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RESEARCH PAPER

A Study of Environmental Awareness among the College Students of Dhakuakhana Sub-Division Assam

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ABSTRACT

Environmental degradation is becoming a burning issue in the entire world in the present century. The young generation has an important role in this context. They should have adequate awareness in this regard. Therefore the investigator has done a study on the college students of Dhakuakhana subdivision, Lakhimpur Dist., Assam. The investigator used normative survey method for the study and the entire college students of Dhakuakhana subdivision are considered as population of the study. The researcher selected 350 students from four colleges including science, Arts, and Commerce as sample of the study. Out of which 170 student from Arts and 90 from science and rest of 90 were chosen from commerce faculty. A questionnaire is used as a tool for collecting data. The investigator basically tried to analyse and interpret the data with the help of percentages on the basis of the questioners.

Introduction

Environment belongs to all and is thus important for all. Whatever be the occupation or age of a person, he or she will be affected by environment and will also affect the environment by his or her deeds. Thus, environment is such subject that is actually of global in nature. For example, atmosphere has no boundaries and the pollutants produced at one place can be dispersed and transported to other place. The river water polluted by industrial or municipal discharges at one point, may seriously affect the life of people living far away. Damage to the forests in a hilly region will have far reaching effects not only on the hills but also on the plains. This is because environment is closely and intricately woven network of components and its functions. There are some environmental programmes, which may be of localized importance but there are some major issues like global warming, depletion of ozone layer, dwindling forests and energy resources and loss of global biodiversity etc., that are going to affect mankind as a whole. For that we have to think globally. For dealing with the local environmental issues, e.g., the impact of mining or hydroelectric projects, solid waste management etc. we have to think and act locally. In order to make the people aware of about those aspects of

environment with which they are integrally associated, it is very important to make everyone environmentally educated. In this context the college students have an important role, because they should have much awareness regarding environment as they are the future citizens of our country. Therefore, an attempt has been made by the investigator in this research to find out the level of students' awareness in the field of environment.

A Brief Discussion about Dhakuakhana Sub-Division

Dhakuakhana is one of the sub-division of Lakhimpur District of Assam located at the northern-most part of India. The total geographical area of Dhakuakhana sub-division is 1283.12 square kilometers. The total population of the Dhakuakhana sub-division is 181845 according to the census of 2011, out of which the male and the female population are 91,501 and 90,344 respectively (in 2011). The Dhakuakhana sub-division has two Muzas-Dhakuakhana and Dakhin Gohain and it has twelve Panchayates. According to the census report of 20011 the total SC & ST population was 9,055 and 14,518 respectively. The density of population was 239 per square kilometer.

Dhakuakhana sub-division consists of three developmental block & town; they are Dhakuakhana, Boginodi and Ghilamara. It has around four hundred villages where about a total of 3,920 houses hold lives permanently.

Objectives of Present Study

1. To study the environmental awareness level of the college students of Dhakuakhana sub-division.
2. To make comparative study of environmental awareness between:
 - a. Male and Female college students.
 - b. Rural and Urban college students.
 - c. Science, Arts and Commerce college students.
3. To suggest measures for promoting environmental awareness among college students.

Delimitations of the Study

The present study has been limited to

- a. The Colleges of Dhakuakhana Sub-Division only.
- b. The Present investigation is confined to the degree students of Arts, Science and Commerce streams. Higher Secondary students have not been included due to time factor.
- c. Both deficit and non-deficit colleges are included for the present study.

Significance of the Study

Rapid increase in population and undesirable utilization of scientific and technological advancement result in widespread contamination of the environment at the global level. During the past few decades rapid industrialization, wanton exploitation of natural resources and excessive use of environmentally abhorrent materials have resulted in discernible environmental disruptions, threatening the life support system. In short the major global problem of modern world is environmental pollution.

However, the objective of environmental protection cannot be achieved without involvement of the masses at the grass root level. To make the citizens environment- conscious, the Supreme Court of India has given directions to make all curricula environment oriented. The University Grant Commission has accordingly prescribed a six months module syllabus for environmental studies for all the undergraduate courses.

It is our new generation who has to bear the responsibility for taking necessary measures towards the protection of environment and for the prevention of a healthy environment for future. The present study will be able to throw light at what extent the college students are conscious about their environment and also provide them the scope to present their opinion regarding environmental protection.

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURE

The effectiveness of a present research work depends, to a great extent, on the methodology followed by the investigator. Adequate knowledge of research methodology is very much necessary for any investigator. The method followed in this study is 'normative survey method'. "Normative survey method is the method of investigation which attempts to describe and interpret what exist at present in the form of conditions, practices, trends, effects, attitude, beliefs, etc." (Siddhu, K.S., 1990, P-107). The investigators used it because the study is concerned with the existing awareness level towards environment among the college students of Dhakuakhana sub-division.

