

AWARENESS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Abstract

In a world where environmental degradation is a growing concern, it's more critical than ever for people to understand the importance of environmental awareness and the role of education in it. Environmental awareness involves understanding and appreciating the natural world and the challenges we face in protecting it. A deep understanding of the environment can help people minimize their personal environmental impact. Humans and all other living beings today confronted with various issues and problems related with environment. Environmental problems are going to be threatening if we do not take measures to tackle them soon. Resources are being depleted at fast rate without chance for recharge and the pressure on environment and its components is very high nowadays. Knowledge is a pre-condition for changing Awareness s. Both knowledge and Awareness s are assumed to be important for changing individual's actions towards the environment. The present study aimed to analyse the awareness of high school students towards environmental issues.

Keywords: Environmental Awareness, Environmental Problems

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I. INTRODUCTION

Human development both qualitative and quantitative depends on the quality of the environment he lives and interact. Therefore, there is no doubt that, it is the primary responsibility of man, not only to preserve the environment but also to improve it qualitatively. The man's greed to overexploit the natural resources, rapid population growth, modern lifestyle and technology have raised serious environmental problems. Without awareness and involvement of people at grass root level, the environmental problems cannot be solved successfully.

Environmental awareness means knowledge and understanding of facts and concepts related to environment and consequences of various environmental issues and problems like pollution, population explosion, deforestation, ecological disruption, energy crisis etc. Living in a healthy environment is right for all living beings. But in the present world, existence and survival of species becoming worse day by day due to the uncontrolled exploitation of nature by Man himself for his comforts and freewill. Environmental issues and problems are severe in recent years, which is going to be threatening if we do not take measures to tackle the issues soon. Population explosion, urbanization, industrialization are major factors for increased pressure on land. Besides this, unscientific human intervention has worsened the situation. Man has destroyed the harmony in the relationship with nature. Education is the only instrument which helps in developing a positive and favorable Awareness towards environment and to reverse the damages caused to environment at an emergency rate. Environmental Education is a process to promote the awareness and understanding of the environment, its relationship with man and its activities. It aims at developing a world population which is concerned about the environment and its associated problems and which works individually and collectively towards solution for current environmental problems. It is also aiming at developing responsible actions necessary for preservation, conservation and improvement of the environment and its components

Busi Ramesh (2021) studied about the Awareness of secondary school teachers towards environmental education in school curriculum and revealed that the gender of the teachers has no influence on their Awareness towards Environmental Education in school curriculum. Also, married teachers working in secondary schools have better Awareness towards Environmental Education in school curriculum as compared to their unmarried counterparts and the teachers working in rural schools have developed better Awareness towards Environmental Education in school curriculum as compared to those working in urban schools.

Danielraja, R. (2019) carried out a study on 180 students of Standard XII using environmental awareness scale for assessing the significance difference in the mean scores of environmental awareness of students stream wise. The results indicated that there was a significant difference in the mean scores of Environmental awareness between the students belonging to science group and arts group, between the students of science group and vocational group and there existed no significant difference in the mean scores of Environmental awareness between the students of vocational group and arts group. There existed no significant difference in the mean scores of Environmental awareness between the students in terms of gender and in terms of types of institution.

Dr. Ranju Medhi (2018) studied about the Environmental Awareness among high school students of Guwahati city of Kamrup District in relation to gender and type of school. Descriptive survey method was used on 100 high school students out of which 50 were boys & 50 were girls. Findings of the study are that there exists no significant difference in environmental awareness of boys and girls high school students. It was further found that there exists significant difference in environmental awareness of government and private high school students.

II. NEED & SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Knowledge about environment and its issues is foremost factor for taking steps to solve those problems. Knowledge, Awareness, and Attitude all are interconnected. Increase in environmental awareness leads to increased knowledge about the environment. Both knowledge and Awareness are assumed to be important for changing individual's actions towards the environment.

Environmental awareness is important because we receive resources from mother earth that are essential to our well-being and quality of life. These resources are clean air, water, and soil, the richness and bio diversity of our planet. Environmental awareness in schools is crucial because it enhances students' appreciation for green earth, also promotes healthy behaviour towards environment and sustainability.

It helps students understand the system of environment and how human actions can impact the environment. Students should develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills to explore and learn about environmental issues. They are the future leaders to take action on environmental issues and work towards solutions. Better awareness helps to improve the school environment by conservation practices, promoting sustainability and reducing waste, application of sustainable practices in life and develop innovative methods to tackle environmental issues.

Awareness, attitude, and knowledge of Environmental Education studies enables the students to know their responsibility in the protection and preservation of the environment. Ajzen and Fishbein (1977) pointed that Awareness to be predictive of behaviour. Students need right education and assistant to realize the interrelations between living beings and nature, utilization, preservation and conservation of natural resources, ways to lead a sustainable life style. Students should know environmental issues and develop Awareness to solve the issues for restoring the quality of environment for existence of life. The protection and conservation of environment is in the hands of citizen in the nation especially the future generation -the students So, exploring the Awareness on Environmental Issues among High School Children is necessary.

III. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMES

- 1. Awareness:** Environmental Awareness means to help individuals and social groups to acquire an awareness of total environment and its allied problems. It is a state of being conscious about environment. It may be defined as to help the individual to gain variety of information and experiences to acquire basic knowledge and understanding of environment and problems associated within.

2. Environmental Problems: Environmental problems are the harmful effects of human activities on the environment. These include pollution, overpopulation, waste disposal, climate change, global warming, the greenhouse effect, etc.

3. Objectives of the Study

- To find the Awareness level of High school students on Environmental Problems.
- To find the Awareness level of High school students on Environmental Problems based on Gender and Locale.

4. Hypothesis

- High school students poses moderate level of Awareness on Environmental Problems.
- There is no significant difference in the Mean Awareness level on Environmental Problems of High school students based on,
 - Gender
 - Locale

IV. METHODOLOGY

- 1. Method:** Survey Method was used for the present study.
- 2. Population and Sample:** High school students studying in 8th, 9th and 10th class constitutes the population and 150 High school students of Kozhikode, Malappuram and Thrissur district by random sampling method constituted the sample for present study.
- 3. Tools Used:** An Awareness Test on Environmental Problems was used for measuring the Awareness level of High School Students which was developed and standardized by the researcher. The test consisted of 30 multiple choice questions carrying 1 mark for each correct answer.
- 4. Analysis and Interpretation:** To realize the objective of the study. i.e., to study the Awareness level of High school students on Environmental Problems, the collected data were analyzed quantitatively using percentage analysis.

The total score for each student was obtained by adding score on each question. The total score of the students was organized in ascending order. Then the score has been divided into three categories, namely Low Awareness, Moderate Awareness, High Awareness using Mean and standard deviation. Students who fall under each category were counted and % analysis was done of that frequency. The details of analysis are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Awareness Level of High school students on Environmental Problems

High Awareness			Moderate Awareness			Low Awareness		
No.	of	%	No.	of	%	No.	of	%
Students			Students			Students		
22		14.67%	104		69.33%	24		16%

From the table 1, It is clear that major percentage i.e, 69.33 % of High school students have moderate level of Awareness towards Environmental Issues whereas only 16% of students have highly favorable level of Awareness and 14.67% have low level of Awareness towards Environmental problems.

To realize the second objective of the study i.e. To find the Awareness of High school students on Environmental problems based on Gender, the collected data were analyzed and the details are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean, SD, t-value : Gender wise

Gender	No. of students	Mean	SD	t- value & significant level
Boys	75	9.093	3.77	3.393 (0.05)
Girls	75	11.373	4.43	

Table 2 shows that, calculated t-value 3.393 is greater than table value of 1.98 at 0.05 level. i.e., There exists significant difference between Mean scores of Boys and Girls in the Awareness on Environmental problems. Since the mean value obtained for Girls (M= 11.373) is greater than that of Boys (M= 9.093), Girls are superior to Boys in the Awareness on Environmental problems.

To find the Awareness level of High school students on Environmental problems based on Locale, the collected data were analyzed and the details are given in Table 3.

Table-3: Mean, SD, t-value: Locale wise

Gender	No. of students	Mean	SD	t- value & significant level
Urban	80	10.43	4.63	1.84 (0.05)
Rural	70	9.18	3.52	

Table 3 shows that, calculated t-value 1.84 is less than table value of 1.98 even at 0.05 level. Since there is no much difference in the mean value obtained for Urban students (M= 10.43) and Rural students (M= 9.18) there exists no significant difference in High school students in the Awareness on Environmental Problems based on Locale.

5. Findings:

- A majority (69.33 %) of High school students have moderate level of Awareness on Environmental problems whereas 16% of High school students have low level of Awareness and only 14. 67% have high level of awareness on Environmental problems.
- Significant difference was found in the Awareness of High school students based on Gender (t= 3.393) and Girls have more Awareness on Environmental problems when compared to Boys.
- No significant difference was found between Urban and Rural students (t= 1.84) in the Awareness towards Environmental problems.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study revealed the Awareness level of High school students on Environmental Problems. Environment is most important for living and survival of species on Earth. The exploitation of the environment may result in deficit in availability of resources. Scarcity of resources develops Unhealthy citizens, especially young children who are future citizens. The students should develop environmental Awareness, issues and problems of environment and should act to solve those problems for a healthy living.

Education should provide opportunity for increasing Awareness on environment and its protection among student community through right strategies and curricular planning. Educators can increase environmental awareness in students by hosting events, integrating environmental themes into the curriculum, etc. Nowadays modern technology like virtual reality ,AI etc can effectively incorporated for environmental education. Educating people about the environment is crucial for saving the planet from the hands of disaster and making it a better place for future generations to live.

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