

FACILITATING GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION FOR ENHANCING RESPONSIVE QUALITY EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

Global citizenship is one of the sorts after concepts that is being establishing in the field of education. It may be because of the need for interdependence and interconnection that we felt in a globalized era. Education that promotes global citizenship is thought of as having the capability to address many of the issues that we, as humans face globally, such as environmental issues, social injustices, poverty, and human rights violations. The most important aim of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is developing respect for all, creating a sense of belongingness to a common humanity and helping the learners to become more responsible and active global citizens. GCED sensitises the learners to the major challenges across the globe that we face today and equip them to think reasonably and to act for it with a vision of achieving a much more secure world for all. Education for global citizenship, is a public good that is of benefit not only to the individual pupils and students concerned but also to the well-being of society as a whole (Nixon, 2011).GCED helps learners to attain an individual, national, and global identity to transcend geographical borders. The present paper is a thematic intervention which explores how education for global citizenship can be facilitated through the school curriculum and what are the challenges that come in the way of its implementation.

Keywords: *Global Citizenship, Global Citizenship Education (GCED), School Curriculum.*

Introduction

The world we live is in nowadays extremely interdependent, where the action of each and every person has a relatively tremendous impact on other one's life across the globe. In fact our food habits, our dress sense, our access to facilities, our choice of jobs and even the developments of our local communities are being influenced by the global references. The identity of today's citizens should go beyond the boundaries of mere nationality and evolve solutions to problems that threaten the existence of our planet. Our education system, in this regard should meet the needs of the learners who portray themselves as members of an international community. There comes the significance of Global Citizenship Education (GCED) in our curriculum. **Global Citizenship Education can be defined as a formal training for the inclusion of a sense of global mindedness that encourages students to develop a consciousness of global connectivity and responsibility.** Our goal must be to educate our learners who reflect themselves not as a representative of a particular country or a local region, rather as human beings who are bound to each other and with the rest of the lives in this planet with the bond of concern and coexistence. The development of any system of education is generally influenced by underlying factors including historical backgrounds, geographical peculiarities, socio-political scenario, economic standards and global trends (Ker, 1999). In our times the curriculum should be more capable of addressing the demands of the learners as global citizens by defining their roles in the world community, together with clear identifications with their own local culture and heritage.

Understanding the Concept of Global Citizenship

Global citizenship is based on moral identity, which implies that **everyone has a moral obligation to care about each other, regardless of geographic locations or nationality.** According to Heater to be a global citizen means "a member of the human race is responsible for the condition of the planet; an individual subject to moral law; and promotion of world government". Global citizenship is a

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way of understanding how the world works, and it links between our own lives and those of people throughout the world. **“The global citizen is one who is willing to think beyond boundaries of place, identity and category, and recognize all human beings as their equals while respecting humanity’s inherent diversity”** (Jefferess, 2008). As a leading international NGO Oxfam suggests the following characteristics of a global citizen:

- The wisdom to perceive the interconnectedness of all life and living
- Is aware of the need and necessities of the world we live in and identifies his/her role as a world citizen
- Capable of respecting the inherent diversity
- Has an in-depth understanding of the socio-political structure of a wider world
- Is sensitized by social injustices
- Engage themselves in wide range of community activities spreading over local to global levels.
- Is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place
- Has the capability to appreciate the beauty and versatility of nature and is ready to act for the problems that really threaten it.

Global Citizenship Education

The global citizenship requires the presence of persons who are more so everglobal in their attitudes and concerns regarding the planet. Education should train the learners to equip themselves to lead a good civic life, not just for the nation that they belong to but for the whole world they are part of. Students as global citizens must develop a vivid understanding of the urgency to make decisions in problems pertaining to the whole world. They need to participate in ways that will enhance democracy and promote equality and social justice in their cultural communities, nations, and regions, and in the world. So Global Citizenship Education should enable students to realize the fact that "no local loyalty can ever justify the intolerance and the lack of concern towards our fellow beings"(Banks, 2008).

Education for Global Citizenship provides the learners an opportunity to think rationally about global issues of interests within the classroom. It encourages the young minds to explore and express their own opinions, while respecting other's as well. It promotes a mindset that has care for our mother earth and develops an empathy with those whom they share it. It indicates the role of education in training global citizens as a key for a prosperous and secure world and helps them to adopt sustainable life styles in an enormously complicated and diverse world.

Global citizenship education includes the following features:

- Comprehensive knowledge about world political systems
- Comprehensive knowledge about world economic systems
- Critical thinking skills that transcend boundaries
- Cross-cultural communication skills
- Opportunities for active engagement
- Developing empathy and respect for diversity

Education for global citizenship ensures the development of well sensitised, enthusiastic, active, critical, empathetic and sociable learners. Students need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes which probably help them to identify their roles in diverse areas as a member of the world community. So, citizenship education parameters are; **knowledge and understanding**, **skills**, and **values** related to citizenship as shown in the following table (UNDP, 2000).