Population

In the present study the population comprises of all the college students of Dhakuakhana Sub-Division irrespective of provincialised and Non- provincialised Colleges, which included five colleges. Considering the size of the population the sample for the present study was selected to make it representative.

Selection of the Sample

In the present study purposive sampling method was followed by investigator. The investigator has selected 350 students from 4 Colleges, out of which 120 students belongs to Arts Stream, 90 students from Science and another 90 students from Commerce Stream.

Table-1

Table 1. Showing Break-Up Of Colleges According To Management And Stream:-

| Name of the Colleges | Type of management | Stream available |
|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Dhakuakhana College | Provincialized | Arts and Science |
| Brahmaputra degree college | Provincialized | Arts |
| Dhakuakhana Commerce College | provincialised | Arts and Commerce |
| Rengam subansiri College | Non- provincialised | Arts |

Table-2

Table 2 Showing Break-Up of Selected Colleges Students According to College, Stream and Locality

| Name of the Colleges | No. of Total Students included in Sample | Stream Available | | | Locality | |
|------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| | | Arts | Science | Commerce | Rural | Urban |
| Dhakuakhana College | 100 | 60 | 90 | Nil | 50 | 50 |
| Brahmaputra degree college | 100 | 50 | | Nil | 40 | 60 |
| Dhakuakhana Commerce College | 120 | 30 | Nil | 90 | 70 | 50 |
| Rengam subansiri College | 30 | 30 | Nil | Nil | 30 | - |
| Total | 350 | 170 | 90 | 90 | 190 | 160 |

Table-3

Table 3 Showing Location of Selected Colleges

| Name of the Colleges | Location |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Dhakuakhana College | Urban |
| Brahmaputra degree college | Urban |
| Dhakuakhana Commerce College | Rural |
| Rengam subansiri College | Rural |

Instrument/tool Used in the Present Study

The investigator has chosen **questionnaires** as a means for collecting data for the present study. This method of data collection is quite popular. A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed

or typed in a definite order on a form or a set of forms. The questions are formed according to the need of particular investigations.

Table Showing the Various Dimensions of the Questionnaire

| Sl. No | Dimensions |
|--------|---|
| 1 | General Awareness of environmental degradation and it causes |
| 2 | Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution |
| 3 | Awareness regarding protection of wild animal |
| 4 | Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes |

The questionnaire was checked, edited properly and then submitted to experts for criticism and modification. Depending upon the advice of the experts some modifications were made to a number of questions and five more questions were included. The final questionnaire included “30 Questions” and it was distributed to the college students of selected college by the investigator under the kind assistance of the Principals of the concerned colleges.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The investigator basically tried to analyse and interpret the data with the help of percentages on the basis of the questioners. The findings of the analysis and its interpretations are presented in the following sections:

Table 4. Showing level of environmental awareness among the arts, science and commerce stream college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | | |
|---|-----------------------|---------|----------|
| | Arts | Science | Commerce |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 76.42% | 81.32% | 75.22% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 78.16% | 82.33% | 78.23% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 75.57% | 80.88% | 72.48% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 65.23% | 67.84% | 65.86% |
| Aggregate awareness | 73.85% | 78.09% | 72.94% |

Table 5. showing level of environmental awareness among the arts-male and female college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Male (Arts) | Female(Arts) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 77.12% | 75.28% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 78.32% | 77.78% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 74.16% | 75.23% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 60.43% | 65.84% |
| Aggregate awareness | 72.50% | 73.44% |

Table 6. showing level of environmental awareness among the science stream-male and female college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| | Male (Science) | Female (Science) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 80.14% | 82.28% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 79.92% | 84.16% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 78.42% | 82.44% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 67.12% | 69.46% |
| Aggregate awareness | 76.40% | 79.58% |

Table 7. Showing level of environmental awareness among the commerce stream-male and female college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------|
| | Male (Commerce) | Female (Commerce) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 75.10% | 75.24% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 76.55% | 79.88% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 71.26% | 73.19% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 64.44% | 66.28% |
| Aggregate awareness | 71.56% | 73.63% |

Table 8. showing level of environmental awareness among the arts, science and commerce stream-male and female college students

(In Aggregate)

| Streams | Response (In %) | |
|-----------|-----------------|--------|
| | Arts | 72.50% |
| Science | 76.40% | 79.58% |
| Commerce | 71.56% | 73.63% |
| Aggregate | 73.48% | 75.85% |

Table 9. Showing level of environmental awareness among the rural and urban arts stream college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| | Rural (Arts) | Urban (Arts) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 78.54% | 80.24% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 73.23% | 78.16% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 74.12% | 75.16% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 60.16% | 70.54% |
| Aggregate awareness | 69.76% | 76.03% |

Table 10. Showing level of environmental awareness among the rural and urban science stream college students.

