

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS OF SECONDARY AND SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

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The present study gathered data through survey method. Survey of 600 secondary and senior secondary school students in the city centre and villages of Patiala district found that rural students and students studying in government schools were still not aware of the various threats of environment and natural calamities and most of the Government rural schools did not possess basic literature related to Environment (in regional language). The paper suggested environmental awareness campaigns like competitions, vanmahotsavs, tree plantation, celebration of world environmental day etc. be carried out in these areas.

INTRODUCTION

Polluted environment endangers the human race by threatening its survival on planet earth. Boundaries of any nation can not limit these environmental problems to a particular country and region, but its impact is global one. This large scale environmental degradation has caused a global concern about the conservation and protection of the earth's environment. Hence, efforts are being made for inculcating environmental consciousness or awareness among the masses. It is education which can make the human being conscious and knowledgeable about environment and environmental problems. Moreover, awareness is essential for the action. The main purpose of environmental education in schools is to acquaint and sensitize the young minds to the environmental problems and concerns, to inculcate in them healthy personal and social attitude and behaviour towards environment. Thus, students must have awareness about environment and the problems associated with it so that they can play their role very effectively. Hence, it is necessary to know how far the school students are aware about environment and environmental problems.

OBJECTIVE

To study the environmental awareness level of students.

HYPOTHESES

There will be no significant differences in environmental awareness between secondary and senior secondary students, boys and girls in government, semi-government and private schools.

METHOD

Present study was conducted on 600 students selected from different schools situated in rural and urban vicinity of Patiala district. Stratified random sampling technique was used to collect the sample. The tool used in the present investigation was the environmental awareness scale (EAS) developed by Haseen Taj. This tool measures the extent and degree of awareness of students about environmental degradation and its protection. The statistical measures used in the present study are Mean, SD and t-test (significance level).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Environmental Awareness Among Secondary and Senior Secondary Students

There were 117 items in the EAS and each item was given a credit of '1' point and a 'zero' for wrong answer. The observed means score of the entire sample of secondary and senior secondary students was 88.16 which is quite high. The secondary (M=88.62) and senior secondary (M=87.5) students of Patiala district have more awareness regarding the environment. The reason behind it is that Patiala is considered to be the educational hub having all kinds of educational institutions

like a university, engineering colleges, medical and dental colleges, various arts and science colleges and numerous schools.

Variation in Environmental Awareness between Secondary and Senior Secondary School Students

Mean (M) score of environmental awareness of secondary school students was 88.62 and that of senior secondary school students was 87.58. Standard deviation (SD) score of secondary school students was 11.90 and that of senior secondary students was 11.95. Critical Ratio score (t-value) was 0.08 which was significant at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the hypothesis no. 1 that there might be no significant difference in environmental awareness of secondary and senior secondary school students was accepted. As it is concluded that both secondary and senior secondary students have almost equal environmental awareness shown by non significant value ($t=0.08$). The main reason for non-significant differences in environmental awareness between secondary and senior secondary students is that these days environmental education is being taught as a compulsory subject in all schools throughout the India, after an order by the honourable Supreme Court was passed in this regard in the year 2005. The main aim of this order was to educate the people of India about the various environmental issues affecting our planet earth. As the students at both the levels have studied environmental education in school so no significant difference in environmental awareness exists between them.

Variation in Environmental Awareness Gender wise

Mean (M) environmental awareness score of boys was 87.89 and that of girls was 88.43. Standard deviation (SD) score for boys was 12.25 and that for girls was 10.19 and the t-value was 0.428. Therefore, the hypothesis that no significance difference exist between male and female school students environmental awareness was retained at 0.05 level. It is concluded that gender is not a factor for affecting environmental awareness of school students. The main reason for almost equal environmental awareness of boys ($M=87.89$) and girls ($M=88.43$) is that they are studying together in the same teaching learning environment in the schools.

