

Participatory Action Research for Sustainability with Special Focus on Student Initiatives

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Abstract : Sustainable environmental stress is a major concern which needs immediate attention. This paper is an attempt to present participatory action research for sustainable agriculture. Being first and best culture, agriculture protects and improves the natural environment, the social and economic conditions of people, and safeguards the health and welfare of all groups. During course of time agriculture turned to agribusiness, then the values are not safeguarded. Moreover, in today's busy life many are not taking efforts to take part in agriculture production. Then children are not getting the opportunity to understand agriculture and farming practices. So student initiatives are vital to make them aware. Here the programmes structured by the researcher come under the auspicious of National Service Scheme, a student-centered educational programme, organized by Ministry of Youth Affairs, Government of India. The twin objectives of the study are to examine the role of student initiatives for sustainable agriculture and the role of participatory action research in student initiatives. SWOT analysis is made to study strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. The Methodology adopted is Participatory Action Research. The method is participatory in a sense there is collaboration through participation. The method is action, there is lab land experiences which is real. The method is research that there is documented lessons and creation of new knowledge. Plan of action cover measures adopted and strategies taken i.e., bhavana - kalpana - yojana - sadhana. Through the team effort, the team was successful in converting more than 10 hectares of barren land into cultivable land within and outside the campus. Team efforts of students saved a huge amount of labour cost and produced a huge quantity of organic output and the team was also successful in creating 1000 rain pits in the premises of College for rainwater harvesting. The findings include conveyance of the Message: Food Production is superior to Food donation. Moreover, the study fostered good work ethic and social responsibility among students. Students undertake innovative programmes underlying social and environmental issues and participants got increased opportunities to interact with local and less privileged and acquired increased awareness about real-life experiences which make them confident to interact with people and it resulted in the strengthening of social capital-cooperation, team spirit, social commitment among students. Participants promoted sustainable domestic efforts and ultimately environmental protection is ensured. Finally, there is recognition to the team, institution and the researcher at the university level, state level and at the national level. The learned lessons are, if the approach is good, the response is good and success generates success. Participatory action research is empowering experience for practitioners, focusing the combined time, energy and creativity of a committed group we should lead so many programmes which makes the institution centre of excellence. Authorities should take necessary steps for the Inclusion of community development activities in the curriculum. Action research is problem, client and action centered. So, we must adapt and adopt, coordinates and correlates measures which preserve and conserve the environment.

Keywords : participatory action research, student initiatives, sustainable development, sustainability

Conference Title : ICSEA 2018 : International Conference on Sustainable Environment and Agriculture

Conference Location : New York, United States

Conference Dates : June 03-04, 2018