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------|
| | Rural (Science) | Urban (Science) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 76.34% | 84.82% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 77.82% | 83.55% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 76.18% | 82.94% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 65.33% | 69.88% |
| Aggregate awareness | 73.91% | 80.24% |

The 11.following table showing level of environmental awareness among the rural and urban commerce stream college students

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| | Rural (Commerce) | Urban (Commerce) |
| General Awareness of environmental Degradation | 73.86% | 76.26% |
| Awareness regarding Air, Water, Soil and Noise pollution | 75.66% | 80.42% |
| Awareness regarding protection of wild Animal | 71.24% | 71.98% |
| Awareness regarding need for participation in environmental protection programmes | 62.12% | 67.32% |
| Aggregate awareness | 70.72% | 73.98% |

Table 12 .showing level of environmental awareness among the rural and urban college students of arts, science and commerce streams (in aggregate)

| Dimensions | Total Response (in %) | |
|------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| | Rural) | Urban |
| Arts | 69.76% | 76.25% |
| Science | 73.91% | 80.24% |
| Commerce | 71.60% | 76.82% |
| Aggregate | 71.76% | 76.82% |

MAJOR FINDINGS

On the basis of the analysis of the obtained data regarding environmental awareness among the college students of Dhakuakhana Sub-Division, some major observations can be summed up, which are as follows:

- i. Almost 75% of total respondents were found to be aware about environment.
- ii. There is not much difference between Arts, Science and Commerce stream students regarding environmental awareness. However, students from science stream relatively possessed a bit high level environmental awareness.
- iii. Slight difference was found among male and female college students in respect of environmental awareness.
- iv. College students from urban areas were relatively much more aware of the environment than the students from rural areas.

v. In respect of four major dimensions of the questionnaire prepared for collection of data by the present investigator, it was found that students from all the three streams, i.e. Arts, Science and Commerce were relatively less aware about participation in environmental protection programmes than the other dimensions.

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

Depending upon these findings some conclusions as well as suggestions for increasing environmental awareness among the college students have been presented. After the systematic analysis of collected data the investigator found that the college students of Dhakuakhana Sub-Division had high environmental awareness. However, there is lot of scope and necessity for further increment of environmental awareness among the college students. In this concern the investigator provides the following suggestions:-

- i. Adequate curriculum of environmental education according to the need and interest of the college students should be provided.
- ii. Organizing seminars and workshops regarding different aspects of environmental awareness among the college students need to be done.
- iii. Teachers with adequate background and experience should be specially appointed for teaching environmental education.
- iv. Participation in N.S.S. camps should make compulsory by the college authority for all the students.
- v. Students should be provided opportunity to participate in educational tours, excursions under the careful guidance of prescribed teacher.
- vi. Organization of debates, extempore speech, quiz over the topics related to environment in relation to different college functions will also prove to be helpful in increasing environmental awareness among the college students.
- vii. Visit to the areas effected from natural disasters like flood, earthquake, soil erosion can also be very significant for increasing environmental awareness among students.
- viii. Help books, guide books, charts, kits, teaching materials and aids both for students and teachers should be provided.
- ix. Teaching practical and action oriented field works can also create environmental awareness among college students.
- x. Development of gardening skills has a great value for increasing environmental awareness among the college students.
- xi. Different activities should be organized on the occasion of World Environment Day by the college authority with the help of active participations of the students.

SUGGESTIONS FOR CARRYING OUT FURTHER RESEARCH

It is almost impossible to cover adequately all the aspects of a problem in a given limited period of time. Obviously, these dissertations must have left out certain aspects of the problem. Here the present investigator provides certain suggestion for carrying out further research work over the same field.

- i. A comprehensive study of environmental awareness among the college students of entire Assam can be undertaken.
- ii. A study may be conducted to find out environmental awareness among the secondary school students of the same geographical area i.e., Dhakuakhana Sub-Division along with some other areas.
- iii. Another study may be undertaken to establish relationship between academic qualification and environmental awareness among the people of a certain geographical area.
- iv. A study may be undertaken to find out environmental awareness among secondary school students having literate and illiterate parents.
- v. A comprehensive study may be undertaken to find out relationship between socio-economic background of the college students and environmental awareness among them of a certain geographical area.

In **conclusion** it can be said that now a days environment is become a big issue of study but it is a micro level study of the investigator regarding environmental awareness. There are lots of areas to study relating to environment. The investigator hopes that the findings of the study will help all sections of people to know about environment and help the government and stock-holders in order to take necessary action for preservation and protection of environment.

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