Difference in Environmental Awareness between Students of private and Government schools

Mean (M) environmental awareness score of students of private schools was 96.22 and that of students of Government schools was 78.78. Standard deviation (SD) scores of students of private schools was 9.57 and that of Government school students was 8.303. t-value was 14.53. Therefore, the hypothesis that there might be significant differences in environmental awareness of students of private schools and government schools was retained at 0.01 level. These findings reveal that students of private schools have more environmental awareness than government school students. The main reason for higher environmental awareness among students of private schools (96.22) than government school students (78.78) may be the family background and educational qualification of parents. Parents of students studying in private schools are graduates and are having well to do and affluent family background. Such parents are mainly concerned with inculcating environmental awareness in their children as they are aware of the dangers and consequences of environmental degradation at global level. On the other hand, students staying in Government schools come from poor families and have less educated or illiterate parents. Their main priority is to fulfill the needs of their family members. They are not aware of environmental issues so they can't pass on these awareness measures to their children so the students of government schools do not get the learning environment in their homes because of which they score less than students of private schools.

Difference in Environmental Awareness between Students of Semi-government and Government Schools

Mean (M) environment awareness score for semi-government school students was 87.45 and that for Government School students was 78.78. Standard deviation (SD) scores for Semi-government School students was 9.036 and for government school students was 8.303. t-value was 7.41. Therefore, the hypothesis that there might be significant difference in environmental awareness between students of semi-government and government schools was retained at 0.01 level. These findings reveal that students of semi-government schools (87.45) have more environmental awareness than government school (78.78) students. The main reason for this difference is that the students in semi-government school have better educational environment than those in government schools. The teachers in semi-government schools make more efforts to provide better education and environmental awareness to their students than the teachers of the government schools who make little efforts in this regard.

Difference in Environmental Awareness in Students of Rural and Urban Areas (Rural Urban Variation)

Mean (M) environmental awareness score of students in rural areas was 80.17 and that in urban areas was 95.43. Standard deviation (SD) score of school students in rural areas was 8.14 and that in urban areas was 9.17. t-value was 16.23. Therefore, the hypothesis that significant differences exist in environmental awareness of school students of rural and urban areas is retained at 0.01 level. Therefore, it is concluded that environmental awareness of urban areas school students is much higher than that of rural areas. The main reason for such differences is that school students in urban areas have more facilities in terms of education, entertainment, competitions etc. than students in rural areas. Urban areas school students have an easy access to internet which provides them information about various factors which are responsible for degrading the environment in different parts of the World. Their parents are educated and they got good learning environments at home, which increase their knowledge concerning environment. Various programmes like Van Mahautsav, World Environment Day, No Tobacco Day etc. helps in creating awareness about environment among school students. Whereas, rural school students do not have such facilities. Their home environments are also where they do not get any awareness about the environment. They are not aware about the various threats to the environment. They mostly study in government schools where very little efforts are made to provide them environmental awareness.

Difference in Environmental Awareness between Students Studying in Punjabi and English Medium Schools

Mean score of environmental awareness of Punjabi Medium students was 78.78 whereas the mean score of English medium students was 96.92. Standard deviation of Punjabi medium students was 8.303 whereas the standard deviation of English medium students was 9.576. The t-value comes out to be 14.53. Therefore, the hypothesis that there might be significant differences in environmental awareness of students studying in Punjabi and English medium is retained at 0.01 level. The main reason of this difference is that most of English medium schools and students are in Urban areas and Punjabi medium schools are in rural areas. Students studying in English medium have more environmental awareness because most of the literature on environmental issues is available in English medium. On the other hand Punjabi medium students have limited access to world environmental problems and environmental awareness because they never leave their homes to know about the rest of the world and very limited literature is available in Punjabi medium related to environmental awareness.

CONCLUSION

All these findings urges us and the government to make efforts to provide the necessary infrastructure in the form of internet facilities, proper classrooms, library facilities, environment

related books in Punjabi medium for the students studying in different schools run by the different types of school managements and specially in the government run schools.