

Value-Based Sustainability Education

Bridging Traditional Knowledge and Contemporary Environmental Action

Under the ongoing initiatives of the Value Addition Courses (VAC) Committee, University of Delhi, the Department of Environmental Studies has played a central academic and coordinating role in conceptualizing and advancing innovative pedagogical interventions that integrate sustainability with value-based education.

In this context, the Department collaborated to develop and implement the Workshop to empower faculty members across the University of Delhi Colleges on the course entitled “Gita for Sustainable Universe,” as a transformative framework to connect traditional ecological knowledge systems with contemporary sustainability discourse.

Institutional Leadership and Academic Coordination

The Department of Environmental Studies, University of Delhi, served as a key knowledge partner by:

- Conceptualizing the academic framework of the course
- Coordinating with the VAC Committee and participating colleges
- Leading the integration of environmental science with Indic knowledge systems
- Ensuring alignment with NEP-2020 principles of holistic and multidisciplinary education

This effort reflects a shift from conventional sustainability teaching toward a more integrative, culturally grounded, and ethically informed approach.

Training the Trainers: Scaling Sustainability Education

A two-day faculty development workshop (05–06 February 2026) was organized as part of this initiative to operationalize the course across the University ecosystem.

This workshop functioned as a Training of Trainers (ToT) platform, where educators were equipped to:

- Interpret sustainability through philosophical and ethical dimensions of the Bhagavad Gita
- Build linkages between traditional knowledge and modern environmental challenges
- Develop experiential and practice-oriented teaching methodologies
- Translate sustainability concepts into classroom, community, and behavioural contexts

By focusing on faculty capacity-building, the initiative ensures institution-wide dissemination and long-term pedagogical impact.

Integrating Traditional Knowledge with Sustainability Science

The VAC initiative recognizes that contemporary environmental challenges are not merely technological or policy-driven, but also ethical and civilizational in nature.

The course framework introduces key concepts such as:

- Ecological interdependence and systems thinking
- Ethics of responsibility (Dharma) and sustainable action
- Balance, restraint, and limits to consumption
- Human–nature relationships and environmental consciousness

These principles are aligned with modern sustainability concerns including climate change, biodiversity loss, and resource governance, creating a dialogue between ancient wisdom and contemporary science .

Inculcating Values among the Young Generation

A defining strength of this initiative is its emphasis on value inculcation among students, in line with NEP-2020's vision of holistic education.

Through the VAC framework, students are encouraged to:

- Develop ethical sensitivity and ecological responsibility
- Understand sustainability as a way of life, not just an academic subject
- Engage in reflective and experiential learning processes
- Cultivate empathy, balance, and informed decision-making

This approach addresses a critical gap in sustainability education by integrating knowledge, values, and action.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The initiative contributes significantly to:

- **SDG 4 – Quality Education** (holistic and value-based learning)
- **SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production** (behavioural transformation)
- **SDG 13 – Climate Action** (awareness and engagement)
- **SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions** (ethical frameworks)
- **SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals** (institutional collaboration and capacity building)

Overall Impact

This initiative represents a scalable and innovative model of sustainability education, characterized by:

- Integration of traditional knowledge systems with modern science
- Strengthening of faculty capacity through structured training programmes
- Promotion of value-based environmental consciousness
- Expansion of sustainability education across disciplines and institutions

Vision

Through its leadership in VAC initiatives, the Department of Environmental Studies, University of Delhi, is advancing a new paradigm of sustainability education—one that is interdisciplinary, value-driven, culturally rooted, and globally relevant.

By training educators and engaging students alike, the Department is contributing to the creation of a generation that is not only environmentally aware but also ethically grounded and action-oriented.