school lies in the environmental friendliness value it upholds. Service learning has emanated out of philosophies of progressiveness and pragmatism. Service learning enables students to grow and learn through active participation in community service activities that are clearly connected to their academic program. (Bringle R.G., 1996) The 'Haritha Vidyalayam' Project in Kerala is resonant with the Greening of schools adopted in the western countries in 1990's. The 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' can be entangled to service learning activities and green school projects because it's based on Article 51A. The probable question that shoots out of research is how the green schools are related to the service learning? The critical answer for this is the distant aim that both green school and service learning projects 'the welfare of the community'. The clubbing of society and the school can bring about a greater good for the environment through sustainable development. The Green school as an extended arm of service learning can cater to the needs of the school, society and each individual human being involved within. This paper elaborates upon the 'Haritha Vidyalayam' project and steps to enhance green schooling as part of service learning.

**KEY WORDS: Green School, Service Learning, Haritha Vidyalayam, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan**

## **Introduction**

A “green school” is energy efficient, higher performing school that can be environmentally beneficial, economical to build and operate, and offer improved learning environments. The importance of Green school lies in the environmental friendliness value it upholds. Green school envisions protecting the environment, lowering operating costs, improving the health and quality of the learning environment, and integrating learning opportunities with the built environment. “Green schools offer a comfortable, attractive, and user-friendly environment that demonstrates the great importance our society places on learning and encourages students to excel.” (Christopher, 2009, p. 25)

As per United states legal code of national and service community act 1990 Service learning is a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and helps foster civic responsibility; and that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience. Service learning has emanated out of philosophies of progressivism and pragmatism. Service learning enables students to grow and learn through active participation in community service activities that are clearly connected to their academic program. (Bringle R.G., 1996)

Service learning may be classified into four categories by James Sigmon depending on the importance of learning goals and service outcomes they are,

- **Service-LEARNING:** wherein the learning goals are considered much important than service outcomes
- **SERVICE-Learning:** Service outcomes are considered much important than learning goals.

- **service learning:** Here the community Service and learning goals are separated from each other and do not effect each other.
- **SERVICE-LEARNING:** Service and learning goals are not separated and changed in one effects other correlatively.

Many studies have been done on diversified aspects of green schooling and service learning. De Jong (2012), (Sims, 2012) and Schiller (2012) have done commendable work on green school leadership. (Allen, 2007) (Gordon, 2010) and Kopec (2008) have elaborated on structural design of green school environment. The green school has been taken up as a teaching tool by (Barr, 2011). (Silcox, 1995), (Briscoe,1996) and (Hamilton 1997) have studied different attributes of service learning and its vocational significance. Researches on green school and service learning reiterate the fact that these two can be intertwined

The probable question that shoots out of research is how the green schools are related to the service learning? The critical answer for this is the distant aim that both green school and service learning projects ‘the welfare of the community’. Only when an environmentally energetic community is created can there be learning in the true sense. Green school opts itself for sustainable development with community participation as observed in the service learning. The greening of schools can be envisioned to extend beyond the boundaries of the school for a greener environment. When the greening aspect reaches out for the community it falls into the purview of service learning. The environmental education imbibed in the NCERT curriculum accounting for various commissions and reforms like NPE 1986, POA 1992, NCF 2005 and RTE 2009 can attain practicality through greening of neighborhood of school and later on the village in which school is situated. The ‘BaLa’ Building as learning aid is a noble initiative of NCERT in this direction

Honorable Supreme Court of India in its December 18, 2003 verdict on environment says “today formal education has largely become alienated from the habitat of the student’s .But the environmental degradation proceeds at an unprecedented pace. We are beginning to realize the importance of taking good care of our habitat. Humankind must therefore make an attempt to comprehend its roots, to re-establish links with its habitat, and to understand and take good care of it” Globally UNESCO has announced this decade as Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) and reflects the goal of the Decade is to integrate the principles, values

and practices of Sustainable Development into all aspects of education and learning in order to encourage behavior that will create a more sustainable future in terms of environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society for present and future generations (UNESCO, 2005).

The 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' can be entangled to service learning activities and green school projects because it's based on Article 51A that elaborates 'fundamental duty of every citizen to protect and improve the natural environment including forests, lakes, rivers and wildlife'. The whole school approach followed by the states and center concerning the child learning in relation to community needs a thrust to match with global standards. Many states are following green school application via various projects which include natural resource management (water, air and land), promoting environment friendly learning situation for the child to grow physically, morally and psychologically to cope with the academic pursuit and the expectations of the society. One of the noble initiatives launched by government of Kerala is Haritha Vidyalayam project.

### **'Haritha Vidyalayam' Project- the Green school project of Kerala**

The 'Haritha Vidyalayam' Project in Kerala is resonant with the Greening of schools adopted in the western countries in 1990's. In Haritha Vidyalayam Project the best schools that bring about energy efficient alternatives are awarded with one lakh as prize money. It began as part of 'SEED' project for initiating school farming. 'Haritha Vidyalayam' jointly organized by IT@School, ViCTERS channel, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the State Institute of Education Technology. The Haritha Vidyalayam project has been transformed into a reality show, which IT@School says is the first of its kind in Kerala and is modeled on the popular Green Kerala Express programme. The 'Haritha Vidyalayam' has covered majority of schools in Kerala after it started transmission on the VICTERS channel and on Doordarshan over the last three years. The project imparts the intertwining of green school and service learning as this project proves itself to be an initiative to increase the green cover of the school as well caters to the needs of the society taking into account the local expertise available. The assessment is based on the green facilities available in school and the projects done. This is elicited through interaction between jury members and students, parent representatives and administrators of each school. Sreshta Haritha Vidyalayam award is given for best schools in each revenue district. The Vishistha

'Haritha Vidyalayam' award (one lakh) is selected from the 14 Srehsta Vidyalayas in 14 districts. Hundreds of compensatory prizes are also given. The school which comes first in educational district level gets Rs 25,000 the school in second position gets Rs15, 000 and school in third position gets Rs10, 000. The project is open to both the government and aided schools of Kerala and is financially backed by government of Kerala. The project has enhanced the interest of every school in the state to nurture their school environment.

### **Steps to enhance green schooling as part of service learning**

- Increase public private partnership in choice of green school site, setting up green school buildings and managing the facilities in such schools
- Conduct researches on effect of green schooling and reveal the positive effects of such school on community.
- Chalk out new curriculums to imbibe the environmental sensitive issues into each subject learned
- Critically analyze the issues of particular demography and design for the best possible result.
- Organize awareness campaigns to delineate the fads associated with green schooling and service learning.
- Organize a subcommittee under the ministry of environment to overlook the establishments.
- Green schools involving public money must be set up in large scale.
- Build up an Indian design for the green school as part of service learning accounting for skills needed globally while rooting itself to the age old values we uphold.
- Involve the immediate society to find solution to common issues encountered.

### **CONCLUSION**

The principle aim of education in a society when the environmental factors are taken into consideration should be learning about environment, learning through environment and learning for sustaining the environment. The criticality with which the society approaches environmental issues will decide our own future. The clubbing of society and the school can bring about a

greater good for the environment through sustainable development. The Green school as an extended arm of service learning can cater to the needs of the school, society and each individual human being involved within.

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