



A Study of Environmental Awareness Among Higher Secondary School Students of Bankura District in West Bengal

KEYWORDS

Environmental awareness, environmental education, higher secondary school, gender, locality, academic stream

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ABSTRACT *The study attempts to highlight the level of environmental awareness among the higher secondary school students of Bankura district in the state of West Bengal. The descriptive survey method was employed for the present study. A random sampling technique was used for selection of sample. The sample consisted of 100 higher secondary school students of six west bengal government aided higher secondary schools of Bankura. A Likert type scale for assessment of student's environmental awareness was developed and standardised for the study. The data was organized and statistically analysed by using Mean, SD, 't' test. In course of this analysis it was found that there was no significant difference in environmental awareness among higher secondary school students in respect of their gender, locality and academic stream.*

INTRODUCTION

Environment means the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal, or plant lives or operates. It includes air, water, land dynamically the inter-relationship that exists between these and human beings; other living creatures, plants, micro-organism and property. The word environment embraces the conditions or influences under which any organism or things exists, lives or develops. The environment in which we live is very important and it directly affects our lives. We cannot exist without environment. The relationship between the man and environment has been established in the early periods itself. Human being live in the kingdom of nature and interact with it constantly. The influence of nature in the form of the air he breathes, the water he drinks, the food he eats, and the flow of energy and information. Any change in the environment cannot only result in devastating effects, but can also pose a threat to the human race.

Today man is living in a world of crises. In recent decades, global problems relating to degradation of natural resources and pollution have increased dramatically. Natural resources are depleted by excessive use. Many efforts are being made to make people aware about environmental protection. The term environmental awareness has a broad meaning. It not only implies knowledge about environment but also value and necessary skills to solve the environmental problem. Only education can make man aware, conscious and knowledgeable about environment and environmental problems. Environmental education is an important tool through which the goals for awareness can be achieved easily. This is the crucial time for inculcate the environmental awareness among the masses particularly among students.

If we want to generate the environmental values in our students we have to show eco-friendly behavior. A number of research works have been taken up in this respect. But being a location specific issue, research on environmental awareness should be under taken in different parts of the country for developing a clear understanding and perspective of the issues involved.

It is pathetic to notice that younger generation of India is much behind in concern for environmental balance. Compulsory environmental education at all level in education system as directed by Hon'ble Supreme Court is the most appro-

priate strategy towards environmental protection. We are felt need to study the environmental awareness among the higher secondary school students.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

One of the most grave situations in the present world is pollution and loss of natural resources. The district of Bankura is no exception to it. The rate of population of this district has increased to a great dimension during last some decades. Resultantly, the area of the town has enlarged. As a result, natural forest and resources is getting spoiled. So it has a significant effect on population, creatures, soil and atmosphere. The influence of industrialization has added fuel to it. Some industries that are polluting have been spread in various parts of this district. This pollution is gravely affecting soil and water, as a result of which it is affecting farming and health of human beings. The way of coming out of this problem is to create environmental awareness in every step of life. The first step of this environmental awareness will start from school. Because the future denizens are made from here. If this awareness is increased to a great extent, the students will be able to help grow this environment more beautifully. So the students of H.S. level from some schools of Bankura district are included in the present research work to study their environmental awareness.

DEFINITIONS OF SOME IMPORTANT TERMS

Environment : Environment means the surroundings or conditions in which a person, animal or plant lives or operates.

Environmental Awareness : Environmental Awareness means to acquire concern and sensitivity towards the environment and its problems.

Environmental Education : Environmental Education means a process of developing a world population, i.e. aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems, and which has the knowledge, skills, attitudes, motivations and commitment to work individually and collectively toward solutions of current problems and the prevention of new one.

Students : A volunteer participant chosen from the population of students from the higher secondary level of the schools of Bankura district.

Gender : It means either sex, i.e. male and female.

Locality : It includes some rural and urban areas of Bankura district.

Academic Stream : The term means stream of Arts and Science of H.S. level.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are as follows :

1. To study the environmental awareness of higher secondary students of rural area of Bankura district in West Bengal.
2. To study the environmental awareness of higher secondary students of Bankura town in West Bengal.
3. To find out the relationship of environmental awareness between Boys and Girls students of higher secondary level.
4. To find out the relationship of environmental awareness between students of Rural and Urban area of higher secondary level.
5. To find out the relationship of environmental awareness between Arts and Science students of higher secondary level.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness between Boys and Girls students of higher secondary level of Bankura district in West Bengal.
2. There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness between Rural and Urban students of higher secondary level of Bankura district in West Bengal.
3. There is no significant difference in the environmental awareness between Arts and Science students of higher secondary level of Bankura district in West Bengal.

