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Research Paper

Environmental Awareness Ability: A Comparative Study of Higher Secondary Students

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Key words: *Environment, Environmental Awareness etc.*

Abstract

Environmental awareness means to help social groups and individuals to acquire an awareness of sensitivity to the total environment and its problems. The present study was conducted to investigate the Environmental awareness among different groups of adolescents for measuring the environmental awareness. Environmental Awareness Measure constructed by Dr .Praveen Kumar Jha (2010) was used to fulfil the aim of present study. The sample consists of 150 adolescents selected through purposive random technique of sampling from Bathinda city. The study revealed that gender difference and residing in rural and urban areas significantly affect the environmental awareness ability of adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

The survival of the human beings mainly depends upon their harmony with nature. There is a close interaction between these two, i.e., man and the nature. His privilege to use the earth's resources can be compensated by his responsibility to cherish, to protect and to use them carefully. If man degrades the nature; nature is not going to help and the disaster is inevitable. Man exploits and uses the resources from the earth for his well being. The resource utilization pollutes the environment in many ways. Therefore the understanding of such impact of resource utilization against the environment is essential. We should protect the natural gifts like soil, water, air, forest and become the guardian of the earth.

Environmental education is the process of recognizing values and clarifying concepts in order to develop skills and attitude, necessary to understand and appreciate the interrelatedness among man, his culture and his bio- physical surroundings. It also entails practice in decision making and self- formulation of a code of behaviour about problems and issues concerning environmental quality. Increasing population, Urbanization and poverty have generated pressure on the natural resources and lead to a degradation of the environment. TO PREVENT THE ENVIRONMENT FROM FURTHER DEGRADATION, the Supreme Court has ordered and initiated environmental protection awareness through government and non-government agencies to take part in protecting our environment. Environmental pollution cannot prevent by laws alone. Public participation is equally important with regard to environmental protection. Environmental Education (EE) is a process of learning by giving an overall perspective of knowledge and awareness of the environment. It sensitizes the society about environmental issues and challenges interested individuals to develop skills and expertise thereby providing appropriate solutions.

Climate change, loss of biodiversity, declining fisheries, ozone layer depletion, illegal trade of endangered species, destruction of habitats, land degradation, depleting ground water supplies, introduction of alien species, environmental pollution, solid waste disposal, storm water and sewage disposal pose a serious threat to ecosystems in forest, rural, urban and marine ecosystems. Both formal and informal education on the environment will give the interested individual the knowledge, values, skills and tools needed to face the environmental challenges on a local and global level.

Environmental awareness is the ability to understand the problems of environment through the relevant experiences and the assistance extended to the society and its individuals to solve these environmental problems. The need to spread environmental awareness is enormous in the context of successfully addressing environmental problems. It is linked to environmental education. On the one hand, provision of environmental education creates greater awareness in individuals and communities with respect to putting environmental resources to use even while conserving them. On the other hand, greater environmental awareness increases the scope of environmental education—as a discipline as well as inclusion of aspects of it within the scope of other disciplines. Various media and means are used to spread environmental awareness among the people. The electronic media and the print media are the major mediums of spreading information about environment among the populace—educating them about environmental concerns and ways to address these. News,

features, talk shows and discussions on television and radio are increasingly focusing on environmental themes of today. Global warming, air and water pollution, overuse of fertilizers, the negative implication of use of plastics and polythene, conservation of energy and fuel resources, all these are topics of current media debate. Newspapers and magazines too are, one may say, more environment conscious than ever before. Articles and analyses explore the environmental debacle that our globe is headed towards and create awareness in the common man about environmental problems.

Schools and universities play an enormously significant role in generating environmental awareness among children and the youth. Textbooks reveal an increasing concern with environmental problems and solutions and numerous courses are available at the postgraduate level that provide environmental education relating to management and conservation of environment, environmental health, social ecology and so on. There is no doubt that attention to environment was overdue and it is time to commit ourselves to look after it with all possible means. Every citizen of a welfare state has to obey and maintain the principle of "Maximum of well -being with the minimum of consumption."

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the present study is an attempt to study environmental awareness ability among adolescent girls and boys residing in rural and urban areas.

Objectives

- To assess the environmental awareness ability of the adolescent.
- To compare the environmental awareness ability between the adolescents residing in rural and urban area.
- To compare the environmental awareness ability between boys and girls.

Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in relation to environmental awareness ability.
2. There is no significant difference between adolescent in rural and urban area in relation to environmental awareness ability

Method

The study was conducted on a sample of 150 adolescents of Bathinda District. The sample consisted of boys (75), girls (75): adolescents residing in rural (75) and urban (75) area. The purposive sampling technique was used for selecting the sample.

Tools

Environmental awareness ability scale developed by Dr. Parveen Kumar Jha was used to measure the environmental awareness ability of adolescents. It consists of 51 items (43 positive and 8 negatively worded). The scale based on the following dimensions of environment as a whole.

- Causes of pollution
- conservation of soil, forest, air etc
- Energy conservation
- conservation of human health
- conservation of wild life and animal husbandry

The reliability and validity of the scale is .61 and 0.83 respectively.

Scoring

Each agreed item carries the value of 1 mark and each disagree item of zero mark but the negative items are scored inversely. On the total score, the scores ranged between 0-51. The scale gives a composite score of environmental awareness ability of the subject.

Data Analysis

The collected data was analyzed by using mean, SD and t-test.

Table No. 01

Table showing environmental awareness of boys and girls

Gender	Mean	SD	t-test	Level of significance
Boys	37.46	7.32	2.13	Significant at 5% level of significance
Girls	39.70	5.57		

It can be observed from the above table that the girls are more aware about their environment as compared with the boys. The mean score of boys on Environmental Awareness Ability is 37.46 with the SD 7.32. However the mean score of girls is 39.70 with SD of 5.57. The t value is 2.13 which is significant at .05 level. Thus the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between adolescent boys and girls in relation to environmental awareness ability is rejected.

Table No. 02

Table showing environment awareness of adolescents residing in rural and urban areas

Area	Mean	SD	t test	Level of significance
Rural	36.92	5.83	4.58	Significant at 5% level of significance
Urban	42.36	5.97		

The above table revealed that adolescents residing urban areas have better environmental awareness as compared to the adolescent residing in rural areas. The mean value of adolescents residing in rural areas is 35.91 and the mean value of adolescents residing in urban area is 40.36. The t value is found to be 4.58 which is significant at .05 level. Thus it can be stated on the basis of results obtained that atmosphere also plays an important role in determining environment awareness. Thus the hypothesis in this study that there is no significant difference between adolescent in rural and urban area in relation to environmental awareness ability is rejected.

Conclusion

Thus it can be said that boys and girls differ significantly in terms of environmental awareness and rural and urban adolescents also significant. We may say that the atmosphere also plays an important role in determining the environmental awareness ability

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