Parameters of Global Citizenship Education

Knowledge& Understanding	Skills	Values
Social equality	Critical thinking	Positive attitude towards cultural heritage of other countries.
Awareness of the destructive factors for the environment	Accepting the pluralism existing in the society	Concern for the environment safety
Awareness of international law	Respecting others' rights, outraged by injustices and taking actions against inequalities using constitutional provisions	Sense of identity and self esteem

Awareness of the legislative provisions in the matter of establishing democracy	Mutual understanding ability	Commitment to social justice and equality
Awareness of the distinctions in political structure of different countries	Respect for traditions and culture of other countries	Tolerating opposing views
Awareness of the effects of globalization in various sectors	Ability to evaluate different global issues	respect for human beings
Awareness of the role of citizenship in an international platform	Communication ability.	valuing and respecting diversity
Awareness of the global aspect of the issues such as immigration, trade, consumer's rights etc.	Logical reasoning and skill of just decision making	Concern for his own and others' peace and welfare
Awareness of the identities of various nations through their religious, moral, constitutional and historic tracking.	Accountability, cooperation, and conflict settlement ability	Law abiding attitude
Awareness of the factors contributing to sustainable development	Ability to analyse and compare.	Tendency towards justice and truth seeking

Facilitating Global Citizenship Education through the Curriculum

The necessity of global citizenship education in higher education is a need of the hour. The major global threats that need our concern ranges from the lack of physiological needs of human beings like nutritious food, clean drinking water, safe shelters, promising health care facilities to the lack of recognition of basic human dignity reflected through brutal rapes, child abuse, migration and wage related issues (Sachs, 1995). It should also incorporate disaster management tactics and environment conservation lessons through the promotion of durable and reusable products. Necessarily a global citizen should lend his/her voice against the horrible practices like terrorism, the destruction of active forest land and the resulting extinction of rare species of the flora and fauna.

The curriculum should incorporate the following **content areas** in regard to education for global citizenship:

- The responsibility of the citizens towards himself, others and the environment.
- The idea of citizenship in a democratic perspective.
- Commitments towards society, nation and the world.
- The importance of environmental protection.
- Basics of human rights in a democratic scenario
- Obligation of persons holding public offices
- The role of governmental institutions, and NGO's in matters pertaining to citizenship education.
- Characteristics of a pluralistic society.
- Scientific and unprejudiced study of global issues.
- Major citizenship skills and their detailed study
- Issues related to human rights and settlement of conflicts by peaceful means

In general, Global Citizenship Education should result in equipping the students with necessary skills needed to be responsive and sensible to the global issues in the following ways:

- **Participation:** being an active member of a local group or community that works especially for global trials.
- **Engagement:** More accountable and responsive participation thereby influencing group policies.
- **Advocacy:** Reasonable and logical while supporting an idea
- **Research:** the ability to search for new knowledge from various sources.
- **Evaluation:** the ability for impartial judgement through thorough analysis and logical inferences.
- **Empathy:** viewing an issue from the perspective of another.
- **Conciliation:** settling oppositions and disputes through logical analysis
- **Leadership:** the ability to manage the group, participate and cooperate in activities that group members have agreed upon.
- **Representation:** the ability to talk and act on behalf of others.
- **Responsibility:** thinking before acting and accepting the consequences of action.

Challenges in Implementing Global Citizenship Education in our Curriculum

Even though there is a greater need for Global Citizenship education now a days, there comes a lot of challenges in the way to incorporate it into the curriculum. Some of those challenges can be discussed here:

- **The problem of balancing unity and diversity:** There exists the challenge of citizenship education in a world where globalisation and nationalism co-exist, and where there are competing demands between recognising diversity locally and globally, promoting unity within and between nations.
- **The problem of excessive nationalism:** Patriotism will always be mixed with our concerns for global issues. "no local loyalty can ever justify the intolerance and the lack of concern towards our fellow beings"(Banks, 2008).
- **Lack of perception of teachers and other stakeholders regarding relevant global issues:** Sometimes teachers and policy makers are not that much sensitized towards the problems. At times they feel that discussing about such global concerns are out of the level of understanding and maturity of the learner.
- **Differences in attitude of teachers of different subjects:** The reaction of teachers towards the inclusion of Global Citizenship Education in the curriculum may vary according to the subject of specialisation. For example, teachers of humanities subjects being most sensitive towards these issues (Bourn, 2012).
- **Less confident and ill equipped teachers to explore such grave issues :**Teachers not being equipped or experienced in the kind of methodologies recommended for exploring complex issues.
- **The controversy of tradition and innovation:** The people who raise their voice against issues of global interests are always ready to break the shackles of tradition. There should be a sense of open mindedness and cosmopolitan outlook for the people who are in the way towards global citizenship. Education, being orthodox in its basic structure may feel it difficult to break the conventional mould.

Conclusion

To become a global citizen refers to being sensitized to and having concern for the global issues that we are encountering now a days. It is far more than being a mere patriotic. It can be depicted as the liberation of human soul from the shackles of mere nationality and being able to view oneself as a part of the wider humanity, bonded to each together with love and concern. Our education system should address the new demands of the world we live in with a much more global perspective. It is high time we started thinking of incorporating global citizenship education in our curriculum, so that young people will be able to make sense of their place in a complex world and move towards shaping that world for a better life.

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