DELIMITATIONS

1. Only higher secondary level students have been selected.
2. Only environmental awareness of higher secondary level students have been taken in the study.
3. Only 100 students of higher secondary level students have been selected as sample.
4. Only Bengali medium higher secondary schools have been selected.
5. Only higher secondary level students of Bankura district in West Bengal have been taken into consideration.

METHODOLOGY

The method of the present study is a descriptive survey method.

SAMPLE

A sample of 100 students of higher secondary level has been selected by adopting the random sampling techniques in the present study. The selected sample has been divided into three different groups on the basis of sex, locality and academic streams. All the students are from six Bengali medium higher secondary govt. aided schools situated in the district of Bankura.

TOOL USED

On the basis of the objectives of the study the investigators developed a Likert type scale as tool for assessment of student's environmental awareness which was standardized and used in the present study.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data have been analysed by SPSS statistical software. The Mean, SD, 't' test were the statistical techniques used for carrying out the analysis and interpretation of the data collected for measuring the environmental awareness of higher secondary students.

RESULT

The major findings of the study have been discussed here :

TABLE-1

Environmental Awareness of Boys & Girls students of Higher Secondary Schools

Group of Students	N	Mean	SD	't Value	df	Sig. (two-tailed)	MD	SED	CI
Boys	50	48.80	5.79	0.359	98	0.722	0.56	1.56	Not Significant
Girls	50	49.36	5.24						

't' value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance

After analysis of the data it is found from the Table No-1 that there is no significant difference between Boys and Girls students in regards of their Environmental Awareness. The calculated 't' value of 0.359 at 0.05 level is less than the table value 1.98. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. The observed difference between the mean scores of the two groups of students may be due to sample fluctuations.

TABLE-2

Environmental Awareness of Higher Secondary School Students residing in Rural & Urban area

Group of Students	N	Mean	SD	't Value	df	Sig. (two-tailed)	MD	SED	CI
Rural	62	50.23	5.11	1.944	98	0.058	3.02	1.55	Not Significant
Urban	38	47.21	5.66						

't' value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance

After analysis of the data it is found from the Table No-2 that there is no significant difference between students residing in Rural and Urban area in regards of their Environmental Awareness. The calculated 't' value of 1.944 at 0.05 level is less than the table value 1.98. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. The observed difference between the mean scores of the two groups of students may be due to sample fluctuations.

TABLE-3

Environmental Awareness of Higher Secondary School Students belonging to Arts & Science streams

Group of Students	N	Mean	SD	't Value	df	Sig. (two-tailed)	MD	SED	CI
Arts	60	48.20	5.37	1.406	98	0.166	2.20	1.56	Not Significant
Science	40	50.40	5.49						

't' value is not significant at 0.05 level of significance

After analysis of the data it is found from the Table No-3 that there is no significant difference between students belonging to Arts and Science streams in regards of their Environmental Awareness. The calculated 't' value of 1.406 at 0.05 level is less than the table value 1.98. So, the null hypothesis is accepted. The observed difference between the mean scores of the two groups of students may be due to sample fluctuations.

CONCLUSION

On 22nd November, 1991 Hon'ble Justice of Supreme Court passed an order stating that Environmental Science ought to be included in the syllabus of all the Educational Board of State Governments and this should be made compulsory. As a result, this subject is taught in every school for some years. In our survey it is found that despite having differences in case of gender, locality and academic streams, there is no significant difference in case of environmental awareness. From this point of view it may be said that the positive effect of environmental awareness has created among learners by environmental education. That speaks of the learners' awareness on environment. So, greater importance should be given on every aspect of society in regards of environmental awareness.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION

Two things in the field of environmental awareness are necessary. One is to have knowledge in it and the other is its reflection in behaviour. So, along with theoretical knowledge project work, educational tour, debate etc. are to be inculcated with a view to having concrete knowledge and if skilled teachers are included in it, the awareness programme will be successful. Not only students, but also other peoples like guardians, interested persons in education and social institutions are to be included and as such its total reflection will protect the society and environment. As a result, this earth will be a good habitat for all.

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