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The Role of Primary School Students in Planting and Caring for Saplings in Coastal Areas: A Sustainable Approach to Environmental Protection

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Abstract

Coastal regions worldwide face environmental challenges such as erosion, rising sea levels, and loss of biodiversity. Engaging primary school students in planting and nurturing saplings can play a crucial role in sustainable environmental protection. This study explores the impact of involving young students in tree plantation activities in coastal areas, emphasizing their role in fostering ecological balance and climate resilience. The research highlights the benefits of early environmental education, hands-on learning experiences, and community engagement in fostering long-term conservation habits. Findings suggest that integrating plantation programs into school curricula enhances students' environmental awareness, instills responsibility, and contributes to coastal ecosystem restoration.

Keywords: Environmental Education, Coastal Ecosystem, Primary School Students, Tree Plantation, Sustainable Development

1. Introduction

Coastal areas are among the most vulnerable regions to climate change and environmental degradation. Rising sea levels, deforestation, and soil erosion pose significant threats to both biodiversity and human settlements. While governmental and non-governmental organizations have been working towards reforestation and conservation, the involvement of local communities, especially young students, remains underexplored. Primary school students, with proper guidance, can actively participate in tree plantation and maintenance programs, contributing to long-term ecological stability. This research aims to examine the role of primary school students in planting and caring for saplings in coastal regions and the broader impact of such initiatives on environmental sustainability.

2. Literature Review

Several studies emphasize the importance of tree plantation in mitigating coastal erosion and improving biodiversity (Smith et al., 2020; Rahman & Bose, 2021). Research also indicates that environmental education at an early age fosters long-term ecological responsibility (Khan et al., 2019). However, limited studies focus on the direct involvement of primary school students in practical conservation efforts. This paper bridges the gap by highlighting the effectiveness of engaging young students in hands-on environmental protection activities.

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods. Data collection involves:

Surveys and Questionnaires: Conducted among students, teachers, and parents in coastal primary schools.

Interviews: With environmentalists, school authorities, and local government officials.

Field Observations: Monitoring the growth of saplings planted by students and their level of involvement in maintenance activities.

Case Studies: Examining successful plantation programs in various coastal schools.

A sample of 300 students from five coastal schools was selected to assess the impact of plantation programs on their environmental awareness and engagement levels.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1. Students as Agents of Environmental Protection

Findings reveal that involving students in tree plantation significantly enhances their understanding of environmental issues. Over 80% of students in the surveyed schools expressed increased interest in sustainability after participating in plantation programs.

4.2. Community Participation and Awareness

Parental and community involvement played a crucial role in sustaining the initiatives. Schools that collaborated with local environmental organizations reported higher success rates in maintaining saplings.

4.3. Impact on Coastal Ecosystem

Planting mangroves and native trees helped reduce coastal erosion and improved soil stability. Regular maintenance by students ensured higher survival rates of the saplings compared to those planted through government programs alone.

4.4. Challenges and Limitations

Lack of Resources: Many schools faced shortages of tools and saplings.

Need for Long-Term Commitment: Without continuous monitoring, some plantations failed.

Training Requirements: Teachers required additional training to guide students effectively.

5. Recommendations

Integration into School Curriculum: Environmental conservation programs should be formally included in school syllabi.

Government and NGO Support: Funding and resources should be allocated to support school plantation projects.

Parental Involvement: Awareness campaigns should encourage families to support students' environmental efforts.

Use of Technology: Mobile applications can be used for tracking tree growth and student participation.

6. Conclusion

Engaging primary school students in planting and caring for saplings in coastal areas presents a sustainable approach to environmental conservation. Early exposure to nature-based activities fosters a sense of responsibility and contributes to long-term ecological balance. Collaboration between schools,

communities, and policymakers is essential to maximize the impact of such programs. Future research should explore the long-term effects of student-led plantation initiatives on both environmental sustainability and behavioral change.

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